

MARBLEHEAD REPORTER

SUSTAINABLE MARBLEHEAD: Holiday tips for the planet, our community, ourselves

Jenny Morton

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For many of us, the holiday season is a wonderful opportunity to share rituals around faith and gratitude with our loved ones. We decorate our homes and celebrate the season with gifts, special meals, and other treats.

As the holidays approach, our lives get busier as we rush to buy gifts and make plans. Our stress levels often increase as does the amount of waste we produce. This year will certainly be different as we plan our celebrations around safety considerations, but stress and waste will likely continue to be a part of the season.

While we enjoy decorating, sending cards, and giving and receiving gifts, we probably do not realize how much waste we are producing! Americans throw away 25% more trash during the Thanksgiving to New Year's holiday period than any other time of year. This extra waste amounts to 25 million tons of garbage, or about 1 million extra tons per week!

Sustainable Marblehead wishes our community a holiday season filled with peace, joy and less waste! In that spirit, we will be posting a December calendar on our website with daily ideas to reduce stress and waste. Please check our website at <http://sustainablemarblehead.org> and follow us on Facebook and Instagram as we highlight some of our suggestions throughout the month. Below is a preview of some of the calendar entries to get everyone thinking.

Wrapping

- Buy recyclable wrapping paper and, if you unwrap carefully, you can use the paper again next year.
- Wrap gifts with fabric and tie them with a ribbon or yarn. Cloth ribbon can be reused.

- Use old maps as wrapping paper.
- Buy brown packaging paper from packaging stores or cut up brown paper bags. A fresh pine sprig makes a nice adornment, or have your children decorate the paper with their artistic creations.

Decorations

- Use LED lights and put your lights on timers to save energy.

Gifts

- Make a donation to a charity in someone's name instead of buying a gift.
- Give the gift of planting a tree or give seeds for native plants.
- Give unwanted gifts to charities.
- Give the gift of your time, and help by shoveling walks, raking leaves or buying groceries for those who are not able to do so.
- Give reusable hot and cold beverage bottles and straws.

Cards

- Send ecards or cards made from recycled paper or use cards from charities to which you give or that plant a tree for each card sent. You can find them on many websites, including those of the Arbor Day Foundation, PaperCulture, Green Field Paper Company, Minted, and Artifact Uprising.
- Buy locally to support our local businesses! Walk or ride your bike to shop and always bring your reusable bag. You'll save gas at the same time.
- Make a few green resolutions for the New Year.

Slow down and enjoy the season!

Jenny Morton is the co-chair of Sustainable Marblehead's Conservation Working Group.