

## Go Green with holiday cleanup

While the holiday season is a time of joy, giving and religious reflection, it also can be a time of excess. Holiday parties, meals brimming with more food than the average person can consume, wrapping paper tossed aside after minimal usage, and shoppers venturing for miles in cars in search of presents can all prove wasteful.

For the environmentally conscious, the holiday season is a great opportunity to put your ideals to use. Although it may seem like a challenging task, going green for the holidays is easier than you might think.

\* Get a live Christmas tree. Christmas trees are planted expressly for the purpose of being cut down and turned into holiday decor. Be a good

steward for the environment and recycle your tree once the holidays are over. Some recycling centers will pick them up for free or a small fee.

\* Cut back on holiday decor. Most people love showcasing their Christmas spirit with decorations. However, many decorative products are produced overseas and shipped over to North America on large vessels that require a lot of fuel.

\* Don't leave lights on for extended periods of time. Homes and businesses bedecked in holiday lights are staples of the season. Instead of leaving lights and other decorative items running for hours each night, turn them off after a little while to save energy.

\* Donate money in

lieu of gifts. Choose environmentally responsible charities and donate funds to their efforts in the name of people who do not need another package of pajamas.

\* Donate unused gifts. Nearly everyone gets an unwanted gift come the holiday season. Instead of putting items in the trash or taking them back to the store, donate gifts you'll never use to a charity or a thrift shop.

\* Wrap gifts with wrapping paper alternatives. Sew scraps of fabric together for a patchwork bag or use glossy photos from a fashion magazine to papier mache a box.

Although many people tend to go overboard for the holidays, getting into the holiday spirit does not have to be unfriendly to the environment.

## Tips to keep your home holiday safe

Accidental house fires and fire deaths are often at their highest at this time of year but there are opportunities for everyone to reduce the incidence of preventable fires and ensure a safe holiday season.

While there are a number of contributing factors leading to these often preventable fires, the Christmas tree has been named as one of the leading causes of fires at this time of year. The main focal point for some during the Christmas celebration, Christmas trees can also be the cause of much tragedy if steps are not taken to keep the tree safe.

The perfect tree has needles that are green, moist and pliable. Lift and drop the tree two or three times on a hard surface and listen for a solid knock rather than a dull thud. Watch and see how many needles drop off. Numerous needles falling are a sure sign of a dry tree that could become a

fire hazard.

• Before placing in the stand, cut two or three inches off the base diagonally to help the tree absorb water.

• Check and add water daily.

• Use only CSA approved and labeled indoor Christmas lights.

• Unplug the lights before going out or going to bed.

• If possible avoid the use of extension cords. If necessary only use CSA approved and labelled extension cords.

• Ensure you have working smoke alarms on each floor.



**REINDEER GAMES:** Wellington-Halton Hills MPP Ted Arnott got into the Christmas spirit – performing a solo rendition of Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer at Ted Flanagan's Old Time Christmas Special at St. John's United Church in Georgetown. – Submitted photo

## KEEP YOUR PETS SAFE THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Some of the more common holiday hazards include:

**Overindulgence and Treats**  
your pets may end up eating much more than they normally do, causing stomach upset or worse. Pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas) can be caused by eating fatty foods. The holiday turkey or chicken will leave a lot of tantalizing bones, which can lodge in the throat, stomach, and intestinal tract.

**Chocolate**  
chocolate can be toxic or even fatal to dogs. Signs of chocolate ingestion include; vomiting, increased thirst, diarrhea, weakness, lack of balance, hyper-excitability, muscle spasms, seizures and coma.

**Ornaments & Decorations**  
Pets who have eaten objects like tinsel or ribbon can quickly become ill with signs such as vomiting, diarrhea, depression, belly pain and sometimes fever. Surgery may be required to remove the foreign matter.

lights are pretty, but puppies and kittens, as electrical shock may occur from pets chewing on electrical cords.

### Yuletide Plants:

Poinsettias are usually not very toxic to pets. Mistletoe can be very toxic to pets. Holly berries and leaves can be a problem although signs of poisoning are generally mild. Lilies are extremely poisonous to cats (lilies are not toxic to dogs). The ingestion of just one or two leaves or petals is enough to cause kidney failure in cats (even the pollen from these flowers is toxic).

Need a last minute stocking stuffer for the pet-lover in your life? Consider the Pet Poison Help iPhone app for only \$1.99, which lists over 200 poisons to keep out of your four-legged friend's reach.

If, however, you think your pet may have ingested something harmful, take action immediately. Contact your veterinarian or Pet Poison Helpline at 1-800-213-6680.

**Wishing you happy, healthy and safe holidays!**

**The Pet Healthcare Team at Wingrove Veterinary!**

## GLOBAL PET FOODS

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**CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE**  
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12:00 NOON - 5:00 PM

**Merry Christmas & Happy New Year**

To All Our Clients, Friends & Neighbours  
And we look forward to seeing you in 2013

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