



GCFM VILLAGE NEWS / gcfm.org / gardenclubfedma@gmail.com / 781-237-0336 /

We are quickly approaching the end of November and are looking forward to Thanksgiving and the December holidays. GCFM wishes you and your family a wonderful season of joy. As part of our mission, GCFM promotes education, encourages environmental responsibility, and provides information and resources on current topics.

With that in mind, we present tips to make your holidays greener while still having fun. 🌲 🍁

🌸 **First** – don't forget to register for the December 1st Design Workshop. Time is 10-1130 in Wareham MA. Judy Morgan takes us for a deep dive to learn about underwater design. Watch her demonstration and then create your own arrangement. Bring a friend and garden snips. Register here: [Design Workshop](#)

🏆 **Second** – a reminder - December 1 is the deadline for GCFM State Awards and Flower Show Awards. Contact GCFMStateAwards@gmail.com or GCFMFlowerShowAwards@gmail.com with any questions or concerns. We look forward to receiving your submissions.



Environmental Awareness Chair Maria Bartlett offers **Eco-Friendly Holiday Ideas with Mother Nature in Mind**. You can view the entire list with many more ideas and suggestions on the GCFM website. [HERE](#)

The holidays can be a time of excess...food, gifts, travel, decorations, parties! For example, studies show that Americans generate 25% more trash between Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve than during the rest of the year! But wait! We can make the holidays eco-friendly without taking anything away from the wonderful spirit of the season. Sustainability is possible when we all shop, gift, and celebrate with the environment in mind. Consider the following ideas:

Shopping Smart and Creative Gift-giving: 🛒 🛒

1. Buy locally and consolidate shopping trips to save gas.
2. Consider giving indoor plants, the green color is soothing and reduces stress.
3. Replace plastic water bottles. Give a gift of a stainless-steel water bottle.
4. Programmable thermostats allow heat to be turned down automatically.
5. Select gifts that do not use batteries or do use battery charger with rechargeable batteries.
6. A tire pressure gauge is a great gift for less than \$10. Correctly inflated tires can save 20% at the gas pump.
7. Drive slowly... less than 60mph saves gas. And, don't idle more than 30 seconds while waiting for a parking spot. Turn off engine.
8. Create gifts grouped around a theme:
 - Free trade coffee and a French press, with organic chocolates and teas.
 - A rubber or stainless-steel hose (to replace the toxic phthalates in the vinyl ones), gift certificate with seed catalogues, and a soil test kit.
 - A gift certificate to a garden center and a book about native plants.
 - A small compost pail, outdoor compost bin, and a book about composting.
9. Reuse/Recycle/Regift! Find quality not-new items from antique shops, yard sales, thrift shops, or your own bookshelf, or basement. There may be treasures galore in your attic!
10. Use recycled wrap for gifts. Don't use foil paper...it can't be recycled. Avoid glitter...it is toxic to the environment. Buy or make fabric gift bags.
11. Give gift certificates for shows, movies, cooking classes, and take-out dinners.
12. Purchase a National Parks pass...outdoor time in nature is good for everyone's health.

13. Avoid gag/useless gifts that may not be used or might end up in the trash.
14. Give the gift of your time: bake and deliver a meal; teach knitting or tennis; help someone learn how to convert to organic lawn care; offer to weed a garden when spring comes; or teach a computer skill.

Holiday Decorating:

15. Christmas trees: it's best to buy a live tree or a locally grown cut tree. Avoid artificial trees---they are plastic. If you have one, pass it on or donate it when you no longer use it.
16. Use greens from your own yard to decorate the house.
17. Decorate your tree/home with home-made items rather than purchased items made of plastic
18. Use LED lights for all your holiday decorations. To light your outdoor walkways, consider solar lights.
19. Use candles made from beeswax or soy with natural fragrances.

Entertaining:

20. When cleaning your home, use products that do not contain harsh toxic substances such as bleach or ammonia that are asthma triggers. Use white vinegar, water, liquid soap, and essential oils of thyme, lemon, grapefruit, and sage to make your own all-purpose cleaner (not for granite, though). Use white vinegar and water for cleaning glass and mirrors. Use baking soda for scrubbing toilets.
21. Deemphasize meat and highlight all the wonderful vegetables and fruits abundant this time of year. Serve locally raised chicken or turkey instead of beef, lamb or pork that add to global warming in their production. Move those "side dishes" into the spotlight.
22. Compost food scraps. Food waste makes up to 40% of trash going to landfills and incinerators!
23. Plastic containers/wrap can leach toxic substances into food. Store holiday leftovers in stainless steel, glass, silicone or ceramic containers and never reheat in plastic containers in the microwave.
24. For mealtimes, use cloth napkins or compostable paper napkins and paper towels. Use real dishes, glassware and flatware or compostable paper dishes (and compost them).
25. When grocery shopping, use mesh draw-string bags for produce rather than the plastic bags. Bring your own bags to use at checkout.
26. When dressing for parties and events, pick your personal care products carefully so you are using ones that are free of toxic substances. Look for fragrance-free items. Consider not using nail polish. Check Environmental Working Group (<https://ewg.org>) or Silent Spring Institute (<https://silentspring.org>) websites for safe cosmetics, moisturizers, and sunscreens.

RESOURCES

Environmental organizations for gift memberships:

Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow www.healthytomorrow.org; Mass Audubon www.massaudubon.org; MA Sierra Club www.sierraclubmass.org; Environmental Working Group www.ewg.org; Clean Water Action www.cleanwateraction.org; Natural Resources Defense Council www.nrdc.org; Mothers Out Front www.mothersoutfront.org; Silent Spring www.silentspring.org; Grow Native MA www.grownativemass.org; Native Plant Trust www.nativeplanttrust.org; Elders Climate Action <https://www.eldersclimateaction.org/mass-chapter/>

See additional gift ideas, book choices, and a reference list on the GCFM Website. [Here](#)



Have a Happy and Green Holiday Season from GCFM/www.gcfm.org

