

## Holiday Trees & Lights

### Why we care

Evergreen trees, wreaths, and lights deck our halls and add to the festive traditions of winter holidays. What are ways to celebrate and still be thoughtful of our environment? Both natural and artificial greens have an impact. Live trees are often farmed using pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers. Artificial trees are made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC), which produces toxics during manufacturing, and can contain lead, which may be emitted over time. And these trees are non-recyclable and non-biodegradable.

### Simple, positive steps

- Instead of a tree, search for downed limbs and greens to decorate your home.
- Rent a tree from the [Original Potted Christmas Tree Company](#). A live tree is delivered to your home and then picked up and delivered to parks, schools, and other institutions for planting.
- Purchase a tree from a [SERF Certified farm](#) that has documented its commitment to environmentally sustainable practices. Sometimes, the NE Portland Whole Foods store has them.
- Cut your own. Permits are available to cut trees from designated areas in [Mt. Hood](#) National Forest.
- Contact [Metro](#) (5030-244-0026) to find a Boy Scout or other nonprofit group that collects trees for recycling. Residents with curbside yard debris collection can recycle their trees at the curb.
- If decorating with holiday lights, limit the number of hours they are on to save electricity.
- Choose LED lights over incandescent. They use at least 75% less energy, are longer lasting, do not get hot, and are more resistant to breakage. Contact Metro to recycle old strings of lights for the valuable copper.

*Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at [jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org](mailto:jeanne@ecoschoolnetwork.org).*