



Hong Kong News

Green Christmas

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Dongjiang Source Village Primary School students take part in a tree-planting activity organised by Friends of the Earth (HK). Photo: Friends of the Earth (HK)

Rebecca Tsui explores some ideas for making this year's festive season more sustainable

Green groups are calling on Hongkongers to think about sustainable living this Christmas - about everything from wrapping paper and greetings cards to Christmas trees.

The latter, in particular, are wasteful, green groups say, because they have such a short shelf life. Mei Ng of Friends of the Earth suggests that people make a donation and name a tree rather than buy one to put in the home.

'Name a Tree' is a programme associated with the Dongjiang Project, which aims to safeguard the city's drinking water at the source of the Dongjiang, or East River.

'Many people know most of Hong Kong's fresh water comes from the Dongjiang, but few of them are aware that the river's source is under threat,' Ng says.

Ng explains that planting trees at the source of the Dongjiang in Jiangxi province helps stabilise the soil and protects the source of the river. With just HK\$100, donors can name a tree and a certificate will be sent to the donor.

'You can name the trees for your friends and relatives, making it a great gift,' Ng says.

Photo essays



Jacob vs Edward

- Team Edward
- Team Jacob

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Donors who adopt trees in their own name or in the names of friends or relatives will receive an e-certificate

Go to www.foe.org.hk for more information

Meanwhile, students are becoming increasingly aware that the majority of Christmas presents are wasteful and harmful to the environment.

'I used to buy Christmas presents for my friends, but it's getting harder to find things to buy,' says student Wong Ka-ye. She adds that she is wary of buying gifts that are materialistic and have no meaning other than fulfilling a Christmas obligation.

WWF is offering a solution to this quandary by introducing eco-friendly gift sets and toys made from Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified wood for the first time.

The gift sets are co-presented with Fairtrade, a local fair trade enterprise initiated by Oxfam. The sets include various fair trade food and drinks, as well as WWF products that include recycled wrapping paper. FSC-certified toys are manufactured with wood that comes from sustainable forests. Buying any of these products as gifts is not only environmental friendly but also helps WWF's conservation and fair trade work.



WWF's Christmas Gift Sets. Photo: WWF

In addition, you can adopt a wild animal through WWF as a gift. Choices include polar bears, orangutans, giant pandas, Chinese white dolphins, sea turtles, elephants, snow leopards and tigers. You get a certificate, a small toy and a framed photo, as well as a fact sheet about your adopted animal.

Go to www.wwf.org.hk/pandashop for more information.

But let's not forget Christmas cards. E-cards are the best way to save on paper, but you can send an even more environmentally message with Greenpeace's Greengiving.

In the Greenpeace catalogue, you can choose from protecting the forests, slowing climate change and cleaning the air and drinking water. All can be sent as e-cards and free mobile phone messages and come with Christmas blessings.

Check out the selection at www.greenpeacegiving.org.cn

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