

Holiday celebrations are always full of bubbly beverages; sparkling waters, sparkling ciders, and champagne. For those of you who like carbonated drinks, I have a green solution. Purchase a Soda Stream machine (www.sodastream.com, 1 800 763-2258) and avoid lugging home the cases of beverages. The kit includes a reusable bottle, two carbonating bottles of CO2 gas (carbon dioxide), and assorted flavors to make your own sodas. Soda Stream is now available locally at Kohls, Sears, and Camping World. We now have local places to exchange empty CO2 containers including Camping World in Vacaville, NapaStyle in Benicia and Bay Area William Sonoma locations (listed on the website above).

One-use disposable water bottles are a big environmental concern, so consider giving reusable water bottles as gifts. Include a water filtering system such as a Brita pitcher or, if you are handy, give a filter that can be installed on a kitchen faucet.

Now for some unusual gifts. How would you like an indoor vertical garden? Wooly pocket (www.woolypocket.com) is a soft-sided breathable planter that can be hung on a fence or wall. The makers guarantee that these lined pockets have built-in moisture protection which helps protect floors and walls. They are made in the U.S.A. from recycled plastic bottles.

Looking for more green items, I stumbled upon this site: www.ecostreet.com. EcoStreet is a blog and directory dedicated to raising green consciousness. Started in the United Kingdom by two sisters in 2002, this site is now global and offers tips on living green, green products, and services. A green pet page, www.ecostreet.com/directory/lifestyle/pets/, will keep you smiling. Check out the link to Recycle This (www.recyclethis.co.uk).

One sage piece of advice from EcoStreet is a strategy on how to politely say "Thanks but No Thanks" to holiday gifts.

For practical green gifts for home and office: to www.greenearthofficesupply.com or www.letsogogreen.biz. Take a little time and visit these sites or google for your favorite

green items. Then make you list and look for similar items locally. Your phone book can be your guide. Call local stores and ask what they have in stock.

Christmas Trees

Your choices are artificial, live, cut or nontraditional tree sculptures. Today, artificial trees look like real trees and some even come with lights attached. These are reusable and easy to store.

Vintage aluminum trees, such as the one my grandmother had, are hot and available on Ebay-type sites.

Live trees take a little extra work as you can only keep them inside for a short period of time and they need to be acclimatized before you put them back outside. Some are buying a living tree such as an orange tree, decorating it this year then planting it when the holiday is over.

Cut trees are part of our culture and are easily recycled into your yardwaste bin or picked up by a nonprofit for a small donation. Look for Treecycle information in this paper and on www.recycle-guide.com.

Shop at craft faires and art galleries for trees made from alternative materials. I saw one made from rebar many years ago and my sister has one made from twisted metal.

Get five free gifts for your home and pocket book. Just bring to VALCORE Recycling five incandescent light bulbs and trade them for five **FREE Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs**.

Last Paper Shredding event.

The last Confidential Paper Shredding event will be held on Saturday, December 19 at VALCORE Recycling (38 Sheridan Street, Vallejo 707 645-8258) from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. There is a charge of \$5 per twenty pounds (maximum: 100 pounds).

VALCORE Recycling Board Secretary 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.