

## Waste Reduction Programs and Tips

### Enviro Shopping

Shop with the environment in mind and choose products that make the best use of energy resources, don't pollute air or water, are reusable or recyclable, are made from recycled material, and use a minimum of materials in design and packaging.

### Practice the Five 'Rs' in Selecting Packaging

More than 30% of household waste is packaging. Almost everything we buy has been wrapped in a package – or several layers of packaging – at some point on its way from producer to consumer. While packaging provides many essential functions, it can be excessive. When you're an 'enviroshopper,' you choose products in packages that have the least amount of negative environmental impact.



**R**educe the amount of packaging you buy and throw away.



**R**euse packaging.



**R**ecycle packaging whenever possible.



**R**eject packaging that's unsatisfactory.



**R**espond to producers and retailers to let them know their packaging is unsatisfactory.

### Reduce Packaging

- Don't accept a plastic shopping bag when only buying a few items
- Reuse plastic grocery bags for other purposes in your home, or when shopping again
- Take your own cloth shopping bags
- Choose packaging that uses the least amount of material
- Buy products in the largest quantity possible in one package, or buy refills and add liquid

### Buy Recycled

"Buying recycled" means purchasing products that contain recycled content materials. More products than ever before are being made from recycled materials. Buying recycled helps to close the recycling loop by putting recycled materials to good use as new products in the marketplace. When we buy recycled products, we communicate our desire to play an active role in the preservation of our environment.

### America Recycles Day

America Recycles Day is the 15<sup>th</sup> of November. Each year, Mecklenburg County celebrates this day by hosting and participating in a number of recycling events. Past events have included secure paper shredding, the collection of electronics and batteries, and working with partners to accept gently-used clothing and household items. America Recycles Day is the one day of the year dedicated to reminding us of the Reduce! Reuse! Recycle! way of life.

You can learn how to participate at

**[www.americarecyclesday.org](http://www.americarecyclesday.org)**

## Wrap Up Your Holidays With Recycling

The holidays offer many opportunities for recycling! Recycle your holiday gift wrap, cards, gift boxes, tissue paper, and cardboard in containers either curbside or at a Full-Service Drop-off Center or a Self-Service Recycling Center.

Your live Christmas tree and holiday wreaths (with all ornaments, bows and ribbon removed) are also recyclable through composting at our County-owned composting facilities. Simply place these items curbside on your regularly scheduled trash pickup day, or bring them to a Full-Service Drop-off Center.

## Holiday Waste Reduction Tips

Here are a few tips to help make your holidays a little more “green”:

- Have children make their own wrapping paper by designing and coloring paper grocery bags
- Decorate your home and tree with holly, cedar, berries, fruits, and nuts and compost these items after the holidays are over.
- Decorate your table by making a centerpiece of colorful fruits, vegetables, and nuts and compost these items after the holidays are over.
- Ask your guests to bring their own reusable containers to take home holiday meal leftovers.
- Unwrap presents carefully and save gift boxes, bags, bows, and ribbon to use next year.
- Give gifts in reusable gift bags, metal containers, or baskets, or use colorful material, bandannas, or old clothes for wrapping.
- Keep the fronts of old Christmas cards to use as name-tags, bookmarks, or postcards or donate them to St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital.



When you go shopping, bring your own reusable bags.



Make “do-it-yourself” decorations out of natural materials.



Avoid using disposable plates, utensils & napkins.

### Waste Fact

During the holiday season, there’s typically a 25% increase in garbage.

## CELEBRATE EARTH DAY!

Mecklenburg County Solid Waste participates annually in Earth Day events. If you would like us to distribute waste reduction information at your event, please contact [solidwaste@mecknc.gov](mailto:solidwaste@mecknc.gov)



# PLEASE KEEP IN MIND THAT **NOT EVERYTHING** IS RECYCLABLE

**Markets have dramatically changed, and are not tolerant of contamination. So do not bag recyclables, do not place complex items such as child safety seats made of plastic, and other such items in curbside bins.**

**Check out [www.WipeOutWaste.com](http://www.WipeOutWaste.com) if you have questions.**

**WHEN IN DOUBT LEAVE IT OUT.**

