The Green Minute for December – Greening Holiday Lights 2023



The winter solstice is a time many cultures celebrate light. In the United States, people often decorate their homes with strands of white or colored lights. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, decorative lighting accounts for 6.6 billion kilowatt hours of electricity use each year. That is more electricity than the country of El Salvador uses in one year.

The amount of electricity used for decorative lighting can be reduced by switching from conventional incandescent lights to LED lights, resulting in a saving of $850 million per year.* *Read More…*

Moreover, LED lights prevent 9.9 billion pounds of greenhouse gas from entering the atmosphere. Although all decorative lights contain toxins, LED lights are less toxic. When purchasing them, look for the RoHS compliant label. Importantly, LED lights are cooler than incandescent lights, thereby reducing the risk of fire.



In addition to switching to LED lights, further savings can be achieved by putting decorative lights on a timer; turning them off at bedtime; and limiting the amount of time the lights are displayed, e.g., three weeks rather than a month or more. Extension cords can be used to connect strands of lights in unseen areas and turn off other outdoor lights for better effect. Ref:

https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/led-lighting

Green Minute 2 for December-January 2023 – Reduce Holiday Waste

According to the National Environmental Education Foundation, US shoppers are buying more items online and in "2022 more than 93% of all cardboard boxes and nearly 68% of paper consumed in the US were recovered for recycling." That's the good news, but what about gift wrapping? * Read More…

Most holiday wrap and gift cards are not recyclable because they are covered in glitter or other coatings, such as foil that are not able to be recycled. Food waste, holiday travel, plastic holiday trees and holiday lights all contribute to environmental stress. Have an environmentally friendly holiday by not buying too much food and composting what's left over, bringing recycle bags when shopping, taking public transportation when traveling, using LED lights for decoration. See more helpful hints at https://neefusa.org/story/sustainability/give-gift-planet-reducing-holiday-waste