

Plastic free (and environmentally conscious) Christmas

The following ideas are suggestions only – we have not necessarily tried or bought them and we are not endorsing them. There are many ethical suppliers in the market nowadays – this is just a small selection – find your own by simply Googling what you want.

The tree

Buy a real one, or if you already have a plastic one, keep it and use it. If you have a garden, buy one in a pot and plant in your garden afterwards. You can then dig it up next year.

Dispose of a real Christmas tree through your local tree recycling scheme. Do not put in your general waste – trees give off methane if they rot down in landfill.

Alternatively, gather fallen branches from your garden, or local countryside.

Decorations

Use what you already have, particularly if plastic. Your tree might not look “designer”, but old, treasured childhood decorations and handmade baubles makes a tree more personal and charming.

Make your own decorations for the house – foliage from your garden, dried orange slices, tangerines stuffed with cloves, gingerbread men on strings (!), fir cones. Recycled paper can be fashioned into many different sorts of decorations (snowflakes?)



Food

Make your own mince pies and cake. Buy ingredients from a Refill shop using your own containers. Pedrick’s Zero Waste Shop is in Caterham, <https://pedricks.co.uk/> and Alexander Stores is in Beckenham (although sadly closing at end of November, 2022) <https://www.alexanderstores.com/> There are several refill shops in Crystal Palace, La Amazonas, <https://la-amazonas-store.webflow.io/>. The Store Cupboard, <https://campsite.bio/storecupboard> and The Walkthrough, <http://thewalkthrough.co.uk/>

Crackers? Well, they’re just crackers! Plasticised paper, a little bang and a useless plastic toy inside.

Presents

Experiences/charity. Offer your time/experience instead of buying a present. Consider charity donations or one of the many gifts you can buy to help third world countries, such as Water Aid <https://shop.wateraid.org/> There are many others.

Make your own – home-made preserves, bulbs planted in pots, make FairTrade chocolates, etc.

Buy if you must

Buy pre-loved from a charity shop or Freecycle, <https://www.freecycle.org/town/CroydonUK>

Buy local, or online from independent retailers such as Etsy, <https://www.etsy.com/uk/> who feature handmade and vintage goods: avoid Amazon, who have a bad ethical record on many fronts.

Books: You can buy books from World of Books, <https://www.wob.com/en-gb> and the Bookshop Org <https://uk.bookshop.org/> who channel all profits to the actual bookseller. E-books can be acquired from Ebooks.com <https://www.ebooks.com/en-gb/>. Ethicalshop sell cards, calendars and other ethical items <https://ethicalshop.org>

Perfumes: from Dolma, <https://www.dolma-perfumes.co.uk/> Flaya, <https://flaya.co.uk/> Neil's Yard <https://www.nealsyardremedies.com/> and Lush.

Soap: try solid, organic, vegan. Readily available.

Chocolate: Fairtrade, Divine, Pacam, Beyond Good, MIA, Fairafric and Choc Madagascar are all ecologically sound brands.

Wrapping paper: The thinner, cheaper varieties of wrapping paper, laminated papers, and those embellished with gold, silver or glitter are often non-recyclable. Why waste materials and money on something that will be thrown away? It's what's inside that counts.

Use an alternative - anything lying around will do, such as newspaper or old fabric. Thick brown paper is also a good option, as it's often recyclable. If you can tie your gift up with string, that's an added bonus, as sticky tape is another problem area for plastic waste. Re-use old Christmas cards as gift tag labels for your presents

You can find [100% recycled wrapping paper](#) online.

Fabric scarf wrapping is always pretty, and a bonus gift! Get one from a charity shop". Fabric reusable bags also sold by Lush.



Croydon u3a

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