



PRACTICAL WAYS TO CREATE MEANING

Decorate with green in mind

Even though gift-giving gets a lot of attention during the holidays, decorations are often on display for a month or more, so deserve some thought as well.

In 2006, an astounding [\\$15.8 billion was spent on new decorations](#). (And—for some statistically fun news, 1:1 is the ratio of the density of fruitcake to the density of mahogany.)

It's also important to consider the real cost of decorations. Not only do most people pay for new decorations every year, but lights are often left on for hours, using plenty of electricity...and money from your pocketbook.

This [web site](#) lists ways to reduce the cost of holiday lights. And if you're looking for an activity during some winter bonding time, check this whole list of articles about [Do-It-Yourself Christmas decorations](#) (<https://www.pinterest.com/kcmoody/christmas-diy-decorations/>).

Another great way to reduce your eco-footprint this winter is to [use a real, locally-grown tree](#) (http://environment.about.com/od/greenchristmas/a/christmas_trees.htm). Surprising though it may be at first, real trees sequester and store carbon, reducing the effects of global climate change, and provide a host of other earth-friendly services during the seven years it takes for them to mature on a tree farm.

You can find a real tree near you through [Iowa Christmas Tree](#) (<http://www.iowachristmastrees.com/>).

When the holidays are over and you're ready to start packing up the decorations, we strongly encourage you to recycle your tree. When recycled, trees are turned into compost or woodchips, as opposed to decomposing in a landfill, which can take up to 30 years. Many cities in Iowa now sponsor tree-recycling programs.

Google "Christmas tree pick up in YOUR CITY" or "Christmas tree recycling in YOUR CITY." If you find nothing on the web, contact your local waste management program, which is often a department of your city or county. And if it doesn't offer tree-recycling, [this article](#) (<http://bit.ly/6THq04>) has some great suggestions on how to do it yourself.

Additional resources:

Holiday Lights: LED and Fiber Optics

<http://www.energyideas.org/documents/factsheets/HolidayLighting.pdf>

Tips for buying and using a living Christmas tree

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/article/yard-and-garden-safely-handle-fresh-cut-christmas-trees>

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For more information, visit www.ReclaimYourHolidays.org.