

When my sister and I were traveling in southern Spain a couple of years ago, we noticed trees with huge rings of bark removed. It took us a back for a moment before we realized that these were cork trees.

Unlike many forest products, cork oaks are never cut down for their bark. Cork oaks provide a sustainable crop during a life cycle that lasts nearly 200 years. A mature tree (50 years old) can be harvested every 9 years for the life of the tree.

For years, I have advocated tossing corks into the compost bin. Recently, I have started using them in the bottom of plant pots for a light weight drainage material. People have occasionally dropped them off in the VALCORE ReUse Barn for arts and crafts projects.

Now we can truly recycle them. VALCORE Recycling Community Board Member Ellie Wells informed me about the ReCork program at Whole Foods in Napa. And, by good fortune, I found the ReCork warehouse is located in the Napa Business Park.

Recycled wine corks can find a new life as shoe soles, bulletin boards, place mats, flooring tiles, building insulation, gaskets, packaging materials, and even as a soil amendment in compost.

So, as you pop those corks at your holiday parties, don't toss them in the trash, save them for recycling and drop them off in the ReUse Barn at VALCORE.

Christmas Trees

Christmas tree lots have again sprung up around Vallejo. This year, Loma Vista Farm (150 Rainier Avenue) is selling trees, poinsettias, handmade wreaths, and plants. They are open tonight and Thursday through Sunday from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. until December 21. For information call 707 556-8765 or www.lomavistafarm.org.

If you purchase a cut tree, let me remind you to water it well because dried-out trees are a fire hazard. Each year, trees come to VALCORE for treecycling that have never received a drop of water as evidenced by the original wooden stands that are still

attached.

If you have a living tree from years past, it is time to get it ready to move indoors. Prepare your spot away from heating vents. Living Christmas trees require two quarts to one gallon of water every day and can stay indoors for about a week. To protect the tree from drying out use miniature lights.

Mid-City Nursery offers a variety of beautiful living trees. Conical shaped trees include Alberta spruce, Colorado spruce, Deodar cedar, and redwood.

When the tree is ready to be taken outside, place it in a protected spot for 12 days to allow the tree to acclimate. You can leave your tree in its large pot so that you can use it next year after careful summer feeding and watering.

After Christmas, you can recycle your tree. Watch this column for details.

Looking for holiday decorations? Check out your favorite thrift store, They have many items including serving dishes at a reasonable price. This is truly recycling.

Deep Fried Turkeys

If you cooked a turkey in one of those big outdoor fryers, you have several gallons of used cooking oil to deal with. It should never go down the drain. Please recycle it at Vallejo Garbage Service (2021 Broadway). They accept used cooking oil Thursday to Saturday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Confidential Paper Shredding

The City of Vallejo is sponsoring a paper shredding event on Saturday, December 20 at VALCORE Recycling from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There will be charge of \$5 per 20 pounds of paper with a maximum of 100 pounds.

VALCORE Recycling Board Member Jane Bogner's "A Sorted Affair" is published every other week in the Times-Herald. For recycling information call VALCORE Recycling at 645-8258 or visit www.VALCORErecycling.org.

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