

HOLIDAY RECYCLING

By Becky Miller-Cripps

Tree Recycling

University of California Cooperative Extension (UCCE) Master Gardeners support foothill-friendly, "smart" gardening. Two of our principles are: Feed the Soil and Recycle. How can you follow those principles in disposing of your cut, green Christmas tree? Real Christmas trees are a renewable, recyclable resource. You may wish to chip your Christmas tree and use it at home as mulch or compost. Or, you may want to help reduce the waste stream by recycling your Christmas trees.

Recycled trees have many beneficial uses. Christmas trees can be chipped, shredded and used as mulch for water conservation and weed control, erosion and/or dust control on hiking trails and bridle paths, additives in composting operations and alternative fuel in co-generation or biomass plants.

The Big Oak Flat/Groveland Transfer Station and the Cal Sierra/Waste Management Earth Resource Facility (ERF) are accepting Christmas trees on a limited basis for FREE under certain conditions. Christmas trees should **NOT** be mixed with other trash for disposal or recycling. Take advantage of one of the following opportunities to recycle Christmas trees in Tuolumne County.

TREE DROP-OFF LOCATIONS:

Please remove all decorations, tinsel, metal tree stands and nails. Also, some trees may have a metal supporting rod in the trunk that must be removed. Please do not bring any Christmas wrapping paper or trash.

- **Big Oak Flat/Groveland Transfer Station** at the end of Merrell Road (10700 Merrell Rd), Wednesdays and Saturdays, 8:00 am to 3:45 pm.
- **Cal Sierra/Waste Management Earth Resource Facility (ERF)** at 14909 Camage Avenue, off of Tuolumne Road near Standard, Tuesday through Saturday, 8:00 am to 3:30 pm. Extra-special bonus: if you drop off a Christmas tree during the month of January, you can take home a load of mulch FOR FREE!

Styrofoam Recycling

Master Gardeners will once again be collecting your clean, dry #6 polystyrene foam. Clean, colored polystyrene food containers are also accepted. Please remove all labels and tape. No packing peanuts or other types of foam, please. Bring your Styrofoam to Microtronics Way (off of Standard Road or Camage Avenue, in East Sonora) on Saturday, January 18, 9 am – 4 pm and Sunday, January 19, 10 am – 2 pm. Master Gardeners will unload your car for you.

Master Gardeners collaborate with Waste Management Inc. and Tuolumne County to repurpose Styrofoam. Cal Sierra Division of Waste Management provides free 20 bins for collection, and then compresses and bales the Styrofoam. Tuolumne County's e-waste hauler picks up the bales

and delivers them to a manufacturing company in Lodi that turns the Styrofoam into new food containers.

Battery Recycling

Did you know that there are new options for recycling batteries in Tuolumne County? Household batteries weighing less than 11 pounds and cell phones (or cell phone batteries) – regardless of age, make or model – can be recycled for free. Wrap batteries separately in plastic bags or tape the terminals individually with electrical tape (or similar type of tape). Drop off your batteries or cell phones at one of 15 different locations stretching from Pinecrest to Groveland. You may also drop them at the Sonora, Groveland, Tuolumne or Twain Harte branches of the Tuolumne County Library. For more information, visit <https://www.tuolumnecounty.ca.gov/436/Garbage-Recycling>.

In Calaveras and Alpine Counties – under the auspices of the Calaveras County Solid Waste Division – there is an extensive list of agencies that accept recycled items. For a look at the items that can be recycled and the places that accept them, go to <https://intwaste.calaverasgov.us/Reduce-Reuse-Recycle> CalaverasRecycles.org is intended to be a clearinghouse of information for local recycling programs and the management of solid waste.

Please support your community by recycling your Christmas tree, your batteries, your cell phones and Styrofoam this holiday season.

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UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties can answer home gardening questions. Call 209-533-5912 or go to: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=7269> to fill out our easy-to-use problem questionnaire. Check out our website at: http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/ You can also find us on Facebook.