

RECIPROCITY AND

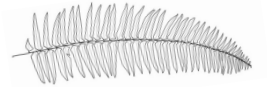


WASTE-LESS HOLIDAYS

When you spend time outside, you likely feel the positive effects that nature can have on your emotional and physical well-being. We humans are part of the ecosystem, part of nature, though we often don't think of ourselves as being so. Along with embracing the positive effects of spending time outside, we need to give back to the spaces we benefit from. **Reciprocity is the act of giving and taking equally in a mutually beneficial way.** Building a reciprocal relationship with other beings (including animals, plants and even water) is as important for you as it is for the young people in your life. Set an example and build reciprocity with the world around you this holiday season and beyond!



Reciprocity and Relationship-Building Activities:



- **Take some time to learn about the land you live on!** If you have a smartphone, download apps including [NativeLand](#) (maps with local Indigenous territories), [iNaturalist](#) (interactive naturalist social network), and [Seek by iNaturalist](#) (plant and animal ID app). Otherwise, libraries have access to great field guides.
- **Read a book or story!** Click [here](#) for some of our favourite reads for kids and adults. *Braiding Sweetgrass* by Robin Wall Kimmerer discusses reciprocity. [Strong Nations Publishing](#) has many wonderful story books and series that explore reciprocity and relationship building.
- **Give back to your community!** It is easy to overlook the impact that a strong community can have on your everyday life. Using gloves and masks, collect trash in an outdoor space (especially beneficial along a beach). Find ways to volunteer with local organizations. Create art and holiday cards filled with sincere greetings and thanks for the elders and frontline workers in your local care homes and hospitals. A little bit of community love can have a big impact.
- **Do an activity together!** Try building a [bug hotel](#) or making [hummingbird feeders](#) to both spend time with loved ones and help local beings. You can also make birdseed tree decorations to hang outside with string by spreading peanut butter on pinecones and then dipping the cones in bird seed (don't use recipes with gelatin, corn syrup or shortening as these are harmful to birds).
- **Plant a garden!** The winter months can be great for laying the groundwork for a garden. Start simple with plants including garlic, potatoes, radishes, and beans. Build a balcony garden out of scraps of plywood (often given for free at your local hardware store). Windowsill gardens work well for growing microgreens and herbs all year long. The cooler months can also be an ideal time to transplant native plants from your local native plant nursery.
- **Enjoy our [free drawing webinars](#) featuring incredible (and endangered) species!** Organize a drawing hangout online with family and friends over the darkest days of the year to brighten the holiday season and appreciate the beauty of the amazing beings with whom we share the lands, skies and waters. Show your drawings to others and mention why it is important to protect the habitat of these beings.



Bug Hotel



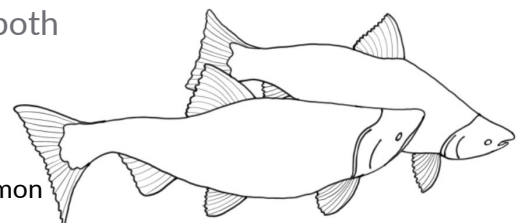
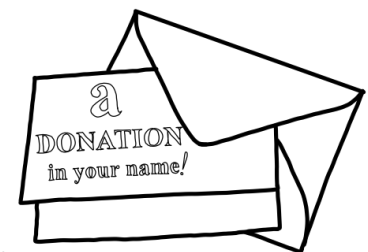
Waste-Less Holiday Suggestions:

- **Shop locally!** This common suggestion really does make a difference! Supporting local craftspeople, fine artists and musicians, in particular, bolsters the art community and economy and avoids the negative environmental impacts of buying highly packaged gifts that are shipped from across the globe.
- **Go on a search for stylish second-hand clothes or furniture** at your local vintage and thrift stores and then get creative with loved ones to personalize, repair and/or improve items you find. Or, support people in your local community who have created a small home business out of this model. The clothing industry (especially 'fast fashion') is one of the most detrimental to the environment.



Newspaper giftwrap

- **Re-think wrapping paper!** Use materials you already have to wrap gifts (newspaper, cardboard boxes, scrap paper with a bit of paint to jazz it up). Use and reuse natural materials such as a hemp or twine instead of buying ribbon made with artificial materials.
- **Re-consider gift-giving culture!** The holidays have become focused on consumerism and excess. If you find yourself giving gifts out of a sense of obligation, consider how you might re-think gift giving in your family.
- **Homemade gifts!** Share and express love with family members without supporting consumerist gift-giving culture. Time spent creating gifts for loved ones can also be a gift to yourself. Slow down and create something that makes you think of the person you are gifting it to.
- **Try non-material gifts!** Not big on crafting? Write a poem, story or song for loved ones (and read or perform it for them)!
- **Donate to an environmental organization** that gives back to our natural world! Make a donation in someone's name, rather than giving them a physical gift that they might not need.
- **Focus on experiences!** Make personalized "time vouchers" with special activities to give to your loved ones and enjoy together. A zero-waste picnic lunch, walk and nature activities in a local park are sure to be both fun and relaxing and create valuable memories. Possibilities for eco-friendly activities are endless!



Chinook Salmon

Find more activities and resources about the beautiful beings we share the planet with (and about our school programs!) at: sierraclub.bc.ca/education