

MAKE YOUR HOLIDAY GREEN

According to the Department of Energy, in one month in the US, holiday lighting consumes the equivalent electricity of 500,000 homes. And from Thanksgiving to New Years, we will throw away 25% more trash than we do the rest of the year.

Don't get us wrong. We love this season as much as anyone. But as we celebrate this year, there are a few easy things we can do to make the holidays just a little greener. It's a gift that we all can give—and it's good for the wallet too.

Here are 5 ways to make your holiday a little greener:

ENERGY-EFFICIENT APPLIANCES

If you're going to give the gift of a new appliance this holiday, make sure it's energy efficient. Energy efficient appliances use between 10 and 50 percent less energy than their conventional counterparts. That makes it a gift that keeps on giving.



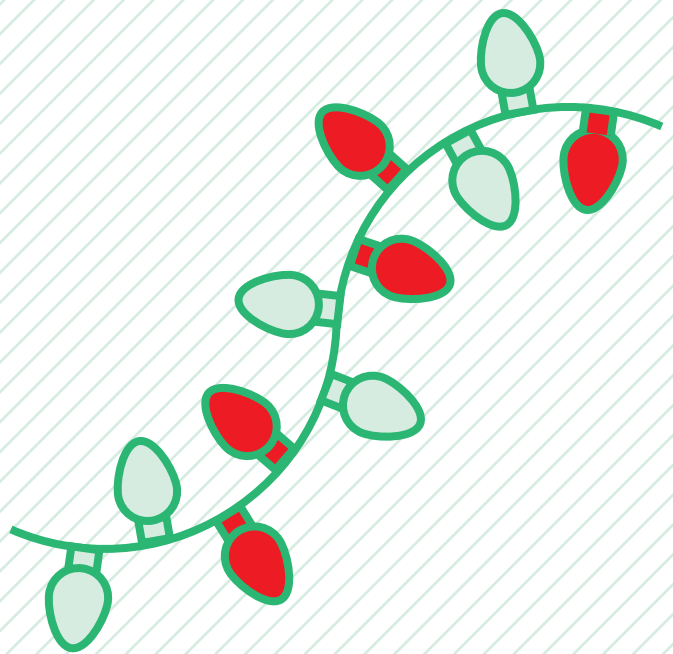
HOME AUTOMATION



With smart home technology, you can lock and unlock your doors, turn on and off your Christmas tree lights, and control your smart thermostat, all from your smartphone. Having a "smart" thermostat-controlled house can save you up to \$180 a year in energy costs.

LED LIGHTBULBS

When you light up that house, tree, or office this holiday, if you haven't done so already, you need to ditch your old incandescent light strands and replace them with LEDs. LED Christmas lights (and LED lights in general) only use 10 percent of the power needed by incandescent lights and they last as much as 10 times longer. In fact, many home automation systems allow you to control your lights remotely.



RECYCLE



There are so many ways to recycle during the holidays. If you are giving a gift that requires batteries, give rechargeable ones. And unless you reuse your wrapping paper and bows like my Aunt Debbie, recycle them. If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet.

SOLAR

Going solar is one of the best gifts you can give yourself—especially since options like the power purchase agreement (PPA) and leasing allow you to get up and running with no upfront costs. Solar also offers potential for dramatic energy savings. For example, a solar energy system with a PPA can save you 20–30% on your utility bills.

