

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Join us for one of the next meetings of the Sustainability Committee on December 27 or January 31!



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## Salt Alternatives By Clair Ryan

Rock salt (sodium chloride) prevents cars from sliding and pedestrians from slipping on icy roads, sidewalks and driveways, but salt-laden runoff is bad for water quality and can harm the critters that

live in our local stream, lakes and ponds. Close to half of the rock salt put down is used on private roads, walks

and driveways, so individuals can play an important role in reducing salty runoff. Here are a few alternatives to rock salt that you may want to consider for keeping your property free of ice this winter.

- Physical removal + grit: shoveling

snow and chipping ice can be good exercise! If surfaces are still slick after snow and ice are removed, you can put down a gritty substance to increase traction – sand, kitty litter and fireplace ash are popular choices. Grit should be used sparingly, since it can be carried in runoff too.

- Other salts: all salts contain chloride, which causes water quality problems, but other salts like calcium chloride and magnesium chloride are more effective at preventing ice formation than traditional rock salt, meaning that you can use less. Expect these salts to cost more than regular sodium chloride.

- Salt alternatives: the best chemical deicing alternatives seem to be calcium magnesium

acetate and potassium acetate. Potassium acetate can actually prevent freezing at much lower temperatures than rock salt. Both chemicals biodegrade fairly readily, but may reduce oxygen in water bodies if overused. The major drawback of these products is the cost, which far exceeds that of the various salts.

It is important to keep in mind that most chemical treatments, rock salt included, are better at preventing ice from forming than they are at melting it once it has formed. To most effectively use a de-icer, put it down on driveways and sidewalks when snow or freezing rain is forecast but before it falls. Also, always remember that safety should come first. Avoid traveling in bad winter weather whenever possible and make sure that your family members, particularly the elderly, have boots with good treads to prevent falls.

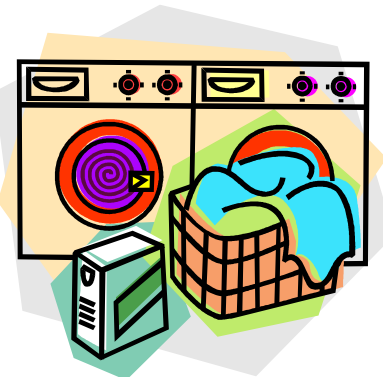
## Homemade Holiday Gift By Jaclyn Harrison

With the holidays approaching quickly, homemade laundry detergent makes a great gift with little impact on your finances and on the environment!

What you need for a batch that yields approximately 64 loads:

- 1 bar of shaved bar soap (Fels-Naptha, Ivory, or ZOTE)
- 1 cup of borax
- 1 cup of washing soda

Thoroughly stir together and place in a nice container. Use ribbon to tie around the jar and attach a tablespoon and card with instructions: **Use 1 Tbsp Per Load.** And that's it!



## Green Wrapping Tips by Nick Cohen



There are lots of ways you can make your gift wrapping “greener,” no matter what holiday you celebrate! Here are some tips my family uses:

- Wrap in newspaper. You can even wrap in themes, like using the sports section of the newspaper to wrap an

athletic equipment gift, or the “Styles” section for a clothing gift. One recommendation:

Avoid using pages of the newspaper with intense or depressing news stories.

- Reuse wrappings, such as bows, ribbons, boxes, and non-ripped wrapping paper.
- Use smaller and homemade presents as part of the wrapping. You can try wrapping presents in new magazines or homemade artwork (by chil-

dren) that will serve as additional gifts. (I’ve wrapped a birthday present for my girlfriend using *People*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Us Weekly* to add some amusement to the gift. )

- Clean and decorate used plastic food take-out containers as boxes for gifts.
- When possible, use wrapping paper made from recycled paper.
- Make your own wrapping paper.

## Making “Nature First” behavior “Second Nature” By Emily Bird

Being an environmental non-profit organization, environmental stewardship is not like pushing snow for NEIWPC colleagues in making green decisions second nature among our standard operating procedure, the sustainability committee is developing the NEIWPC Green Office Guidebook.

The guidebook will cover four topic areas for sustainable in-office practices including:

- Office Purchasing
  - Waste
  - Energy Consumption
  - Paper and Printing
- We hope that this effort will

support and recognize the efforts of all NEIWPC colleagues in the pursuit of sustainability, not only at the Lowell office, but our staff and programs in all New England states and New York. Additional chapters will provide sustainability guidance for outside the office in our mail, contracts, and event/meeting correspondence as well as at home and in the community.

The Sustainability Committee will focus quarterly on the four in-office chapters through informal [Community Based Social Marketing](#) (CBSM). The first step is to identify baseline levels of a behavior related to sustainability (i.e. recycling) through observation, survey, or focus group (i.e. baseline paper waste audit). Based on observations and feedback from colleagues we identify

barriers to achieve sustainability goals (i.e. lack of recycle bins). Behavior change strategies to address barriers include education, convenience, social norms, prompts, communication, and/or incentive (i.e. convenience – provide individual desk recycle bins). After implementing the behavior change strategy, a follow-up study is done to measure progress (i.e. follow-up paper waste audit). Through this approach, we are not *telling* our colleagues to behave sustainably, but setting them up for success to achieve NEIWPC’s goals for sustainability.



# Sustainable Season's Greetings By Erin Jacobs

According to the Greeting Card Association, "More than 2 billion boxed and individual Christmas cards were sold in the U.S. last year." That's a lot of paper! Consider your impact on the environment during the holiday season and apply the "reduce, reuse, recycle" mantra to holiday greeting cards:

Send a "green" greeting to **reduce** waste:

- Follow NEIWPC's example

- by sending an electronic greeting card
- Create a card by reusing materials such as last year's cards or wrapping paper
- Use paper products made with recycled content
- Send cards that are recyclable (beware of cards with embellishments such as gold foil, embroidery, or plastics!)
- Send a plantable greeting card that will sprout wildflowers when planted
- Pick up the phone to give the most personal greeting

**Reuse** received greeting cards by making holiday decorations: See <http://bit.ly/>

[VPwUOC](#) or <http://bit.ly/nFRC6e>.

**Recycle** the greeting cards you receive. Paper can be recycled, but cards that sing, talk, or dance have hidden components such as batteries, speakers, circuit boards, LED lights, wires, and pieces of metal or plastic that need to be discarded separately. Contact your local transfer station for proper disposal instructions.



## From the Chair By Susy King

NEIWPC staff at the Lowell office recently started putting together this newsletter as a way for the sustainability committee to update the rest of the office on their activities, as well as to share news and tips on sustainable practices at the office and home. With this issue, we are expanding distribution to all NEIWPC employees. For future issues, we welcome article submissions from all employees. Please contact Heather Radcliffe if you are interested in contributing.



Fall and winter are a great time to enjoy foods that can be grown or produced in New England. Below is an example of a recipe that can be made with all local ingredients.

### Maple Syrup Roasted Pumpkin & Apples (From Taste.Com.Au)

- Approximately 1.5 -2 lb sugar pumpkin
- 3 tbs butter, melted
- 3 apples
- 2 tbs maple syrup



Preheat oven to 360. Cut the pumpkin into 8 wedges and remove seeds. Cut each piece in half crosswise. Transfer to a large bowl. Add 2/3 of the butter and toss to combine. Place on a large baking sheet. Bake in oven for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cut each apple into 8 wedges and core. Transfer to a large bowl. Add remaining butter and toss to combine. Place the apple on the baking sheet with the pumpkin. Bake for a further 30 minutes. Reduce oven to 340. Drizzle the maple syrup over the pumpkin and apple. Toss to coat. Bake, tossing once halfway through, for a further 10 minutes or until golden and tender. Enjoy!



# Green Travel Tips for the Holiday Season

By Heather Radcliffe

Going green while you travel during the holidays requires only one thing—common sense. Here are some ideas for remaining environmentally conscious while you celebrate the season with friends and family.

## Before your trip



Before you leave home, adjust your thermostat, suspend your newspaper delivery, and unplug

appliances, televisions, and computers. Think before you pack. Not only will a lighter luggage be healthier for your body and easier to manage, it will contribute less weight to your plane, bus, car, or train, which translates into less fuel used and less carbon emitted into the atmosphere.

## Getting there

Avoid flying if you can—it's the most carbon-intensive form of transportation—but when that isn't possible, plan ahead and do some research. Start by booking your flight electronically (reduces waste—no paper ticket) with an airline that recycles in-flight waste and, when possi-

ble, choose a direct flight which will use less fuel and produce less harmful emissions. Consider purchasing carbon offsets from an organization that will invest your money in projects like wind farms to counteract your unavoidable carbon use. Don't need to fly? Use public transportation like a bus, take the train, or rent a more fuel-efficient car to save gas and avoid putting miles on your own vehicle.

## At your hotel

If you're staying at a hotel this holiday season—and for any other trips as well—research environmentally conscious choices. It's easy to find most hotels' environmental policies online or call and speak to a staff

member. Find out if they have a recycling program and a towel and sheet reuse policy; if they don't, try to recycle on your own and request not to have your towels and sheets changed daily (reduces water and electricity use). Leave behind un-



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used hotel freebies—toiletries, pens, and notepads—so the hotel can reuse them and produce less. Invest in reusable travel-size bottles to bring your own toiletries from home. If you do open hotel toiletries, bring them home to use them up and then recycle the packaging. Even while away from home, don't forget to conserve water by taking short showers and turning off the facet while brushing your teeth.

## During your trip

Carry a reusable water bottle—you can refill it and also buy fewer individual drinks—and a reusable tote bag to use at local stores. Throughout your trip, implement the "Getting there" tips already mentioned—use public transportation when you can't walk or bike; look into local bike rental programs. In fact, walking or biking will help you burn some calories from your holiday meals. Prepare your holiday meals using locally sourced ingredients (see Susy's recipe on the previous page) and large batches of punch rather than individual beverages.

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