

At Gas Networks Ireland we know that there are more ways than one to be sustainable. Christmas is a time of year traditionally known for excesses – but it can also be a chance to slow down and focus on being more sustainable.

Christmas Sustainability Facts

- In Ireland, we produce about 30% more **waste**¹ – at Christmas than other times of the year. Gifting experiences, choosing gifts made from natural or recycled materials, and shopping second hand can all help reduce that!
- Across Europe, around 50 million real Christmas trees are used every year. Christmas tree farms replant every tree they harvest, or they'd have nothing to sell in future years! So real trees are **carbon-neutral**, which means they help prevent **climate change**. And many local councils arrange tree collection points in January and turn the trees into compost or wood chip for parks and gardens.
- **Artificial trees** can be used lots of times, which sounds good - but making them from metal and plastic and transporting them from where they're made (far away) harms our climate. And when we're done with them, they can't be recycled. So the only sustainable artificial tree is one we already have, or one we buy pre-loved.
- After Christmas millions of tonnes of packaging will end up as waste. **Reusable** gift bags, **recyclable** wrapping paper, and putting packaging into the recycling bin reduce this.

How You Can Have a Sustainable Christmas

Ready to make Christmas great while being a superhero for the planet? Let's do this!

Gift Adventures

Instead of more stuff, why not gift someone an adventure? Ask a grown-up to help you get tickets for fun places, or plan a day out that doesn't need a ticket – like a walk in nature or a trip for ice-cream! Or make a voucher for the gift of your time to help someone out, or to teach them something you are good at.

Used is the New Cool (and Repair is Even Cooler!)

Whose gift could you get pre-loved – from a charity shop, a local market, or a jumble sale at your school? Could you get a grown-up's help to borrow something someone loves that's broken, get it fixed, and return it as their gift on Christmas Day? There are lots of ways to give meaningful gifts without buying something brand new.

Foodie Fun

Did you know, reducing food waste is one of the most powerful ways to help our climate? Try freezing leftovers, or having a grown-up help you cook something delicious with them!

¹ Source: [MyWaste.ie](https://www.mywaste.ie)

Wrap it Up, Eco-style

Gift wrapping can be eco-friendly too! Look for wrapping that's paper, not plastic. Tip: if you can tear it, it's paper and can be recycled; if you can't tear it, it's plastic and probably can't be recycled. Look for already-recycled (made from waste!) wrapping paper, or reuse gift bags or use a pretty cloth to wrap things.

Reuse for Games and Crafts

Enjoy quality time together making things from waste! You could turn old Christmas cards into present tags for next year, or make used wrapping paper into paper chains to decorate with.

And think about Christmas crackers – did you know you can get refillable ones? Or make your own! The most fun is deciding what to put inside – photos of happy memories, home-made treats, or jokes you wrote yourself?



Having fun with Christmas crafts (Photo: Jiminy.ie)

So, this Christmas, let's make it awesome, filled with fun, and extra kind to our planet!

Sustainability Activity

1. Print out the below on scrap paper, or copy the words and pictures yourself onto paper or card. Colour and decorate it however you like.
2. Attach the sign to a bag or box and encourage your household, local club, or a group at school to gather the things they no longer need.
3. When the bag or box is full, ask your grown-up to help you bring it to your local charity shop or offer on your local Freecycle group!



IT'S BETTER TO GIVE
THAN TO RECEIVE



AND SANTA WILL BE HERE SOON...

DONATE YOUR UNLOVED
TOYS AND THINGS TO MAKE ROOM!

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