

# Thoughts on an Eco Christmas

## Discussion 06/12/22

### Christmas Trees

7 million Christmas trees are bought each year, with 1600,00 tonnes of trees dumped each January.

If you're not yet in possession of a Christmas tree, you might want to consider renting one or purchasing one in a pot that you can grow on for next year. This avoids the carbon emissions associated with composting and/or chipping it, reduces waste and could save you money if you use it again next year.

The most local option we've found to rent a tree is the Roots Family Farm Shop near Cheltenham (<https://www.familyfarmshop.net/>), but if you have already bought a tree think about how you are going to dispose of it in the most eco-friendly fashion.

A Christmas tree absorbs about 3.5 Kg of Carbon dioxide(CO<sub>2</sub>) when grown, which is released back into the atmosphere is you burn, chip or commercially compost your tree. The worse method of disposal is land fill as that causes the tree to decompose and produce methane gas, which is 25 times more potent as a greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide and is equivalent to producing 16 kg CO<sub>2</sub>.

Herefordshire County Council compost the trees which are taken to their household recycling centres, but make sure you put it in the garden waste container. Alternatively contact Colwall Orchard Group (<https://colwallorchardgroup.org/>) who make them into wildlife friendly dead hedges.

In comparison artificial trees produce about 40.0Kg of CO<sub>2</sub> in their manufacture and transport. So if you take this route, please keep for at least 10 years or recycle via a charity shop next Christmas. To put this into perspective:

- CO<sub>2</sub> from chipping a tree = driving 12 miles in a petrol car

- Putting a tree in landfill = 54 miles

- Buying an artificial tree = 135 miles

Of course a tree is not essential for Christmas. Locally sourced decorations of branches and foliage can look just as good.

### Decorations

According to various surveys, the average household spends £185 on Christmas decorations. About 12500 tonnes of Christmas decorations are discarded in landfills, with a value of £1.2m. This includes 68,488 miles of Christmas lights. So it goes without saying – reuse, reuse, reuse.

### Wrapping it up

In 2017, the UK used an estimated 108 million rolls of Christmas wrapping paper. That is 227,000 miles of wrapping paper each year – enough to wrap the island of Guernsey. A lot of wrapping paper is not recyclable, especially shiny and glittery paper. Sellotape is also not recyclable. So think brown paper and string.

Or try wrapping your gifts in fabric using the Furoshiki method. The fabric can be old scarves, or something from a charity shop. <https://www.zusetsu.com/furoshiki-tutorials> has a nice video explaining how to tie a neat knot.

**Source of facts and figures:**

<https://www.businesswaste.co.uk/christmas-waste-facts-its-not-very-jolly/>

<https://www.gwp.co.uk/guides/christmas-packaging-facts/>