



GreenTip
How Do You Measure Up?

Green Gifts for the Holidays!

The holiday gift giving season is a perfect opportunity to go **green**! We talked about packaging and wrapping in last week's edition of the [Green Tip of the Week](#). Earth-friendly ideas abound this year, from filling up stockings to decking the halls. Lots of companies have begun to advertise the fact that their products have gone **green**. So, with a little forethought, you can make the holidays **greener** for everyone on your gift list. Check out these suggestions:

Clothing:

Clothing manufacturers are now paying attention to the use of sustainable materials in their garments. A good example is polar fleece -- a popular fabric for winter gear, including blankets, pullovers, jackets, hats, gloves and scarves. Fleece is often made from recycled plastic bottles, so check labels for an indication of recycled content on these items. Fiber fill can also be made from recycled plastics, so choose winter coats and gloves, and even stuffed toys and pillows that use polyester fill made from recycled materials. Natural fibers like cotton and wool are made from renewable resources, and are a great way to green the wardrobes of your friends and family. In addition, many textile manufacturers have begun to conform to organic growing and production specifications, and have converted to the use of natural dyes in their processes. Some producers of jeans and casual wear recycle zippers and buttons for use in their clothing lines, and often include natural and organic content labels on their fashions as well.



Recycled Fleece

E-Gifts and Services:

If you're considering giving subscriptions as gifts this year, think about e-subscriptions instead. Online magazines and newspapers include all of the information and photographs (and advertisements!) that printed subscriptions provide -- **without the paper**! Less paper means less trees being harvested and less energy being used in both the printing and transporting or shipping of these periodicals.

Giving the gift of services is also a **green** idea. Why not purchase a gift certificate for a spa or gym, a bowling alley or batting cage, a favorite restaurant or coffee shop, or tickets to a theater or sporting event? With these gifts, you eliminate the purchase of consumer products that come with a carbon footprint based on their production, sale and afterlife disposal. You can also eliminate a lot of frustrating shopping and the time and fuel you use in the process. Donations are also a wonderful green idea -- give a gift in the name of your friend or family member to one of their favorite charities!

Energy Savers:

When purchasing any type of appliance or electronic equipment, look for the Energy Star ® logo that indicates energy efficiency in the operation of the product. This year, you can find all kinds of household appliances, heating and cooling systems, lighting fixtures and home electronics, such as televisions and computers, that display the Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star ® symbol. If you're considering giving the gift of home improvement this year, check out Energy Star ®'s Home Advisor before finalizing your plans. For more information about rated products and specific brands, visit Energy Star ® online at <http://www.energystar.gov/>.



If your gift list includes products that require internal power, consider options that use solar power or rechargeable batteries that can be charged through solar charging systems. There are solar calculators, solar landscape lighting kits, solar radios, solar flashlights and lots of other self-contained solar powered products on the market. In addition, if you purchase a device that runs on batteries, you can green that device by including rechargeable batteries and a solar charging unit. One of the hottest new gift items for students this season is a backpack that contains a solar charging unit for cell phones and iPods.

A Few Green Shopping Tips:

Whatever the gift you're intending, give some thought to the materials from which it's made. More and more products are being made using sustainable processes and renewable resources. Look for furniture and household items that are constructed from bamboo and recycled content wood alternatives. Check labels to find products made with post-consumer recycled plastics, paper, glass and metals instead of virgin materials. Search out items that are produced or grown locally. Make sure the gift you choose is reusable instead of disposable. Avoid products with excessive and non-recyclable packaging. By following a few of these pointers, you can make the holidays **greener** with the gifts you give.