

## Tips for an Earth Friendly Holiday Season

'Tis the season to celebrate and give gifts. In the spirit of giving, Keep Allen Beautiful's support staff has gathered some holiday tips that create less waste and more memories:

### Gift Wrap Alternatives:

- Scarves, handkerchiefs, or the standard Texas bandana.
- Old posters, maps, or newspaper comics.
- Pages from a child's coloring book taped together (especially nice for relatives who'd enjoy the artwork).
- Last year's holiday paper (press with a warm iron if wrinkled)
- Fabric scraps or home-sewn fabric bags.
- A present in a present: a hat in matching scarf, jewelry in a wooden box, cookies in reusable tin, BBQ utensils or picnic supplies in a tablecloth, kitchen gifts in towels, etc.
- Reusable decorative holiday bags.
- Purchase gift wrap made from recycled paper.

### Packing:

- Dry, popped popcorn (include a note that the birds can eat it).
- Biodegradable starch packing peanuts.
- Used packing peanuts from previous gifts (unwanted packing peanuts, if clean, are accepted by many packaging stores for reuse).
- Crumpled glossy ads from newspaper (ink on glossy paper doesn't smear as other newsprint does).

### Bows / Ribbons:

- Reusable items such as hair bows, ornaments, shoelaces, scarves and toys.
- Stencils or pictures from last year's holiday cards pasted onto plain brown paper.
- Spices such as bundled cinnamon sticks or cloves in a mesh bag.
- Scrap fabric, lace, yarn, rickrack, and seam tape.
- Combination of beads and buttons.
- Dried or silk flowers.

### Party Waste and Energy Reduction Ideas:

- If your holiday lights no longer work, consider purchasing LED holiday lights which use 80 to 99% less energy and can last for up to 50,000 hours. They are also much safer because they operate at only one degree above the temperature in your room.
- Use reusable tableware...if you don't have enough, borrow from friends or family.
- Or rent dishes, cloth napkins, tablecloths, glasses instead of using expensive disposables.
- Cut up last year's holiday cards and use for place cards.
- Tape outdated calendars together to make a unique New Year's tablecloth.
- Place easily identifiable recycling containers at your celebration so guests can recycle their soda cans, bottles, etc.
- Point out the ways your party demonstrated waste reduction and recycling and SPREAD THE WORD!

### After the Holidays:

Save packing material, wrapping, bows, and tissue paper for reuse during the year.

Use leftover gift wrap to line shelves or dresser drawers.

Recycle your tree! For the two weeks following Christmas, place your undecorated and unflocked Christmas tree out with your yard waste (on trash pickup day) so it can be composted. For recycling after the 2 weeks, take it to the Custer Road Transfer Station if you show your driver's license and current utility bill. Reuse your tree: place it in your back yard with birdseed ornaments as a winter treat for the birds. It provides both cover and food!