

Continuing along the theme of global warming, the Cathedral Bloggers have been trying to tackle the most wasteful time of the year - Christmas!

Christmas is notorious for everything in EXCESS! Just think about all the decorative cards, Christmas trees, and decorations, not to mention the explosion of string lights that can practically be seen from space!

Now, far be it for us to cast a (toxic-filled) cloud over the happiest season, but do we really know just how much the beloved celebration is damaging our environment? Although it might seem almost impossible to be environmentally friendly at a time where we practically breathe plastic and unrecyclable glitter-strewn paper, you can actually cut down on a lot more on this waste than you might have realised. People often tell you what you should do or should change but never really explain how to. We are here to help.

Here are our top 8 ways that you can help the environment at this time of year:

1. When you are buying Christmas cards for your friends and family think about whether the cards you are getting have any glitter on them. If it is recyclable glitter, then go for it but if the glitter is not recyclable pick a different card. A staggering 1.5 billion Christmas cards are thrown away each year and 300,000 tonnes of card packaging gets used! That is enough to cover Big Ben 260,000 times!

2. So much plastic is used in Christmas crackers. This year buy eco-friendly crackers or you can make your own. Click on this link to see how or visit eco club and Miriam in Chaplaincy because they will be making their own.



<https://www.housebeautiful.com/uk/decorate/a23461893/make-your-own-christmas-crackers/>

3. Have you ever thought about buying recyclable wrapping paper or making your own? If you have then you are really helping our planet because it estimates that UK households will be throwing away 227000 miles of Christmas wrapping paper away this year. That is enough to stretch to the moon!

<https://www.wikihow.com/Make-Your-Own-Wrapping-Paper>

If you do not have time to make your own wrapping paper you can always find out where you can get gorgeous wrapping paper that will not harm our beautiful planet.



4. We all love giving and receiving presents at this time of year but think about the gifts you are giving. Therefore, another way to cut down on the amount of plastic is buying ethical and Fairtrade gifts instead of ones that are not useful or full of unrecyclable plastic.

Check these out! <https://www.fairtrade.org.uk/Media-Centre/Blog/2019/November/20-Ethical-Christmas-Gifts>

5. All your Christmas trees are probably up by now but **are they artificial trees?** These are not necessarily greener - although they last for longer, they are made from plastic, not recyclable or from a renewable source and have probably been shipped great distances. There are also question marks over where they are made and the labour used. Real trees also help to remove carbon from the atmosphere while they are growing.

Do not forget to think about the rest of your decorations and whether they are helping save or destroy our planet. There are so many ways to make your own decorations that can still look as elegant.



6. The lights on our trees are what makes the Christmas spirit come to life but are your lights LED? If they are not, then you are still contributing to global warming. This is because when you have normal lights on your tree and outside your house, they are using more electricity, which is generated by fossil fuels. Fossil fuels release CO₂, which is one of the primary causes of the increase in temperature to our Earth.



7. Everybody loves counting down to this wonderful time of the year and there is no better way to do that than to have an advent calendar. However, the amount of unrecyclable plastic inside of them is shocking. One way to solve this problem is to either get a res-usable calendar that you buy the chocolate for and use it every year or get a calendar that is made of re-usable or recyclable plastic inside! <https://www.countryliving.com/uk/homes-interiors/interiors/g29484279/reusable-advent-calendars/>



8. Our last tip for you is for when you have your Christmas parties. We beg you to say no to the easier but unrecyclable plastic or paper plates and cutlery. You might think – why can't I put them in the recycling bin? They will not be accepted.

This is taken from the official recyclenow website: 'These can be made either from plastic or paper/card. If they are contaminated with food then they should either be wiped clean or not recycled. The best thing to do is avoid using disposable plates and bowls if possible. An EU Plastics

Directive means that disposable plastic plates and bowls will be phased out, including in the UK in due course.'

So please think twice about whether you can manage that washing up! Let's face it – everyone loves a beautiful Christmas table anyway. 😊



Check out these website for more top tips for a 'green' Christmas!

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ethicallivingblog/2007/dec/12/toptipsforagreenchristmas>

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2019/nov/22/five-eco-friendly-christmas-craft-activities-to-try-around-the-uk>

<https://www.gov.uk/recycling-collections>

A special mention and thanks to our Chaplain, Miriam, for all her extra tips!