

I AM DREAMING OF A GREEN CHRISTMAS

Making the dream of a green festive season a reality

BY ERIN SPERLING

Give. Receive. Build. Make. Repair. Reuse. Recycle.

These are some of the words that are making their mark on the festive season this year.

"This is a new trend. A lot of people are still learning about it, teachers and municipal officials are interested. More and more municipalities across Canada do put out information. There is a bit more awareness," said Greg Marquis of Clean Nova Scotia, in reference to the growing concern of the public for an environmentally-friendly Christmas.

Clean Nova Scotia is taking action to promote an environmentally-friendly Christmas and to counteract the consumerism present in the media around this time of year.

"We will be doing radio ads. We have a hotline for waste reduction in general, but we do get more people [calling] around this time of

year. People can come here to get things out of the library and there are things on the Net," said Marquis.

There are many ideas available for an eco-friendly festive season, and they are not as strange as you may think.

"Rather than wrapping gifts, you can use little gift bags which can

be reused later or used to store things during the rest of the year.

"Christmas is another chance to get the waste reduction message out," said Marquis with a smile.

According to Lynn Brooks, Office Manager of the Ecology Action Centre (EAC), there are many environmentally-friendly gifts for this holiday season.

"Anything that doesn't have an expiry date on it [is a good gift]. Make your own wrapping paper with comics from the paper for kids. Have a treasure hunt for the gifts instead of wrapping. Buy local crafts or movie tickets to Wormwood's; something that is pleasant and doesn't end up in the trash," said Brooks.

The EAC has produced a pamphlet full of useful 'green gifts' entitled "Reduce, Reuse, Rejoice!" It is available from their office.

Clean Nova Scotia is located at 1675 Bedford Row. The Ecology Action Centre is located at 1568 Argyle Street.

Make your Christmas tree chemical-free

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

There's nothing like the smell of balsam fir to bring that Christmas-y feeling into a home. But have you ever thought about what else you may be bringing into your home along with your tree?

There are currently over 40 different kinds of pesticides recommended for use in protecting Christmas tree stands. Growers are not regulated in their

use of these pesticides, and can spray right up to adjacent property lines, including areas where there are wells. These pesticides have detrimental effects on the environment.

The pesticide residue on some trees can also affect your health, especially if you are asthmatic or chemically sensitive.

"I've heard of people having to throw their Christmas trees out," said Lance Makmillen, spokesperson for Safe Environmental Christmas Trees, a group dedicated to raising awareness of pesticide use on Christmas tree stands and promoting the use of chemical-free trees.

Makmillen has been fighting against the use of pesticides on Christmas trees since 1988.

"As far as I can see, to date there have been no changes made by the Department of the Environment to protect the people who have been complaining," Makmillen said. "The Department of Environment is just a joke. And the Department of Health, they don't care."

Sheldon Rafuse, owner of Family Trees, has been growing Christmas trees at his farm in New Ross, Nova Scotia for years and uses neither pesticides nor fertilizers.

"I don't see any point in putting

any more chemicals in the earth," Rafuse said. "You don't need them to grow trees."

The only difference Rafuse notices in the trees is that they are of a lighter colour and take slightly longer to grow. Rafuse used to sell his trees in the US, but has found lately that there is no longer a market there.

"They won't take my trees anymore. They want a darker colour."

Rafuse sells most of his trees in Halifax and Dartmouth through the Ecology Action Centre (EAC).

The EAC, located at 1568 Argyle Street, is the only place in Metro where you can purchase chemical-free Christmas trees. They are accepting orders for trees and wreaths until



Photo by Ryan Lush

December 6, and they can be picked up on December 13. Trees can be ordered by calling the EAC at 429-2202.

Think BIG: buy 'em an acre for Christmas

BY NATALIE MACLELLAN

The World Wildlife Fund of Canada has a unique gift idea for eco-minded Canadians this Christmas. For \$25, you can buy your loved one(s) an acre of Canadian Wilderness and help protect 14 of Canada's natural wonders by Canada Day 1998.

The 14 "Hot Spots" as they've been called, range from the Yukon mountains to an underwater canyon off the coast of Nova Scotia.

All 14 spots are on the verge of being protected, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) hopes that this campaign will see them all protected by Canada Day.

"These are not the most important [areas]," admits David Love, Senior Vice President of WWF Canada, "they are the most likely to be decided on year or nay."

Four of the Hot Spots, including the Jim Campbell's Barren in the Cape Breton Highlands, have been protected since the campaign began.

All money raised in the campaign will go toward convincing the government that these Hot Spots are special places that deserve to be protected.

Most of these areas have been on local environmental agendas for some time, but funding is needed to support the scientific research and/or public awareness needed to get the ball rolling toward protection.

Gift Acre packages include a *Guardian of Canadian Wilderness* certificate, a full colour decal, and a full colour poster detailing all the Hot Spots across Canada and what the WWF is doing to protect them. A fact sheet about the wilderness Hot Spot in the purchaser's province or territory is also included.

Hot Spots in the region include Loch Alva in New Brunswick, a candidate protected area encompassing Turtle Mountain and graced by lakes, bogs, marshes, and swamps; Jim Campbell's Barren in the Cape

Breton Highlands, which was protected on October 29th, and The Gully, off the coast of Nova Scotia. The Gully has been described as Canada's underwater Grand Canyon and is one of the most important habitats for marine mammals in the world. The drilling of oil on Sable Island poses a threat to the whale populations in The Gully.

"We're very close to protecting The Gully," Love said. "We finally got it on the map."

Jn recent years, the 'green' in Christmas has referred to the colour of money. But that's changing: Nature's green is making a comeback.

From "The New Green Christmas", published by The Evergreen Alliance, San Francisco, CA

Someone from Nova Scotia can help us with that."

For more information on the Gift Acres plan, or to purchase an acre, call WWF Canada at 1-800-266-PANDA.

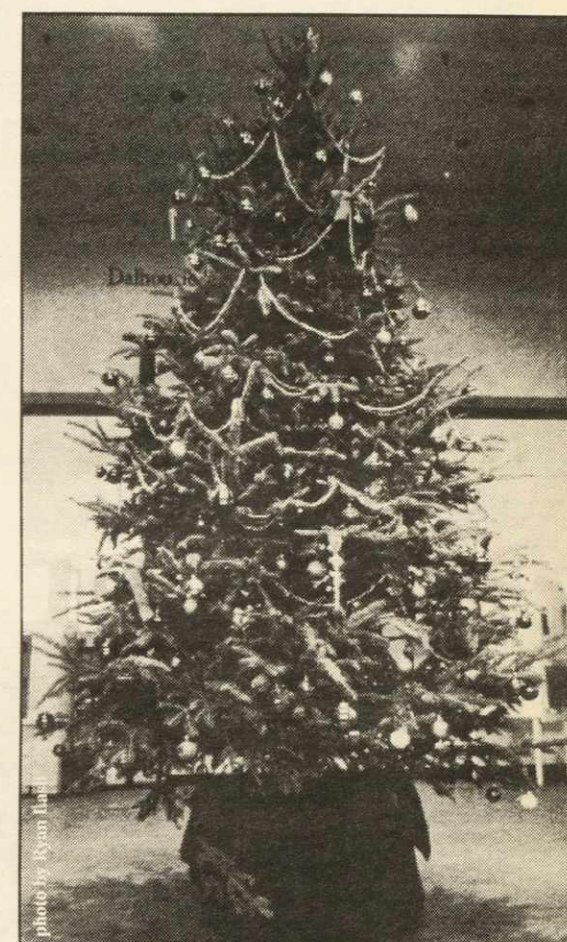
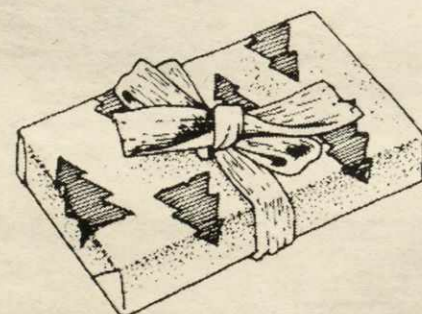


Photo by Ryan Lush

Green Gift Giving

No matter what your festive holiday of choice, this list of gift ideas will be good for the Earth and your wallet:

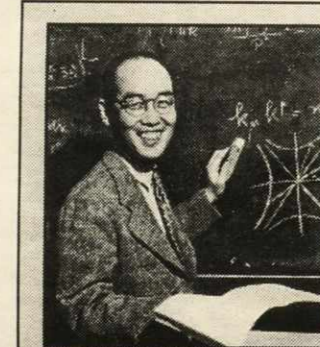
- A living potted tree or plant
- A subscription or membership to an environmental magazine or organization
- A canvas bag (decorate it yourself!)
- Home-made treats and crafts
- Seeds from your garden to be planted next spring
- A reusable lunch container
- A whale watching or another eco-tourism trip
- Second hand store finds
- Energy-saving devices (shower heads, fluorescent bulbs)
- Books, especially nature-oriented
- Do "Secret Santa" with a group of friends
- Make a bird house
- Make a personalized calendar that can be reused by wiping it off
- Time for a friend (babysitting, yard work, transportation, typing an essay)
- Donate to a charity on behalf of a friend



GIFTS TO AVOID, NO MATTER WHICH SEASON

- Furs
- Ivory
- Exotics — plants and animals
- Tropical hardwoods
- Throwaways
- Plastics
- Electronic gizmos

From "Reduce, reuse, rejoice!", Ecology Action Centre, and "T is the Season", New Brunswick Department of the Environment.



DR. ENGLEBERT LIVINGSTONE SAYS,

"PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOUR FESTIVE SHRUBBERY IS CHEMICAL FREE AND LOCALLY GROWN. BE ADVENTUROUS... FIND YOUR OWN! SNOWSHOES ARE THE QUIET AND LEISURELY WAY TO MOVE THROUGH DEEPER SNOW, GIVING US THE CHANCE TO SEE BIRDS, WILDLIFE AND CHRISTMAS TREES UP CLOSE."

What's your holiday wish?

For thousands of people in this city, it's a good dinner...

Help support the Metro Food Bank this season. Drop off non-perishable food items in the SUB lobby. Make someone's holiday.

Barren attracts more controversy

BY CHRIS MILLER

Regal Goldfields Ltd. has announced that it intends to pursue

Regal Goldfields to sue province over the delisting of the Jim Campbell's Barren.

legal action against the province of Nova Scotia over the government's recent decision to reinstate the Jim Campbell's Barren as a protected area.

The barren was initially chosen for protection in 1995, but was delisted by the Savage government last year, without public consultation, to allow Regal Goldfields to explore the site for potential gold deposits. This decision was met with much criticism from a coalition of over 50 environmental, native, and tourism groups.

Following an intense battle between environmentalists and developers, Premier Russell MacLellan agreed that the barren was too precious to be lost to "the temptations of the marketplace", and announced on Oct. 29 of this year that the site would once again be off-limits to development.

This decision did not sit well with Richard Brissenden, president of Regal Goldfields, who had anticipated spending \$1.4-million on the company's Cape Breton exploration program.

Brissenden stated publicly that his company is going to seek compensation for exploration costs already incurred, and will sue for the money that would have been generated by the development of a potential mine at the site.

A Dalhousie report conducted

this summer, however, questions Regal's assumptions of excellent mineral potential, and suggests that the development of a mine near the

barren would not have been economically feasible. The report also points out that three quarters of Regal's targets were actually outside of the protected area, thereby

questioning the integrity of the lawsuit.

Top Five gift ideas from P'lovers: The Environmental Store

5. Recycled-paper journals or picture frames
4. Hemp products: paper, twine, bags, soap, shampoo
3. Recycled glassware products
2. Recycled pop-bottle-fleece clothing
1. Worm composter kit

That's a wrap

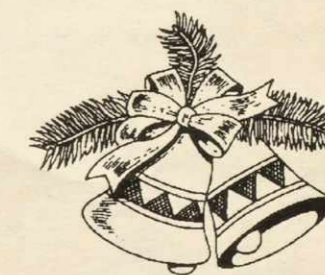


Innovative and Enviro-friendly ideas for gift-wrapping this holiday season

- Inside another useful item — mittens, socks, a t-shirt, a toolbox or lunch-box, a wicker basket, a canvas bag — and tie with a scarf that can be reused throughout the year
- A cloth handkerchief and some ribbon
- Have a treasure hunt for gifts instead of wrapping
- Use organic decorations instead of bows and decorative paper
- Use newspaper, especially colour comics
- Use crumpled shopping bags or popcorn for packing instead of styrofoam
- Hand-made recycled paper giftwrap from P'lovers
- Reuse brown paper bags and stamp them with gold stamps
- Use bright magazine pages for children's gifts
- Last year's Christmas cards make good gift tags

And remember this holiday season, less is more!

Decorating your home the "Green" way



- Use strings of popcorn or berries which can be composted or fed to birds after use
- Use candles instead of excessive lights and cut down on energy bills — but be careful
- Use recycled or reused paper to create chains, ornaments and pictures
- Make wreaths from corn husks and fallen greenery
- Follow this simple recipe to create home-made ornaments:

Mix together: 1 1/2 cups flour
1/2 cups corn starch

Combine: 1/4 cup salt
3/4 cup hot water

Stir salt water into dry mixture. Knead (5-10 min) until smooth. When covered, clay will keep for several days in refrigerator. Form shapes and place on ungreased pan. Don't forget to poke a hole in shapes before they are dry for hanging with ribbon. Dry in 200°F oven for 2-4 hours. Remove before surface starts to brown. When dry and cool, paint decorations with safe, water-based products.