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thursday



eco chic

today : Trees

THE GIVING TREE

Rent A Tree, Recycle A Tree or Cut A Tree: Tips On Making the Most of Your Holiday Pine

You're not alone. You like Christmas. Maybe you even love Christmas. The music, the food, the gay festivities and, of course, the tree. A beautiful beacon of yuletide joy, a shining pillar of evergreen hope, a sparkling reminder of what once was and what could soon be. If only the environmental impact of these holiday lovelies wasn't such a Grinchy bummer...

Fear not, eco-minded Christmas geek. There is hope. Turns out Santa has been listening to you, too. Here are some practical choices so you can have your tree and love it, too.

RENT A TREE. What? Is that possible? Yes. The *Living Christmas Company* is a Redondo Beach, California business that allows you to rent a live tree! Founded by landscape architect, Scott Martin, these trees are fresh, potted (not cut) and delivered directly to your home or office via a bio-diesel truck for your decorating and viewing pleasure. After X-Mas Day, they pick up your holiday buddy, foster him throughout the year and deliver him to someone else (or maybe you again) next season. \$50-\$185, www.livingchristmas.com

Friends of The Urban Forest (San Francisco). Sell tax- deductible potted trees. Plant it yourself or pay a little extra for them to pick up and plant your tree in the city after the holiday. www.fuf.net

Adopt A Christmas Tree (San Diego). The company replants your rented tree in local parks and burn areas wiped out by recent wildfires. www.adoptachristmastree.com

Original Living Christmas Tree Company (Portland, Oregon). Established in 1992, the Original team picks up your tree after New Year's and replants it in one of the watersheds in the Pacific Northwest. They also have detailed instructions for those who don't live in California or Oregon on how to buy and care for a potted tree, and how to plant or donate it to someone who will afterwards. www.livingchristmastrees.org

PLYWOOD TREE. If you're against the chop, check out the über eco-savvy Plywood X-Mas Tree from Australian design firm, Buro North. For the modernist who forms their own traditions, the plywood tree is 80-percent more environmentally friendly than a traditional fir or spruce, and made with environmentally aware ingredients, a low-energy technique and minimal waste materials. Small, \$60; Medium, \$200; Large \$1,619; www.besportier.com



CUT TREES. With more than 32 million Christmas trees sold in America each year, there is some concern that dying trees release greenhouse gases when they decompose. Nonetheless, most cut trees come from farms that grow them specifically for the holiday season, much like flowers or food. Because they are some guy (or gal's) business, each tree that gets cut down for Christmas gets another one planted in its stead and the cycle of oxygen production continues. Some very important things to keep in mind if you go the cut tree route:

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Buy local. The closer the tree lot is to the actual farm, the less miles it traveled to get there. Most lots have literature on where their trees came from.

Organic is best. Many tree farms use a ton of pesticides on their trees, so do some research to find an organic grower or distributor in your area.

Have a recycling action plan. Figure out our recycling plan before you buy. Don't let holiday fatigue get in the way of composting or chopping your tree up for mulch. Whatever you do, *don't leave it on the curb for the trash truck!*

FAKE TREES. While they sound eco-friendly, they're actually pretty terrible. Made from petroleum products, they emit gas chemical fumes and when you do finally get tired of your fake fir, it will end up in the eternal landfill of death (where it will never decompose). Ever. Is that clear? Next!

Whatever rocks your world, *Happy Tree Hunting!* Shel Silverstein would be so proud.

- Julie H.