

How to 'green' your Labor Day festivities

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Labor Day, as with many other holidays, is typically a time for friends and family to come together and celebrate. Holidays and large gatherings are often times for excess. However, you can help make these celebrations more eco-friendly with the following party-planning tips.

1. Avoid Disposable Party Ware

Disposables may make your life a little more convenient, but the process of making paper or plastic cups, plates, and plastic utensils is harmful to the environment.

Companies cut down trees for paper products, or consume significant energy making plastic, then burn fuel shipping those disposable products all over the world. When you're done with the spoon, it will probably end up in a landfill.

Reduce your party waste by using reusable cups, dishes, and utensils when you host gatherings.

2. If You're Grilling, Skip the Charcoal

If you're going to fire up the grill and have a few hamburgers and hot dogs, consider your fuel choices.

Charcoal: Although many love the taste of food cooked over a charcoal grill, cooking with charcoal releases volatile organic compounds, trace metals, and particulates that contribute to air pollution.

Gas: It may not seem like an eco-friendly option, but natural gas and propane both produce far less emissions than charcoal.

Pellets: Pellet grills are growing in popularity and provide a greener option to charcoal. They're fueled by wood pellets and might actually be healthier for you than other grilling methods.

Electric: If your electricity comes from renewable energy resources (like solar and wind), an electric grill may be the most environmentally friendly way to cook your outdoor meal.

3. Recycle (and make it easy for your guests to recycle)

Finally, make sure it's convenient for your guests to recycle those bottles and cans and compost food scraps. Include clearly marked recycling and compost bins next to your main eating area and help your guests understand what goes in each bin.

4. Buy in bulk

When you do head out to the supermarket, make sure that you buy the food you need in bulk. This means less packaging and less waste.

For more information, visit the City of Turlock website at www.CityofTurlock.org or Turlock Scavenger and Recycling website at www.TurlockScavenger.com. Brought to you by the City of Turlock Municipal Services Department.

Water conservation tip

Repair leaky faucets: Small drips add up to 100-300 gallons a day. Consider the additional waste if you have more than one dripping faucet in your house. Repair dripping and leaking faucets immediately.