

Conservation Notes



Shrink Your Holiday Carbon Footprint

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by Jill Kotch

Some green thoughts for next holiday season (actually, all year!!) to reduce your carbon footprint from the American Chemical Society include:

- ◆ Recycling ribbons, tags, paper
- ◆ Recycling your tree into mulch/chips for your garden or having a live tree which you plant
- ◆ Repurposing old maps, bags, comic strips as wrapping paper, interesting old boxes, etc., for containers
- ◆ Rethinking gifting and foods by supporting local artisans, and farmers' markets, thereby reducing energy consumption with shipping
- ◆ Sending ecards
- ◆ Not leaving holiday lights on all night

The University of Warwick in the UK has been working with pyrolysis (a method of decomposition using high heat without oxygen), which can reduce mixed plastics to compounds that can be extracted to make useful products such as monomer styrene, wax and carbon. Since the sorting and cleaning of plastics is so time consuming, if this method is economically viable, it could reduce plastic waste at recycling centers worldwide. Especially important will be those plastics which have to date not been recycle-able, such as those hard plastic coverings for toys and many nonfood items.

Dentist Joe Kravitz, through the Sierra Club, shares another way to reduce your personal carbon footprint—mix your own “green” toothpaste!

1/2 teaspoon sodium bicarbonate
10 drops of water
1-2 drops peppermint oil
1-2 drops tea tree oil

Happy New Year!