

# DECEMBER NEWSLETTER



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*"Winter, a lingering season, is a time to gather golden moments, embark upon a sentimental journey, and enjoy every idle hour."*

- John Boswell

## 4 WAYS TO UPCYCLE YOUR REAL TREE AFTER CHRISTMAS

The end of the Christmas countdown doesn't have to mean the end for your Christmas tree. There are so many ways you can give new life to your tree after the celebrations have ended.

Here are 4 ways you can responsibly recycle your tree this year:



- Make your own mulch - A great way to keep your yard healthy and moist during the cold season is to make mulch or compost from the needles or woodchips from your tree. The Pine needles from your tree allow soil to breathe, keeping it from becoming dense and compact in the winter months. Simply break off the needles and cut the branches into 1-2 inch pieces.
- Create a living bird feeder - By propping up your tree near an existing bird feeder you can create a sanctuary for small birds. You can even decorate the branches with homemade suet, popcorn, and orange slices to create a living bird feeder in your yard.
- Create a fish-friendly habitat- You can donate your tree to a local Fish and Game Department for use as a fish habitat. Often, lake bottoms do not have enough natural structures that fish like to hide in. Your recycled tree can give fish and tadpoles the protection they need to sleep, lay eggs, and thrive.
- Cut firewood for an outdoor campfire - Sawing the trunk of your tree into several pieces and allowing it to dry will give you beautiful and aromatic firewood for your next bonfire. Plus, Evergreens tend to burn hot and fast, making them ideal for bonfires.

Source: [arbordayblog.org](http://arbordayblog.org)

## PEPPERMINT BARK



### Ingredients

- 8 ounces high-quality semisweet chocolate, broken into pieces
- 2 teaspoons canola oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon peppermint extract, divided
- 8 ounces high-quality white chocolate, broken into pieces
- 25 peppermint candies, crushed

### Directions:

1. Lightly grease a 9x9 inch pan and line with waxed paper, smoothing out wrinkles; set aside.
2. Place the semisweet chocolate and 1 teaspoon of the canola oil in the top of a double boiler over just barely simmering water, stirring frequently and scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching. When the chocolate is melted, stir in 1/4 teaspoon of the peppermint extract.
3. Pour the melted chocolate into the prepared pan, and spread evenly over the bottom of the pan. Sprinkle half of the crushed peppermints over the chocolate layer. Refrigerate until completely hardened, about 1 hour.
4. Place the white chocolate and the remaining 1 teaspoon canola oil in the top of a double boiler over just barely simmering water, stirring frequently and scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula to avoid scorching. When the chocolate is melted, stir in the remaining 1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract.
5. Pour the white chocolate directly over the semisweet chocolate layer; spread evenly. Sprinkle the remaining crushed candy over the top and gently press in. Refrigerate until completely hardened. Remove from pan; break into small pieces to serve.

Source: [allrecipes.com](http://allrecipes.com)

## 4 TIPS FOR SELLING YOUR HOME DURING THE HOLIDAY SEASON

The holiday season can be chaotic particularly when your home is for sale. While some sellers opt to take their homes off the market until after New Year, there are still plenty of buyers house hunting at this time of year. If you'll be trying to sell your home during the holidays, here are a few tips to help attract buyers while still maintaining a sense of festivity:



- Choose decorations that accent your home's style without overwhelming it. While displaying some holiday cheer can boost your home's appeal to buyers and help them envision themselves celebrating future holidays there, excessive decorations can be distracting. Err on the side of simple, tasteful decorations that evoke the festive spirit and complement your property's features, while avoiding those that are overtly religious in order to avoid making buyers of different faiths feel uncomfortable.

- Create a cozy, welcoming ambience. For many people, the holiday season evokes feelings of nostalgia and a craving for comfort. Make the most of these feelings by cultivating a sense of coziness inside your home. For instance, keep the interior temperature warm enough that visitors will be comfortable, open the blinds to let in natural light, and use flameless candles to create an inviting glow. You might even consider baking cookies before a showing so that the irresistible aroma lingers!

- Ensure that your yard is properly maintained. Specifically, clean up fallen leaves and other debris, and be sure that your driveway and walkways are free of ice and snow.

- Showcase how your home looks at other times of year. With the skies gray and the trees bare, buyers may be curious to see how your home looks during more vibrant seasons. Consider providing photos from all seasons in your listing materials or in a photo album that you have available for prospective buyers.

Source: [hgtv.com](http://hgtv.com)

If you are currently working with another brokerage, please do not consider this a solicitation.