

# MiSustainable Holland

## About this series

The MiSustainable Holland column is a collection of community voices sharing updates about local sustainability initiatives.

## This Week's Sustainability Framework Theme:

**Environmental Awareness/Action:** Environmental education and integrating environmental practices into our planning will change negative outcomes of the past and improve our future.

## Holiday stuff: What to trash, what to recycle

By Marianne Manderfield  
City of Holland

Glittery wrapping paper, shiny boxes tied up with ribbons and bows, gift bags bursting with tissue paper, and the packaging – oh my! The aftermath of the gift-giving season can seem overwhelming at best. We can be left paralyzed as to what is precisely trash and what can be recycled curbside.

To point you in the right direction, we have compiled a list of what to do with some of the more popular items that can be in question. This can also be a great time to assess if you have things that can be reused or donated.

Tissue paper, colored or white, is all recyclable. But almost all wrapping paper goes in the trash, as much is made with plastic. If the label says it's made with paper and can be recycled, then toss it in the recycle bin. Kraft packaging paper can be recycled at the curb.

Ribbons and bows are trash, or perhaps stored and reused for next year. Glossy gift bags go in the trash or saved to use again; brown paper bags can be recycled or saved to use next year.

What about toy packaging? The cardboard part is generally recyclable, as is the plastic "clamshell" portion of the package.

What about those zip ties and pieces of thin wire that bind an item to the cardboard? Those all go into the trash.

Plain cardboard gift boxes can all be recycled, as can cardboard shipping boxes.

However, packing peanuts and plastic bubble wrap go in the trash, and please be sure to bag any packing peanuts. All Styrofoam is trash. But brown packaging paper can go into the recycling bin.

The time to take down the Christmas tree can also be an excellent time to make decisions about broken or no longer wanted holiday ornaments or lights that don't work properly.

String lights of any kind cannot go in the recycle bin, but you may bring them to Black River Recycling Center located at 11531 Chicago Drive in Holland. Broken ornaments of any kind are trash. And those ornament hooks are trash if they cannot be reused.

City residents may put their real Christmas tree out to curbside from Dec. 27 through Jan. 7 or drop it off at Bouws Pool until Jan. 19. All discarded artificial trees go in the trash.

The holidays can be a bevy of boxes and bags, shiny paper and tissue, ribbons, bows, and lots and lots of packaging. We all have four options with the remnants of gift-giving: trash, recycle, reuse, or donate. A good rule of thumb is, "When in doubt, throw it out."

Finally, excess trash pick-up is available for City of Holland residents from Dec. 26 and through Jan. 5.

■ *Marianne Manderfield is public information coordinator for the City of Holland.*