

# NET ZERO NEWS

## Going green for the holidays

By Marjorie Blackwell

It's that time of the year when holiday shopping, gift giving and home decorating are top of mind. But maybe it's time to take a step back and think about what and how we buy, wrap, give and decorate. Maybe there's a better way that fills our holiday needs and at the same time, offers the biggest gift of all: helping save our climate, our environment, our future! Here are a few ideas:

### "Thrifting"

Instead of ordering another new shirt, sweater, dress, or purse, check out local thrift shops where you can find clothing in excellent shape for bargain prices, as well as unique items that will find new life again and be treasured for years to come. Here's a list of thrift store near us: <https://www.piedmontconnect.org/thrifting>.

### Reusable gift wrap

Republic Services can recycle tissue paper but not coated, glossy or embellished wrapping paper or gift bags, plastic ribbons, bows or cellophane. Instead, save and reuse these items as well as gift boxes, for next year. Wrap presents in reusable gift wrap made of stretchable fabric, Kraft paper, or recycled wrapping paper. Get creative by wrapping presents in old

maps or recruit children to draw magical pictures on recyclable paper bags or newspapers, and tie gifts with reusable fabric ribbons.

### Give experiences

Instead of purchasing gift items, offer family and friends an enjoyable experience. Delight youngsters with a trip to the Oakland Zoo, Chabot Observatory, Academy of Sciences, Exploratorium, a ferry ride on the Bay, or any of dozens of Bay Area activities. Let children choose a non-profit organization to donate to in their name. Give the adults in your life tickets to a theater, concert or ballgame, dinner at a favorite restaurant, a local wine tasting venture, a museum exhibit. There are a plethora of diverse activities to select from in the Bay Area.

### Real vs. artificial trees

Is it better to buy a real live Christmas tree every year or an artificial one that can be reused year after year? Studies have found that a real Christmas tree generates fewer environmental impacts than an artificial tree unless the artificial tree is reused for at least five years, at which point it has a smaller environmental impact than a real tree.

Artificial trees are made from plastic and steel, take more energy to produce, many are shipped

from China, and they cannot be recycled. Christmas tree farmers, on the other hand, replant a new tree for every one they harvest, and Republic Services collects and recycles them. Earth Friendly Tips also suggests a dozen ways to recycle or reuse your tree, yourself, from making coasters out of the wood and air fresheners from the pine needles to creating wildlife habitat from the entire tree. Or what about buying a living tree to plant in your yard? And there's always the choice of creating your own artistic tree. However you decorate, be sure to use LED bulbs or solar powered lights in holiday lighting.

It turns out there's no need to be a Grinch by "going green" for the holidays. From buying second-hand to choosing sustainable products, there are plenty of eco-friendly ways to show your family, friends and the planet, lots of holiday love.

*Marjorie Blackwell is a Board Member of Piedmont Connect, a collaborative community organization supporting resident initiatives and city efforts to build a sustainable future. For more ideas on how to have an eco-friendly holiday, visit Piedmont Connect at <https://www.piedmontconnect.org/eco-friendly-holidays>.*

# CLIMATE CORNER

## How to reduce food waste

By Sophie Roberts

Have you ever had to throw away food that's gone bad, even though you had every intention of eating it?

According to a study published in the American Journal of Agricultural Economics, the average U.S. household wastes 32% of its food. Wasted food is a major contributor to climate change. The production and transportation of food generates carbon emissions and when food is thrown into landfills, it generates methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Luckily, there are simple steps you can take to reduce your food waste at home, and in turn save money and lower your carbon footprint.

The first step in reducing food waste is to buy only what you know you'll eat. Next, choose the freshest produce. This means greens that aren't wilted or yellowing at the edges, apples without brown spots, and potatoes that are firm. The freshest fruit will feel heavy for their size.

If you have lots of produce in the fridge but aren't sure what to make, try using the app Plant Jammer. It takes the ingredients you have and provides recipes that incorporate those ingredients.

Storing food correctly can significantly impact its longevity. Many foods stay fresh for longer when stored outside the fridge. Tomatoes and bananas should be stored on the counter. Potatoes should be stored in a cool, dry, dark place in an open container for airflow.

Onions and garlic don't need

to be kept from the light but should also be stored in a cool dry place with air flow. Other root vegetables, like carrots, parsnips, beets, turnips, and radishes, can last 3 weeks if stored in a crisper drawer on high humidity. Fresh herbs do well in a glass of water and greens are best stored unwashed in a zip-top bag.

Additionally, cut carrots, celery, potatoes, and apples can be kept crisp when stored in cold water in the refrigerator. Even avocado halves can be kept fresh in water! To prolong freshness even more, change the water every few days.

Fruits like apples, pears and bananas give off ethylene gas as they ripen, which in turn causes the produce around them to ripen faster. Lettuce, carrots, and broccoli will deteriorate rapidly if exposed to ethylene and should be stored away from apples.

Lots of commonly disregarded food scraps are edible. Carrot, beet and radish greens are versatile and delicious. If you collect your veggie scraps and peels in the freezer, you can use them to make vegetable stock. Lettuce and green onions are particularly easy to grow from scraps.

Even if you buy food with intention and store your produce perfectly, you'll inevitably have some inedible food scraps. You can reduce your environmental impact by composting. Unlike when food decomposes in the landfill, compost does not produce methane. Putting your food scraps in the green bin is one of the easiest ways to lower your carbon footprint.

## Pickleball Courts Schedule

Effective August 8, 2022

- LINDA BEACH Tennis Courts:** Mon/Tues/Thurs: 10:00am-1:00pm
- HAMPTON Tennis Courts:** Wed/Fri: 12:00-3:00pm
- PMS Sport Courts:** Mon-Fri: 5:00-8:00 pm (or sunset)  
Sat/Sun: 9:00 am-3:00 pm



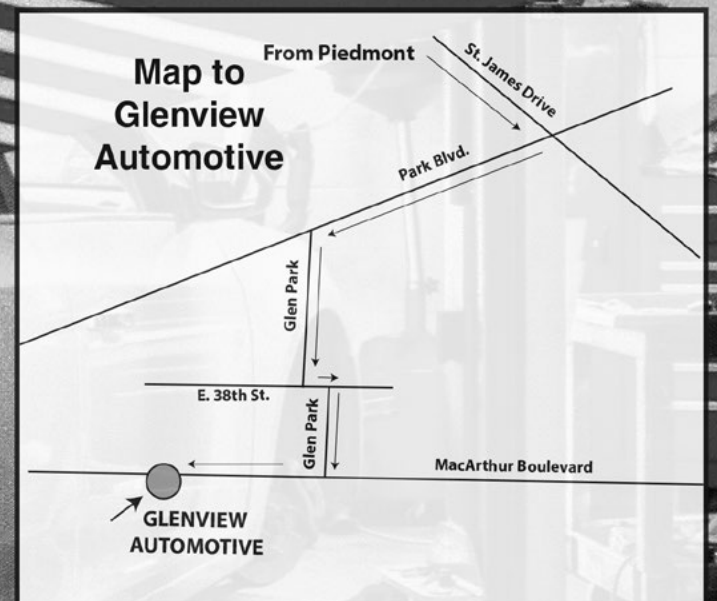
Please make sure to follow basic hygiene, social distancing and face covering requirements while at the courts. Do not play if you have any symptoms of COVID-19 or have been around anyone with symptoms. Check the city website (<https://www.piedmont.ca.gov/cms/one.aspx?portalId=13659823&pageId=15809367>) for the latest information.

## ADVERTISE IN THE POST

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