



# HAVE YOURSELF A SUSTAINABLE CHRISTMAS



November 20th 2018

by phs Wastekit

*Christmas may be the most wonderful time of the year, but it's also one of the most wasteful, creating a rise in the volume of waste materials being produced and disposed of during this busy season. Much of this, unfortunately, is sent to landfill where it damages the environment.*

## PART 1

The average UK adult is said to spend around £330 buying Christmas presents, and the average child receives 16 gifts in total. With Christmas being celebrated in many countries around the world, and the world's population standing at 7.6 billion people (as of May 2018), that's a lot of bubble wrap, wrapping paper, ribbons, bows, and name tags that need to be disposed of after these gifts have been excitedly ripped open! Add to this the one billion Christmas cards being sold in the UK alone each year, and the 17.2 million Brussels sprouts that go uneaten, and that's even more waste that needs to be disposed of correctly, and as environmentally-friendly as possible.

As the statistics show, in the UK alone we create 30% more waste than usual during the festive period, and this includes two million turkeys and six million Christmas trees. These are shocking amounts and they show that something has to be done by both businesses and consumers to reduce our impact on the planet.

**EXERCISE 1** In small groups discuss the potential reasons for higher waste production over Christmas time. Read the text and find the answers.

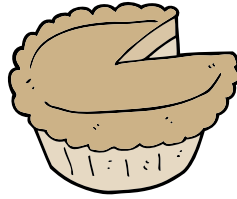
**EXERCISE 2** Read the statements and decide if they are true (T), false (F) or if the information is not given in the text (NG).

1. On average, UK adults spend about £330 on gifts for their children.
2. All the people in the world celebrate Christmas.
3. About 17.2 million kg of brussels sprouts is wasted each year.
4. During the holiday season in the UK, waste production increases by 30%.
5. Christmas tree disposal generates the highest waste production.

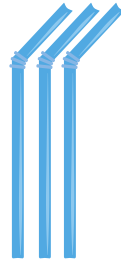
**EXERCISE 3** Read the text below and find the words to match the pictures.



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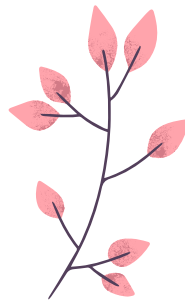
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**EXERCISE 4** Read the second part of the text and think of possible ways of reducing holiday waste.

**PART 2**

*Christmas trees and decorations*

A total of 6 million Christmas trees are said to be discarded every year. According to a survey from 2017, 14% of people said that they would be binning their artificial Christmas tree, rather than reusing it the following year. Many Christmas decorations, such as plastic and glass baubles and tinsel can't be recycled, so you should reuse them or donate them to charity shops when you no longer want them. Wreaths can also be recycled as long as they're made from natural materials (like ivy, holly or fir tree clippings) and they're not covered in excessive amounts of glitter!

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### *Food and beverages*

According to Unilever, 4.2 million Christmas dinners were wasted in the UK in 2014. This figure equates to approximately 263,000 turkeys, 7.5 million mince pies, 740,000 slices of Christmas pudding, 17.2 million Brussels sprouts, 11.9 million carrots and 11.3 million roast potatoes! If all Christmas food waste was recycled into energy, it could power the average medium-sized home for 57 years. The UK is estimated to use 300 million plastic cups and straws at Christmas parties.

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### *Shopping and gifting*

Each year, the UK spends a combined total of around £700 million on unwanted presents! 227,000 miles of wrapping paper is thrown away each year. Instead of being recycled, 1 billion Christmas cards are also put in the bin. 300,000 tonnes of card packaging is said to be used during the festive season, which is enough to cover London's Big Ben almost 260,000 times. Most wrapping paper is suitable for recycling, unless it is a shiny metallic or glitter variety. In 2017, it was estimated that 114,000 tonnes of plastic packaging would be thrown away and not recycled in the UK at Christmas.

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**EXERCISE 5** Look at any additional ways of dealing with increased waste production over Christmas. Match them with either *Christmas trees and decorations (C)*, *Food and beverages (F)* or *Shopping and gifting (S)*.

- a. Use recycled packaging.
- b. Give away leftover food.
- c. Reuse the artificial Christmas tree.
- d. Send digital wishes.
- e. Compost the food.
- f. If you buy a fresh tree, check if you can recycle it.
- g. Donate any unsold food.
- h. Wrap your gifts in recycled paper.



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## PART 1

The average UK adult is said to spend around £330 buying Christmas presents, and the average child receives 16 gifts in total. With Christmas being celebrated in many countries around the world, and the world's population standing at 7.6 billion people (as of May 2018), that's a lot of bubble wrap, wrapping paper, ribbons, bows, and name tags that need to be disposed of after these gifts have been excitedly ripped open! Add to this the one billion Christmas cards being sold in the UK alone each year, and the 17.2 million Brussels sprouts that go uneaten, and that's even more waste that needs to be disposed of correctly, and as environmentally-friendly as possible.

As the statistics show, in the UK alone we create 30% more waste than usual during the festive period, and this includes two million turkeys and six million Christmas trees. These are shocking amounts and they show that something has to be done by both businesses and consumers to reduce our impact on the planet.

**EXERCISE 1** In small groups discuss the potential reasons for higher waste production over Christmas time. Read the text and find the answers.

**EXERCISE 2** Read the statements and decide if they are true (T), false (F) or if the information is not given in the text (NG).

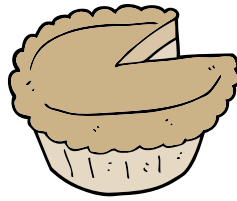
1. On average, UK adults spend about £330 on gifts for their children. (F)
2. All the people in the world celebrate Christmas. (NG)
3. About 17.2 million kg of brussels sprouts are wasted each year. (F)
4. During the holiday season in the UK, waste production increases by 30%. (T)
5. Christmas tree disposal generates the highest waste production. (NG)

ANSWERS

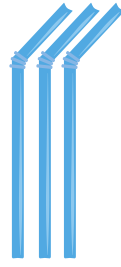
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wreath



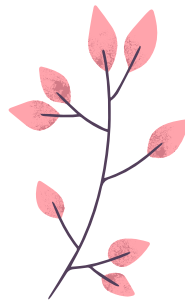
mince pie



straws



to bin



tree clipping



bauble

**EXERCISE 4** Read the second part of the text and think of possible ways of reducing the holiday waste.

**PART 2**

*Christmas trees and decorations*

A total of 6 million Christmas trees are said to be discarded every year. According to a survey from 2017, 14% of people said that they would be binning their artificial Christmas tree, rather than reusing it the following year. Many Christmas decorations, such as plastic and glass baubles and tinsel can't be recycled, so you should reuse them or donate them to charity shops when you no longer want them. Wreaths can also be recycled as long as they're made from natural materials (like ivy, holly or fir tree clippings) and they're not covered in excessive amounts of glitter!

Student's own answers.

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## ANSWERS

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According to Unilever, 4.2 million Christmas dinners were wasted in the UK in 2014. This figure equates to approximately 263,000 turkeys, 7.5 million mince pies, 740,000 slices of Christmas pudding, 17.2 million Brussels sprouts, 11.9 million carrots and 11.3 million roast potatoes! If all Christmas food waste was recycled into energy, it could power the average medium-sized home for 57 years. The UK is estimated to use 300 million plastic cups and straws at Christmas parties.

Student's own answers.

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### *Shopping and gifting*

Each year, the UK spends a combined total of around £700 million on unwanted presents! 227,000 miles of wrapping paper is thrown away each year. Instead of being recycled, 1 billion Christmas cards are also put in the bin. 300,000 tonnes of card packaging is said to be used during the festive season, which is enough to cover London's Big Ben almost 260,000 times. Most wrapping paper is suitable for recycling, unless it is a shiny metallic or glitter variety. In 2017, it was estimated that 114,000 tonnes of plastic packaging would be thrown away and not recycled in the UK at Christmas.

Student's own answers.

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**EXERCISE 5** Look at any additional ways of dealing with increased waste production over Christmas. Match them with either *Christmas trees and decorations (C)*, *Food and beverages (F)* or *Shopping and gifting (S)*.

- Use recycled packaging. (S)
- Give away leftover food. (F)
- Reuse the artificial Christmas tree. (C)
- Send digital wishes. (S)
- Compost the food. (F)
- If you buy a fresh tree, check if you can recycle it. (C)
- Donate any unsold food. (F)
- Wrap your gifts in recycled paper. (S)