



December, the Doorway to Winter: Sustainable DIY - Gift Wrapping for Any Occasion

An action as simple as wrapping a gift can create an enormous amount of waste. It is estimated that in the U.S. alone, we produce 4.6 million pounds of wrapping paper each year. That is about as much as a fully-loaded space shuttle weighs! In addition to the sheer amount being produced, many recycling facilities cannot recycle wrapping paper depending on the material(s) from which it is made. Be sure to check with your local recycling facility to see what items you can and cannot recycle curbside. Greeting cards are another common item purchased and given when gift-giving. Within the United States, we purchase 7 billion greeting cards each year. How can we change our gift-wrapping habits to benefit ourselves and the environment?



NASA - Fully loaded space shuttle weighs approximately 4.5 million pounds.

Making sustainable choices can be done in so many ways. Some options are easier and more inexpensive to make than others. In this case, gift wrapping with eco-friendly and reused products can be a fun, creative challenge that will save you money and help the environment.

#1 Rule: Save materials throughout the year that can be used later for gift wrapping.

Before you throw something in the trash or recycling, ask yourself if it can be used again. Think about common items needed when wrapping gifts like shipping boxes, glass jars, paper bags, twine, string, bows, newspaper, fabric, greeting cards, and other materials. This can sound like a storage disaster, but try to group materials together, break down cardboard boxes, and have a space dedicated to storing these materials. You want to be sure that you are gathering materials throughout the year, so you have items available with which to wrap when a celebration or holiday pops up. The more materials you save and reuse the less money you will spend, and the less waste you will create.

Materials to save and focus on using when wrapping:

PAPER WRAPPING PAPER

NATURAL TWINE



PAPER BAGS



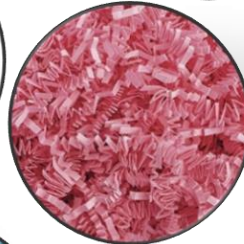
DRIED FLOWERS



NEWSPAPER



BURLAP



CRINKLE PAPER



CLOTH



NATURAL



NATURAL YARN

Below are some lovely ideas and the materials used to make them for inspiration.



Materials used: Brown paper bag, rubber stamps and ink, twine, conifer needles, cinnamon sticks, dried flowers and greenery, paper tag.

Materials used: Toilet paper roll, construction paper, twine.



Materials used: Repurposed glass jars, paper tags, twine/string, fabric.

Materials used: Newspaper, cloth bows, doilies, fabric strips, twine.



Materials used: Cloth squares, dried flowers.

Additionally, check out tutorials on these elegant techniques:

- No tape needed [tutorial](#), square box
- No tape needed [tutorial](#), cylinder container
- Cloth wrapping [tutorial](#)



Activity: DIY Gift Tag

Materials:

- Old greeting card, or any other paper material you want to reuse
- Tag shape template
- Marker
- Scissors
- Hole punch



Instructions:

1. Create or print a tag template on a sturdy piece of paper and cut it out.
2. Place your template on the section of your greeting card that you want to use.
3. Trace along the edges of your template.
4. Cut out the shape.
5. Punch a hole at the top of the tag so it can be strung.
6. Write out your tag.
7. Attach to your gift.



Instruction #2



Instruction #3



Instruction #4



Instruction #5

Activity: Paper Bag as a Gift Bag

Materials:

- Paper bag (without handles)
- Hole punch
- Twine or string
- Decorations of choice
- Gift tag
- Gift



Instructions:

1. Fold about $\frac{1}{2}$ " - 1" of the top of the bag over to the back side of the bag.
2. Punch two holes through the fold at an equal distance from each side of the bag.
3. Nicely assemble your decorations and tag and tie together with your twine.
4. Fully open the bag and place your gift inside.
5. Making sure the top of the bag is still folded, from the front, insert one end of the twine through one hole punch, and the other end through the second hole punch. Pull each side of the twine all the way through until the decorations are centered.
6. Carefully tie the twine that was pulled through to the back of the bag. Make sure you don't tie it too loose because the decorations will hang too low, or too tight because the bag might rip.
7. Give you gift!

Follow along with the photos below



Duke Farms



Instruction #1 - this is now the back of the bag



Instruction #2



Instruction #3



Instruction #4



Instruction #6



Instruction #5



Final product



Gift-giving celebrations we can celebrate more sustainably:

- Birthdays
- Housewarmings
- Graduations
- Holidays
- Appreciation Days
- Teacher Gifts
- Gifts for Community Service Personnel
- Weddings / Engagements
- Showers
- Just-because

Look for the next DIY Sustainable Wrapping article which will feature seasonal ideas for spring and summer.

A special thanks to Ellen Parker for her contributions.