

25 Ideas for a Greener Holiday

from the ABQ BioPark's Green Team



1. **Buy less plastic.** Avoid excess plastic packaging and look for renewable materials in your gift choices. By using less plastic, we use less petroleum, reduce greenhouse emissions, and have less plastic trash in our landfills, rivers and oceans.

2. **Recycle old batteries and cell phones.** When you get new gadgets, be sure to recycle your old electronics. You can [help protect gorillas and other animals](#) by recycling old cell phones at the Zoo's Administration Office.

3. **Decorate an outside tree for wildlife.** Local birds can feast on popcorn wreaths, pinecone birdfeeders and carrot medallion garlands.

[See sample Backyard Holiday Habitat Trees at the Zoo.](#)



4. **Reuse wrapping paper and ribbons.** Instead of throwing them away, fold paper and wind up ribbons to save for wrapping next year.

5. **Use LED lights.** Not only do LED lights last longer, they use less electricity and save you money.

6. **Put a timer on your decorations.** Instead of leaving them on all night, put lights and other decorations on an automatic timer to reduce energy use.

7. **Purchase trees that can be planted.** Instead of throwing out your tree, purchase trees with root balls so you can plant them later.

8. **Recycle your Christmas tree.** After the holidays, the [City offers free tree recycling](#).

9. **Reuse and recycle corks.** Drop off corks for recycling at the Zoo Administration Office, or make crafts with the corks leftover from all the holiday cheer.

10. **Buy secondhand decorations.** Give a second life to thrift store and yard sale finds and save the resources it would take to manufacture new decorations.

11. **Turn down the heat.** By turning down the thermostat even one degree, you use less energy and reduce greenhouse gas production. Plus you can wear your festive Christmas sweaters!

12. **Use reusable packaging.** Pack items in jars or tins instead of disposable packaging.

13. **Make decorations with natural materials.** Find twigs, decorative leaves, berries, herbs, and other outdoor items to make creative holiday decorations. For inspiration, visit the [Holiday Nature Crafts Station](#) for free on Dec. 12 during River of Lights.

14. **Give experiences.** Fun outdoor and community activities waste no packaging and don't end up broken and discarded. The whole family can enjoy experiences like [BioPark Backstage Tours](#), [Aquarium Overnights](#), or a visit to [River of Lights](#).



15. **Go live or keep your reusable tree for years.** Studies have shown that live

Christmas trees have a smaller carbon footprint than plastic trees, which are thrown away after 6 years on average. If you do have a reusable tree, take good care of it and beat the average.

16. **Donate to charity.** Giving clothes, shoes, toys and food helps provides winter necessities for others. Cash donations can be given in honor of a loved one.
17. **Shop small.** Visit small businesses in your own neighborhood to find unique gifts, support local artisans, and strengthen the community.
18. **Ship with biodegradable packing.** First, ship your items in the smallest box possible. Then, ask the shipping store for biodegradable packing peanuts or crumple old newspaper for packing.

19. **Bake your own holiday treats.** Store-bought treats can come with lots of packaging and unsustainable ingredients, like [palm oil that can be harmful to orangutans](#) depending on production methods. Baking at home reduces waste and allows you to select the best ingredients.



20. **Look for stockings made from sustainable fibers.** Sustainable fibers include organic cotton, tencel, burlap, jute, wool and other textiles from renewable sources.

21. **Make your holiday dinners local and seasonal.**



Look for and buy food from local farmers and enjoy fresh, seasonal food that hasn't traveled hundreds of miles. Your dollars stay in the community and support more sustainable agriculture.

22. **Decorate potted houseplants or outdoor trees.** Potted plants and outdoor trees keep growing and cleaning the air for years.
23. **Light sustainable candles.** Look for candles made of soy or beeswax and avoid petroleum-based paraffin wax.
24. **Carpool.** When you carpool with families and friends during the holidays, you reduce petroleum use, emit fewer greenhouse gases and save money.
25. **Start a family tradition.** Share an annual outing and create memories for a lifetime. Enjoy the warmth and colors of a [visit and lunch at the Aquarium](#), take in [beautiful holiday decorations at the Botanic Garden](#), watch [animals open gifts at the Zoo](#) or bundle up for [hiking near Tingley Beach](#).



The ABQ BioPark is an accessible facility and a division of the Cultural Services Department, City of Albuquerque, Richard J. Berry, Mayor. For more information, visit www.abqbiopark.com or call 311 locally or (505) 768-2000 (Relay NM or 711)