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## **Turn your carbon footprint into happy feet this Christmas Top Tips to help Children have a Green Christmas**

Christmas is a time when we all tend to use lot more energy and our carbon footprint (that's the amount of harmful CO2 we each produce) can leave an even larger impression on our world.

Chantal Cooke from Passion for the Planet ([www.passionfortheplanet.com](http://www.passionfortheplanet.com)), the UK's only environmental radio station, has some top tips to help us turn our carbon footprints into 'happy feet' without having to scrimp on any of the festive fun!

1) Buying presents for friends and family is one of the best parts of Christmas so if you are still choosing gifts or looking for ideas for yourself, visit [www.greentoycompany.com](http://www.greentoycompany.com) and [www.naturalnursery.co.uk](http://www.naturalnursery.co.uk), which have a whole range of ethical and environmentally friendly toys.

2) Once the presents are wrapped put them under a live Christmas tree in a pot, rather than having a cut tree. After Christmas, if you keep the tree well watered and put it in the garden, it will last until next year. During the year the tree will absorb lots of CO2, so as well as brightening up the garden it's also absorbing carbon from the atmosphere.

3) If you are decorating the tree try to choose low energy Christmas lights, ([www.lights4fun.co.uk](http://www.lights4fun.co.uk) has a massive range or [www.eco-centric.co.uk](http://www.eco-centric.co.uk) has a smaller quirky selection). They don't cost any more to buy but they are much more environmentally friendly, as they use less energy. It is also worth

remembering to put the Christmas lights on a timer so they don't stay on all night. It will save money and the environment.

4) We all love to stock up on treats at Christmas but rather than going for sweets how about munching on some fair-trade Brazil nuts. Eating Brazil nuts from the Amazon gives people a sustainable income and helps to preserve the forest, soaking up even more carbon from the atmosphere!

5) Closer to home when you are helping to buy the food for Christmas lunch, try to look for labels that say where the food has come from. See if you can find locally produced meat and vegetables. Transporting food long distances from overseas or even just from the other end of the UK produces many tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> every day, so check the labels and ask the shopkeeper where the food was produced. Better still, ditch the turkey and go for a healthy nut roast instead – just be sure those nuts are Fairtrade!

6) After Christmas lunch, if you're visiting family and friends locally why not suggest that you all walk, rather than take the car. It might even help to work up an appetite for the mince pies at teatime, as well as reduce carbon emissions from using petrol.

7) **After all the festivities are over** see how much of the Christmas wrapping paper and Christmas cards can be recycled. If you can reuse wrapping paper for next year – even better! If not put it all in the recycling bin. It takes much less energy and water to produce new paper from recycled pulp than from virgin pulp. You can also shred your waste paper and use it for packing or for bedding for your pets.

8) If you were lucky enough to get a new mobile phone for Christmas remember to recycle your old one. Many charities collect old mobile phones. Have a look at Traidcraft

([http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/get\\_involved/giving/lifestyle\\_giving/recycling\\_printer\\_cartridges\\_mobiles.htm?gclid=CKnhhYyNmJcCFQXtIAodL2JV9g](http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/get_involved/giving/lifestyle_giving/recycling_printer_cartridges_mobiles.htm?gclid=CKnhhYyNmJcCFQXtIAodL2JV9g)) or Oxfam

([http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get\\_involved/recycle/bringbring.html](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/get_involved/recycle/bringbring.html)) Any unwanted gifts or items you no longer want can be donated to your local charity shop to help raise money.

9) Then as we go into 2009 there are lots of fun ways to be green. Ask your parents to get a wormery for the garden and watch the worms wiggle their way through all your food scraps producing compost for your plants.

10) Buying rechargeable batteries will save you lots of money and at the same time you'll be protecting the environment from the toxic chemicals that are in old batteries.

11) Finally, make a real difference for other children around the world. Next time you buy a chocolate bar, buy one that is fairly traded, giving poorer families an income and helping them to send their children to school. Ask your school to stock fair-trade chocolate in the tuck shop and get the school to help you change the world. ([www.fairtrade.org.uk](http://www.fairtrade.org.uk))

You can listen to more tips from Chantal Cooke by tuning into 'Passion for the Planet' on your "eco plus"\* DAB digital radio or by visiting [www.passionfortheplanet.com](http://www.passionfortheplanet.com). You will also be able to hear a whole range of hits and new music including Keane, Nerina Pallot and Feeder, as well as music from around the world, including Baaba Maal, Juanes, Amadou & Mariam, Goton Project, Silbermond and Souad Massi. So get those happy feet tapping away!

**'Passion for the Planet' is available on DAB digital radio across London and the south of England and nationwide on the Internet at [www.passionfortheplanet.com](http://www.passionfortheplanet.com)**

Ends

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\* Pure Digital produces a range of low energy DAB radio under the "Eco Plus" banner – see [www.pure.com](http://www.pure.com)