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Article for Veolia Twin Cities Waste Removal  
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Sources: <http://www.pickyourownchristmastree.org>, <http://www.minneapolismn.gov>,  
<http://livegreentwincities.com>

### **Laying Your Old Christmas Tree to Rest**

When you brought it home, you knew the holiday season was upon you. And then, it became the centerpiece of your holiday decorations. If you have kids, they probably sat under it, staring up at the ribbons, lights, and ornaments, wondering what Santa would place under it on Christmas Eve. But then, Christmas came and went. Then, New Year's Day. And now, the evergreen you brought into your home is shedding needles and turning brown. It's time to lay your tree to rest. However, before you dispose of your tree, look at some of the options you can take advantage of.

### **Recycle Your Tree**

If you have enough space, you can use your old tree to make a winter bird feeder. To do this remove the hooks, garlands, tinsel, and lights from your tree. Then, set the tree in your backyard and redecorate it with treats that birds enjoy. For example, string popcorn and wrap it around your tree. You can also hang suet bags, seed cakes, or fruit slices on the tree. Furthermore, the birds can shelter in the branches of your tree. If you choose to use your tree as a bird feeder, after a year about a year, your tree will become brittle. You can then use a chipper to create mulch for your garden.

### **Use Curbside Disposal**

For specific information about curbside disposal, contact your Twin Cities waste disposal provider for their specific policy for removing Christmas trees. Generally, a trash hauler wants you remove the lights, decorations, and tinsel from your tree. And when you place the tree on the curb, ensure that it is at least five feet away from any other objects. If your tree is over six-feet tall, check with your garbage-collection provider whether they require you to cut the tree in half.

### **Recycle Holiday Lights**

Instead of disposing of your old holiday lights, consider recycling them. Hennepin County recycling facilities accept string and holiday lights for recycling all year long. That way, you both dispose of your old lights while keeping them out of the landfills.

### **Mulching and Composting Programs**

When your Minneapolis or St Paul collection service removes your Christmas tree, they can be recycled several ways. Most often, the city mulches the trees. Residents can then use the mulch in their landscaping and gardening. Furthermore, if you are a Hennepin County resident, you can drop off your tree at a recycling site. The recycling site then turns the trees into compost, which residents can use in their yards and gardens.



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### **The Living Tree Alternative**

As an alternative to purchasing a cut tree, you can buy a live, rooted tree. Before the first freeze, dig a hole for the tree. Then, after the holidays are over, you can plant the tree and enjoy it for decades to come. However, the newly planted tree might have a difficult time surviving the winter, so you might want to contact an arborist about whether this will work for you.

### **Working with Your Waste Disposal Provider**

Whatever your choice, there are many creative ways that you can dispose your Christmas tree. Contact your waste disposal service provider for more information about disposing your tree.