



DeKalb County's GREEN FOCUS An Environmental Newsletter

November 2013

Lee May, Interim CEO

How to Have a Sustainable Holiday Season



Get inspired with great gift ideas that are sure to please, will save you money and are more sustainable.

DeKalb County Government
2009 Bronze Certification

Make Your Own Gifts

Homemade gifts are more personal, can be less expensive and don't have wasteful packaging. Give a gift basket of homemade goodies, offer a wreath made from limb trimmings from your Christmas tree or build a birdhouse.

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Not the crafty type? Handmade items from specialty stores or craft fairs often are wrapped in recyclable packaging. Plus, buying locally contributes to the region's economy and supports local artists.

Give an Experience

Take someone to a play or concert, or give a membership to Zoo Atlanta. Make gift certificates for a special dinner, pet sitting or house cleaning. Offer your skills at gardening, photography or financial planning. Sign someone up for lessons in music, a foreign language or a sport. Better yet, teach someone one of your hobbies – knitting, soap making or playing the piano, for example. Both the recipient and the landfill will thank you.

Learn how you can reduce waste and help the planet by making more sustainable choices about gift giving and entertaining this holiday season.

Go Green with Packaging and Wrapping

Buying and tossing disposable wrapping paper and packaging can contribute to holiday waste. Decrease your impact with these simple steps. Think about packaging before you buy. Purchase gifts with little to no packaging or packaging that's recyclable.

- Put gifts in reusable containers, wrap them in fabric or use boxes, paper and bows saved from last season.
- Buy recycled-content gift wrap or make your own from paper bags, newsprint, old maps or other paper you have on hand. You can paint, draw, stamp or print designs on the paper.
- Also consider using greeting cards made from recycled paper or make

Reuse or Recycle the Rest

When the holidays are over, reuse or recycle what's left. Save bows, containers, packing peanuts and wrapping paper for reuse next year. Make this year's holiday cards into gift tags for next year. Recycle paper, boxes, cards and peanuts that you can't reuse, as well as holiday catalogs and magazines.



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U.S. Department of Energy Clean Cities—Georgia



The U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities program advances the nation's economic, environmental, and energy security by supporting local actions to reduce petroleum use in transportation.





The Clean Cities-Georgia coalition works with vehicle fleets, fuel providers, community leaders, and other stakeholders to encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles.

Idle reduction describes technologies and practices that reduce the amount of time drivers idle their engines unnecessarily. Reducing idling time has many benefits, including reductions in fuel costs, engine wear, emissions, and noise.

Drivers idle for a variety of reasons, such as to keep vehicles warm, operate radios, or power equipment. Each year, U.S. passenger cars, light trucks, medium-duty trucks, and heavy-duty vehicles consume more than 6 billion gallons of diesel fuel and gasoline—without even moving. Roughly half of that fuel is wasted by passenger vehicles.

Idle-Reduction Savings Worksheets

Use these worksheets to help fleet managers and vehicle operators calculate potential savings.

- Medium- and Heavy-Duty Vehicles: [PDF worksheet](#)  and [Excel worksheet](#) 
- Light-Duty Vehicles: [PDF worksheet](#)  and [Excel worksheet](#) 

For more information on reducing idling within your county department, visit U.S. Department of Energy's Clean Cities website: <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/cleancities/toolbox/idlebox.html#presentations>



Think Green. Live Green. Be Green.



Birds of Arabia
Saturday, November 23rd
9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

Learn more about birds and their habitats with Atlanta Audubon Society and Ranger Robby. A hike will venture through outcrops, forests, and wetlands as guides note what is heard and seen. Bring your binoculars!

For more information, call the Nature Center at 770-492-5220 or rlastrove@dekalbcountyga.gov

Winter Wellness and a Natural New Year
Sunday, December 1st
8:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

Join Protea Wild Crafts herbalist Cara-Lee Scheinfeld for a winter wellness workshop. Participants will learn about the health benefits of nature, the healing power of plants that grow in the area, and how to prepare simple restorative teas and tonics.

For more information, call the Nature Center at 770-492-5220 or rlastrove@dekalbcountyga.gov

For more information on environmental happenings, visit DeKalb County's Green Focus website, and click on Upcoming Events.