

12 DAYS OF XMAS

ISSUE No. 3 – YOUR GUIDE TO A PLASTIC FREE YULE!

Christmas is traditionally a time of excess, so how can one try and minimise the most damaging aspects of excess whilst still having a good time? A lot of it means simply going back to an earlier time before we were all so dependent on plastic.

TREES

Real Christmas Trees:

Real sustainable Christmas trees are 100% recyclable – after Christmas they can be mulched for gardening or turned into woodchip. Purchasing a real Christmas tree from a local farmer helps to support the rural economy, and once trees are harvested more are planted.

Rent a living Christmas Tree:

Environmentally-friendly rented Christmas trees are living trees, absorbing carbon dioxide and emitting oxygen. Grown locally throughout the year, they are potted with a root-ball just for Christmas which enables them to be returned and replanted for next year.



Artificial Christmas Trees:

Traditional artificial Christmas trees are made from a combination of (usually plastic-based) materials and cannot be recycled. Despite often being sold as the greener option, according to the Carbon Trust, you would need to reuse your artificial Christmas tree for at least 10 Christmases to keep its environmental impact lower than that of a real tree. But if you already have one, keep using it. If you do prefer an artificial tree but don't want to contribute to landfill and ocean waste, look on second-hand sites such as Freecycle and charity shops to find pre-loved trees that you can give new life to.

<https://eco-age.com/news/eco-friendly-christmas-tree-buying-guide>

DECORATIONS

Remember when all baubles were made of glass, not glitter-covered plastic, and were lovingly saved for use year after year? They are more expensive but one or two new ones added each year become part of treasured family traditions. And there are plenty of non-plastic alternatives for Christmas decorations. Take a walk in the country and pick greenery – holly with berries, ivy, fir, yew, twigs to spray white or silver, pine cones.

Or use star anise and cinnamon sticks tied with ribbon, and dried orange slices. Make your own pom poms with old wool, and paper chains. Get the kids involved. There are lots of great ideas online.



Search plastic-free xmas decorations online. Get some ideas then unleash your own creativity.

WRAPPING

Avoid paper with glitter and metallic papers which cannot be recycled. Try the scrunch test – if it can't be scrunched it can't go in recycling.

Get creative again – use brown paper, newspaper, magazine pages, old maps for your wrapping. Give the sticky tape a holiday, tie up your parcels with string, raffia, wool or non plastic ribbon, and save pretty ribbons for next year, iron out creases, roll up and store. Wrap in pretty pieces of cloth – Search 'Furoshiki', Japanese cloth wrappings. Faversham market has xmas fabric.

Afterwards give your old bubblewrap and any plastic bags to your local antique dealer or charity shops.

<http://trashisfortossers.com/a-guide-to-zero-waste-gift-wrapping>



CARDS

Try and buy them without cellophane wrapping and without glitter which means they cannot be recycled. Many big stores are selling non glitter cards this year. Reuse old ones from last year – the watch word is: NOT MEAN BUT GREEN! No old ones? Keep this year's to make into next year's cards, gift tags, book marks etc

<https://holidappy.com/holidays/Uses-for-Old-Christmas-Cards>

<https://www.whatsupfagans.com/reusing-and-recycling-christmas-cards-and-wrapping-paper>



FOOD

Buy locally where you can, and loose, to avoid surplus packaging. Take your own containers. Where plastic packaging is unavoidable, wash and recycle. Remember to take plenty of bags when you go shopping. Plan for your left overs to avoid just scrapping them into the bin. Can they be frozen or used for another meal?

Wrap with beeswax wraps or put in your collection of permanent plastic tubs.



This is good time of year to make a donation to the food bank collection at your supermarket.

CRACKERS

There are a lot of plastic free options this year. Search plastic free crackers online. Or you could make your own à la Blue Peter, but if life is too short Dunelm are doing a pack of 12 from £3.50 – or Make Your Own Felt Cracker Kits for £5.



PARTIES

Use real glasses, cutlery and crockery if possible. Some paper plates and cups are coated with a layer of plastic designed to make them waterproof, but that coating will also prevent or slow down decomposition. Look for compostable versions or bamboo plates. For a big party hire glasses from people like Tesco, Sainsburys or Morrisons. Buy glasses from a charity shop and later redonate. Paper straws or none at all.

Amazon are selling a Wooden Cutlery Set - 300-Piece Disposable (100 x each of Forks, Spoons, Knives) - Eco Friendly Biodegradable Compostable Bamboo Supplies - £12.97. And recycle all those bottles and cans.



<https://www.nisbets.co.uk/consumables/eco-friendly-disposables/plates>

PRESENTS

Adults: ★ Books on how to give up plastic ★ Packets of seeds, trees and plants ★ Non nylon clothes – vintage, second hand ★ Niche 'green' items such as guppy bags and shampoo bars and similar eco friendly gifts ★ Fairtrade consumables: coffee, chocolate, spices ★ Experiences: theatre, concerts ★ Reusable water bottles and coffee cups ★ Charities – Send a poverty-busting giftcard with a personal message to your loved ones this Christmas and transform lives around the world!

Oxfam Unwrapped: <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/shop/oxfam-unwrapped>

<https://www.worldvision.org.uk/ways-give/buy-gift/>

★ Pledge your time – ironing, childcare, babysitting, car wash, gardening ...

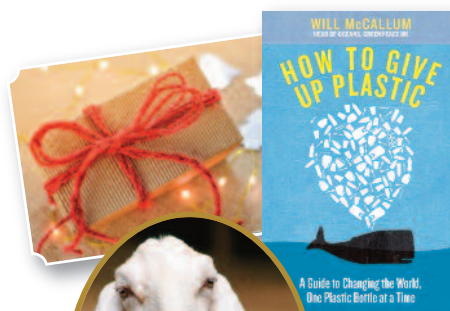
Children: ★ Harder to avoid plastic here. There are toys made from recycled plastic being sold by various people including The National Trust.

<https://bettergiftsguide.com/zero-waste-gifts-kids/>

<https://www.greentoys.co.uk/>

<https://www.bebeco.co.uk/100-recycled-toys-652-c.asp>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/extras/indybest/kids/toys-activities/best-eco-friendly-toys-for-babies-5-year-olds-2-1-3-wooden-sustainable-a8330671>



SHOP LOCAL

Avoid car miles and shop local. In addition to all the great little independent shops in Faversham there are Christmas Markets on 9th & 16th December, a Best of Faversham Market on 21st December and a weekend Christmas Market in the Alexander Centre on 14th & 15th December.

Shop for a wide variety of Christmas fare at:

- ★ Edible Culture – they have a plastic free pop-up Christmas shop
- ★ Barley Mow
- ★ Oxfam
- ★ Macknades
- ★ Mighty Fine Things
- ★ Apotheca
- ★ Top Hat & Tales
- ★ All Stitched Up
- ★ The Yarn Dispensary
- ★ Shepherd Neame Shop
- ★ Creek Creative
- ★ Faversham Society Bookshop & Fleur de Lis
- ★ All our lovely Charity & Antique Shops



And after all that it's time for some

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS!

- ★ Take your own plastic containers to the supermarket – keep a few in the car along with some sturdy bags.
- ★ Plant a tree or a bush to get those leaves soaking up carbon.
- ★ Buy a reusable water bottle and coffee cup.
- ★ If it's a short journey can you walk it?
- ★ Reduce your meat intake.
- ★ Have a Buy Nothing Day.
Think: Do I need to buy this? Can I get it secondhand?
If it's broken, can I fix it or get it fixed?
- ★ Come and join us at Plastic Free Faversham and help to spread the message.

