

# Watch your waste for the holidays; here is how to recycle over Christmas

By Desiree Bauer  
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Household waste rises by 25%, on average, across the nation from Thanksgiving to New Year's Day, according to the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Much of that extra holiday waste comes in the form of boxes, food and wrapping paper.

"As a community, we're recycling more than we ever have," said Steve Skoog, the Becker County Environmental Services Administrator.

In order to recycle as many products as possible, Skoog and Sandy Gunderson, the Regional Household Hazardous Waste Coordinator, Recycling Coordinator and Waste Educator, rely on the community to sort their products — and sort them correctly.

"At the holiday season, or anytime, there's always this temptation to keep all your waste together," Skoog said. "But, in reality, it's probably not supposed to be that way."

"They and everyone else at the Becker County Transfer Station can't sort through every blue recycling bin and every garbage bag to make sure something recyclable, or something hazardous, isn't in the wrong place. When something is misplaced, it can create a dangerous situation, such as a fire.

"Lithium batteries have become a real problem," Gunderson said, adding that this includes all rechargeable batteries.

"Those should come out if people are going to throw them away," Skoog said.

Over the holiday season, Christmas lights are one common item at the Transfer Station. But they are recyclable and collected year-round. Gift-wrapping paper, on the other hand, is not recyclable and has a steep increase during the holiday season.

"The challenge with wrapping paper is a lot



A mountain of plastic bottles at the recycling facility.

## HOLIDAY RECYCLING

This holiday season, know what you can recycle — and where — in Becker County.

- Gift-wrapping paper: Most of this paper cannot be recycled, and must go in the regular trash.
  - Other papers (newsletters, office paper, brown paper bags): Can be recycled by county's curbside recycling pickup program.
  - Cardboard (broken down): Can be recycled by county's curbside recycling pickup program.
  - Corrugated cardboard boxes (except pizza boxes or freezer food boxes, which are trash): Take them to one of the county's large blue recycling bins.
  - Rechargeable and lithium batteries: Becker County Transfer Station (no fee)
  - Fluorescent light bulbs: Becker County Transfer Station (\$2.50)
  - Holiday lights: Old or new strands of lights can be recycled at Beug's Ace Hardware, Detroit Lakes Library, Becker County Transfer Station and Becker County Courthouse (third floor, by zoning).
  - Real trees: These are considered yard waste, and can be taken to the Becker County Transfer Station.
  - Artificial trees: Generally are not recyclable. Consider donating that old artificial tree.
- For a full list of recyclables and recycling locations, visit [www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/environmental\\_services/recycling.aspx](http://www.co.becker.mn.us/dept/environmental_services/recycling.aspx).

of times there'll be a cellulose ingredient on it or glitter and that's a contaminant," Gunderson explained.

Instead of buying the traditional wrapping paper, Skoog and Gunderson recommended purchasing paper-bag wrapping paper. Options are available at Target, Walmart, and many online stores like Amazon.

"One of my favorite things is to go to the

(Tribune) newspaper office and get the end rolls," Gunderson said. End rolls are what's left of the white paper rolls that the Tribune's printing plant uses — the rolls vary in size. "Get the grandkids to decorate on it and that's all recyclable. Plus it's memorable."

Other gift-wrapping products, like cardboard boxes, bags and tissue paper can all be kept and reused, lowering waste.

Or, to lower the use of all wrapping products, give gifts that require little to no wrapping. Gifts of experience or gifts of time aren't thrown away or recycled, unlike other gifts tend to be. And, instead of throwing away gifts when they're no longer used, donate them if they are still usable.

"A lot of stuff can be reused," Skoog said. "That's probably the best thing; if you can reuse it."

Along with wrapping products, residents can cut back on trash by composting their food waste. Compost bins take food waste and turn it into a highly-nutritious soil additive. By composting and recycling the correct items, "there's not much left" for waste, Skoog said.

To make the sorting process easier, Skoog and Gunderson have multiple PDFs and brochures up on their website with the sorting information. They also have the prices listed for applicable items that they take, and locations in each town with recycling bins.

"We're trying to make it easy for people to do," Skoog said.



Photos by Desiree Bauer / Tribune  
Toys, like the tractor on the right of this picture, can oftentimes be cleaned and donated instead of tossed in a recycling bin.

## ANSWERS FROM THE BIBLE

BY: PASTOR OLSON

Q: Is the doctrine that Jesus was born of a virgin an important and vital part for the Christian faith?

A: Yes! The Lord's virgin birth is demanded in the Old Testament Scriptures and declared by the New Testament (Is. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25). This is a marvelous truth, a pregnant virgin. But what is also marvelous is that He shall be "God with us" (Matt. 1:23). If the Lord's birth was not a virgin birth, His birth would be no different than any other baby boy born at that time.

Yet, the truth of it is that it was prophesied to happen centuries before by the prophet. In fact, the prophet Micah gave the exact place of His birth in Bethlehem 700 years before and stated this One who was to be born was eternal. He was "from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Therefore, to deny the virgin birth is to deny who Jesus is and places one's eternal soul at risk!

If you have any questions, write Pastor Olson at First Baptist Church  
300 Central Street East, Detroit Lakes, MN 56501  
or email: [olson7@gmail.com](mailto:olson7@gmail.com)

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JD 4640		\$12,500.00
JD 2600 w/18 Plow		\$1,750.00
JD 4910, Gas		\$3,950.00
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## 'Why the Porcupine Has Quills'

*Editor's note: This is the third of several Ojibwe winter stories that can be told only when there's snow on the ground. They have been shared with us by readers, and will be published over the next few weeks. To learn more, read our previous story on dl-online.com.*



Adobe Stock photo

Long, long ago, the porcupines had no quills. One day, a porcupine was out in the woods. A bear came along and would have eaten Porcupine, but he managed to get up a tree, where the bear couldn't get him.

The next day, Porcupine was out again and he went underneath a hawthorn tree, and he noticed how the thorns pricked him. He broke some branches off and put them on his back, then he went into the woods.

Along came Bear, and he jumped on Porcupine, who just curled himself up. The bear just left him alone because the thorns pricked him so much.

Wenebojo was watching them. He called to Porcupine and asked, "How did you think of that trick?"

Porcupine told him that he was in danger when Bear was around.

Then Wenebojo took some thorns and peeled the bark off of them until they were all white. Then he got some clay and put it all over Porcupine's back and stuck the thorns in it. Wenebojo used his magic to make it into a proper skin, and told Porcupine to come with him into the woods.

When they got there, Wenebojo hid behind a

tree. Wolf came along and saw Porcupine and jumped on him, but the new quills pricked at him and his way away. Bear was also afraid of the quills and Porcupine was safe.

That is why Porcupines have quills.  
— As told by Mike Swan, spiritual leader for the Pine Point community and Native American Cultural Liaison for Detroit Lakes Public Schools

### Read other stories

- "Why The Fawn Has Spots" as told by Carol Annette Kramer
- "Nanaboozhoo and the First Weneboboon Migwewin (Winter Giveaway)" as told by Emily Buermann

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