

“On the first day of Christmas, my true love gave to me...”



... a homemade decoration for my tree

Make your own tree ornaments from things you have around the house. Paper chains can be made from colourful flyers. Twigs, bark, flowers and pine cones can also be transformed as decorations on packages.



... two fabric bags

A collection of handmade fabric gift bags make beautiful, personal and unique gift wraps. Even better, they're re-usable and can be made entirely of recycled materials.

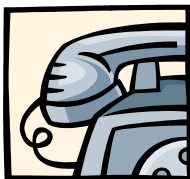
If everyone in Canada wrapped just 3 gifts in reused paper or fabric gift bags, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 hockey rinks.



... three strings of LED lights

LED (Light Emitting Diode) holiday lights have operating lifetimes more than 30 times longer than traditional miniature lights and use about 90 per cent less energy. They also emit less heat than their incandescent counterparts, making them safer to mount on trees, wreaths, and other combustible material in the house.

If every household in Canada changed just one traditional incandescent light bulb to an ENERGY STAR labelled CFL, the country would save over \$73 million in energy costs every year and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 397 000 tonnes of carbon dioxide – which would have the same impact on climate change as taking 66 000 cars off the road for one year.



... four calling cards

Give the gift of conversation. For family and friends far away, give a calling card they can use to connect by phone



...five hours of time

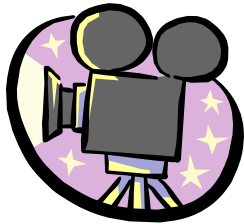
Christmas is a time to be with family and friends, to share the joys of the season, and to reconnect with those we haven't seen for awhile. Your promise of time together – an afternoon helping in the garden, a massage, a trip to the mountains – builds relationships, not more “stuff”.



... six free range turkeys

Shop carefully to buy as much locally produced, healthy food as possible for your Christmas celebrations. By eating locally, you'll decrease your ecological footprint by 75%!

On average, each Canadian wastes over 100 lbs of food every year. Try taking a smaller helping. You can always go back for more!



...seven family passes

Think of gifts that don't have to be wrapped at all: tickets to concerts or sporting events, gift certificates, house plants, or even gifts of your own time.

From 1989 to 1996 inclusive, 11.7 million tonnes of packaging waste were saved from the garbage heap by reducing, reusing and recycling — enough to fill a line of garbage trucks stretching bumper to bumper from Vancouver to Halifax and back to Toronto. **You can be part of the solution!**



...eight potted flowers

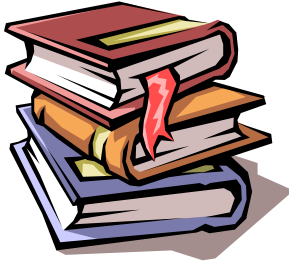
The gift of a potted flower or plant will go on giving all year round! For that matter, if you want a real Christmas tree, why not use a potted one, and then plant it in your yard in the Spring? Or, decorate a tree in your yard or a large house plant. Or, forgo the tree altogether and decorate your house with the ornaments.



... nine fair trade items

While we're always looking for a bargain when we buy clothes, food and electronics, it's often the case that prices are low because the products are made by people in sweat shops on unsustainable wages. Look for stores or web sites that sell fairly traded items, such as Ten Thousand Villages. Your purchases will help people make a fair wage for their labour.

By the age of only six months, each Canadian has consumed as much resources as the average person in the developing world consumes in his or her lifetime.



... ten used novels:

Thrift stores and used book stores are great places to find popular novels and even a rare and special book for the readers on your list. Or, to save space on the bookshelves, give the gift of a library card.



... eleven Santa's reindeer

For your favourite environmentalist, adopt a woodland caribou or a polar bear; or buy an acre of rainforest from the World Wildlife Fund, Adopt-a-Tree from the Western Canada Wilderness Committee, or donate money to an environmental organization.

Climate change is having a major impact on the North Pole. The Arctic's sea ice is home to a wide variety of wildlife, including polar bears, arctic foxes, seals, walruses, and whales, fish species such as Arctic cod and char, and sea birds such as guillemots, auks, and eiders. The sea ice is also used as an important transportation route by caribou and muskox and a traditional hunting ground for the Inuit. As temperatures at the poles rise, the ice is beginning to melt, putting animals and a way of life at risk. All of our green Christmas suggestions will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing consumption of the earth's resources.



... twelve less bags of garbage

Canada produces more than 21 million tonnes of garbage annually. That figure puts Canada in the top five in the world, after the US and ahead of Norway and Mexico (Statistics Canada). In Britain, the average person throws away an extra 40 kg of trash as a result of Christmas (Environment Agency 2004). It's probably more here.

With about 30,000 households in Lethbridge, if every household threw away just 1 less bag of garbage a month, we would reduce the number of bags taken to the landfill by 360,000 a year!