

THE ECO MOSQUITO

SUSTAINABILITY NEWS AND EVENTS AT HSPH AND BEYOND

ISSUE 16, DECEMBER 2013

Ah, December. Daylight dwindles to just over 9 hours while the temperature follows suit with its own slow decline. Stay happy during a cold, dark winter by cozying up with books, comfort food, and loved ones. And warm yourself with the thought that days will slowly begin to grow longer after the winter solstice on December 21!

More Cheer, Less Garbage



It's the most wa-asteful time of the year... [record scratch] Wait, what?! It sounds like something only the Grinch would say, but according to the EPA, household waste increases by more than 25% during the holiday season. This extra trash, including food, shopping bags, product packaging, and wrapping paper, accounts for an additional 1 million tons of waste per

week sent to U.S. landfills. Wrapping paper and shopping bags alone contribute to 4 million tons of waste annually, says The Use Less Stuff Report. Luckily, there are many ways to keep it cheery while cutting down on holiday waste. Here are some of our favorites:

- Show off your crafty side and make gifts such as beer, wine, baked goodies, soaps and perfumes, etc. Hey, you may even discover a marketable talent!
- Offer to teach someone a skill or provide them with a service such as cleaning, organizing, babysitting, or gardening.
- Give the gift of a memory-making experience, such as tickets to a show, membership to a museum, luxurious spa services, or sign them up to learn something new and exciting, like languages, dancing, fitness, or outdoor activities.
- Be creative, thrifty, *and* green by using recycled gift wrap, newspapers, scarves, or scrap materials for wrapping gifts.
- Give your real Christmas tree back to nature by recycling it into compost when you're done enjoying it. Most cities, including Boston and Cambridge, have a curbside collection service in January.

DON'T MISS THIS

Join us for this month's installment of the popular **EcoOpportunity Seminar Series**. Chef and author Barton Seaver of the Center for Health and the Global Environment discusses "Environmental Sustainability and the Human Experience" on Tuesday, **December 10** at 12:30pm in Kresge 502. Coffee and refreshments for all!

We must take a moment to brag about how good our November **Green Team Meeting and Potluck** was and hopefully entice you to come to the December edition. Come enjoy conversation and holiday desserts on **December 19** from 11-12pm in Kresge 203.

Please turn off your computers and lights before you kiss your office goodbye for the holiday break. Take the **Season of No Lights Pledge** at hsp.harvard.edu/ecoopportunity if you're on board!

GREEN TIPSTER

Are you in need of sustainable stocking stuffers? Maybe you're hoping to contribute the most random-yet-useful gift to your department's yankee swap. Well, how about a spork?! And not just any spork. Ours is emblazoned with the "Harvard Eats Green" logo and comes in green, yellow, red, or blue. If you've got \$3 and are sick of using disposable utensils, then simply email the Green Team at ecoop@hsp.harvard.edu to place an order.



Hooray for Humanity and the Year 2013!

It's easy to get caught up in negative thoughts about climate change and environmental degradation, but let's take a moment to celebrate some of the wonderful and sustainable achievements of this past year.

- According to NASA satellite data, the hole in the ozone layer seems to have stabilized and may be healing! The hole was slightly smaller in 2013 than average in recent decades, thanks to a decline in levels of the most ozone-depleting chemicals in the atmosphere.
- Key wildlife populations are making a comeback in Europe, where conservationists have been battling habitat loss, pollution, and hunting for decades. Densely populated Europe may have lost a lot of nature and wildlife, but recent research is proving that conservation efforts are working and key species are growing in numbers.
- It's pretty obvious that the Eco Mosquito is no stranger to bathrooms, so we're proud to announce that a Philippine-based organization has developed a low-cost composting toilet called Ecosan (Ecological Sanitation) that uses local materials to minimize water contamination and create fertilizers from human waste. This innovation could provide millions of people around the world with safe and sanitary bathroom facilities, and that's great news!

