



# The Daily Gleaner

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## **Remember to Recycle at Christmas**

The holiday season is in full swing and Christmas is only a few short days away. I am sure today is a relief for some and a panic for others. Either way, I hope you can find a few extra minutes in your day to read this week's Green Matters column.

One thing I love to do during the holidays is eat! Christmas is a wonderful time of get-togethers and entertaining, but this often means we are busier and have less time to prepare home-cooked foods. As a result more packaged items find their way into our grocery carts.

Even though I do make a few less healthy food choices during the holidays, I still try to take the time to make healthy choices for the environment. So if I'm buying packaged foods, I choose to buy items packaged in recyclable boxes, plastics or containers. When entertaining in my home I let guests know that we recycle in our home and where they can place their empty containers. I am also in the habit of continually re-checking packaging for the recycle symbol before throwing it in the garbage. I have noticed that many companies have been 'getting green' and are responding to the ever-growing environmental demands of the consumer by making packaging recyclable.

On another packaging note, if you are still wrapping gifts with traditional wrapping paper, please remember that you cannot throw it in your gray bin. The Fredericton Regional Solid Waste Commission says that traditional wrapping paper is the lowest quality paper and does not produce a good final recycled product. The good news is that there is still time to change your habits this year (3 days, in fact)! So this year consider using reusable gift bags, brown paper, or newspaper wrapping instead!

Of course, we can only control the gifts we wrap. Parcels coming in the mail may be bundled in bubble wrap, packed in Styrofoam, and presented in pretty shiny wrapping paper. As you unwrap these packages remember the following: brown paper, cardboard and boxes are recyclable; while Styrofoam, bubble wrap and wrapping paper is not. I would encourage you, however, to save things like Styrofoam chips and bubble wrap and reuse them the next time you have a package to send in the mail.

The best thing we can do this season is, *remember to recycle*. Even though the big black garbage bag is out during the unwrapping frenzy and it is easier to throw it all in there with the wrapping paper – this year I challenge you to change your habits. Stop, take a breath, and sort through the paper and packaging. Check the plastics on packaging before throwing them away – plastics numbered 1 through 7 are accepted in the Fredericton area for recycling. And even if the plastic is not recyclable, be sure to remove the cardboard backing – it is recyclable.

Merry Christmas, may you enjoy a safe and green holiday!

*Valerie Hillier is a Frederictonian who looks for ways to conserve energy, waste less and challenge herself to do more for the health of our planet. Check for more winter and Christmas green tips at [www.greenmattersfredericton.com](http://www.greenmattersfredericton.com).*