First, congratulations.As someone who is considering an alternative to the 'cut' Christmas Tree, I salute you for having a mind that is open to creative possibilities!

Here are Ten Alternatives to Cut Christmas Trees, with some direct links to for each option whenever possible. I hope you enjoy creating a new tradition and welcome you to the special group of folks choosing against a cut tree.

Author: Andrea Lee

Ten Alternatives to Cutting Down a Tree for Christmas

1. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, try a living tree, in a pot.

A living tree isn't thrown out after Christmas, and can continue to oxygenate your surroundings making your air quality better. If you choose to plant your living tree outdoors in your yard or garden after Christmas, you've now added value to your property and beautified your surroundings. More on how planting a live tree helps the planet at this link: http://www.joytotheplanet.com/3/default.html

Your local garden store or nursery is a good first try for locating a living Christmas tree in a pot. Or, try these links for more possibilities.

http://www.davisfarms.com/products/index.cgi http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/gl_trees_shrubs/article/0 ,,HGTV_3643_1383646,00.html

2. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, try designating an existing outdoor tree as your Christmas tree.

Perhaps you have a lovely tall evergreen in your front or back yard. Choose one and give it some energy efficient lights set to a timer, and let your Christmas tree shine in to your living room. Your hardier ornaments and even popcorn garland also work nicely outdoors...and attract birds too.

3. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, try an inflatable Christmas tree.

Inflatable trees are reusable and a treat to put away after Christmas, since they collapse into the size of a small bag once the air is released. With the potential for many decades of use, the inflatable tree can be used indoors and out, and inflates with a simple pump. No watering, and kids love these!

Inflatable tree options are increasing, so check with your local Christmas store for details. Otherwise, these links may prove useful:

http://www.brandsonsale.com/inchristre.html http://store.yahoo.com/gsdotcom/christre60.html

4. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, make your own tree.

Making your own Christmas tree can become a great tradition especially if you get the whole family in on the fun. What recycled material will you use this year? When you succeed in building an especially great tree, you can keep it and reuse.

The only rule here is: use your imagination. How about a beautiful clear tree made from used water bottles, or a wooden tree from scrap lumber? Empty egg cartons, old computer parts, any kind of "junk" in your blue recycling bin can be made into a cool and unique "tree." Talk about your true meaning of Christmas!

5. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, use a Christmas tree wall hanging.

Christmas tree wall hangings are a new, and awesome alternative to cut trees. Simple to hang and ultra slick to store, these are works of art that can even sometimes be lit. Have a look at the sample photo and click the link to find the only source - so far - that I know of. If anyone else knows of another supplier, be sure to write me!

http://amos.catalogcity.com/cc.class/cc?a=a&pcd=4402705&prd=6408407&ccsyn=117

This is another super choice if your Christmas involves kids.

And oh yes, there's always the option of making your own Christmas tree wall hanging, if you're handy with a needle. Try this link to a pattern and some advice...

http://www.edmontonsewing.com/pr_countdown.html

The tree shown at http://www.joytotheplanet.com/images/kid.jpg is small and perfect for small spaces. A full size tree is also possible by altering the dimensions of the pattern.

6. Instead of a cut Christmas Tree, try a (non-plastic) artificial tree.

Your typical artificial Christmas tree (found by the dozen in stores all over during the Christmas season) is made from PVC or plastic based materials and are actually NOT a good alternative to the cut Christmas tree. Unfortunately this is because of poor manufacturing processes of those trees that cause a great deal of damage to the environment through pollution, chemicals and waste.

So when we recommend an artificial tree in this list, it's only carefully. And here's an example of a fake tree that passes muster, and is really rather elegant too. Reusable forever, this is a fabulous tree to pass down from generation to generation as you solidify yourself as a 'No Cut Tree' family. Set the lights on a timer and way you go. This is also a sharp tree for business offices that often go the PVC tree route. All you office managers, stop! Before you commit to one of the plastic trees, see if you can do better for the air quality of the office. Your staff will thank you...

Available in specialty Christmas stores, and at this link:

http://amos.catalogcity.com/cc.class/cc?main=departments&act=d%2C1922&pcd=4402579&ccsyn=117

7. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, try a bonsai or miniature evergreen tree.

Especially if your space is limited, or you just adore small, miniature evergreen trees are a readily available alternative to cut Christmas trees. They last a long time, and again, because they are living trees, using them or Christmas will help the planet immensely. Remember, a cut tree is a dead tree!

Visit online retailer Red Envelope for more information about the Mini Cypress Tree or Rosemary Tree http://www.redenvelope.com

8. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, sponsor the planting of 15 or more live trees in a damaged ecosystem.

Those of you who read the regular issue of Joy to the Planet (88 ways to enjoy life AND help the planet) know I am a big fan of planting trees. And doing so for Christmas is a truly perfect choice. In the face of the millions of trees that are cut down for Christmas, PLANTING 15 or more, for US$15, is a bold and brilliant statement worthy of celebrating.

The non-profit organization American Forests makes it simple and easy to do. Just click the link and consider hanging a Christmas wreath beside the certificate they send you as thanks. http://www.americanforests.org/planttrees/holidays.php

9. Instead of a cut Christmas tree, decorate a completely different kind of household tree or plant.

In Hawaii, the Christmas tree of choice is actually the Palm tree, and the family at this link htt

p://www.joytotheplanet.com/images/ripebanana1.JPG
chose to honor their banana tree with ornaments this year. (Thanks go to Tom Elliot's Alternative Energy Information Centre for the photo and inspiration.) What living room plant or tree can you dress up?

10. Instead of a cut Christmas tree in your house, stop and make a point of enjoying all the Christmas trees that are already out there.

Have you ever stopped and noticed how many Christmas trees - artificial, cut, potted, inflatable, outdoor, what have you - you walk by every December? Last time I was out, I counted more than thirty!

So this year, instead of cutting down a Christmas tree for your own private viewing, why not take a moment and enjoy the many trees that have been decorated with care out there? Whether it be at the mall, on the Christmas television special, in magazines, the Internet, or the one in your friend's living room (until next year, when you convince her not to get one!). There's plenty of tree to enjoy for all of us.

Merry tree-free Christmas!

Best regards,

Andrea

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To sign up for Joy to the Planet, the ezine that shows you how to enjoy life AND help the planet, just visit http://www.joytotheplanet.com for more information. It's fun, and free!

Note: Although we have carefully researched the various links above, we cannot guarantee the

quality or availability of products purchased from other companies. Please inquire directly with the respective online companies for pricing, warranty, and other detail. Thank you!

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