

# Ways to tree-cycle a used Christmas tree

While your discarded Christmas tree may look sad and bare without the lights and ornaments lying on the snowbank, it is getting ready for its next Tree-cycling act. Christmas trees are 100 per cent biodegradable and there are many ways to give your tree a second life this post-holiday season.

Most municipalities in Ontario have curbside pickups or drop-off depots for your used tree. Each year, the 100,000 Christmas trees collected in Toronto are chipped into 3,700 tonnes of mulch used as compost in city parks. When it comes time to recycling your tree, bring it to the curb and keep your stand, ornaments, tinsel and lights so they can be re-used next year.

In some places like the Royal Botanical Gardens near Hamilton, discarded trees are placed streamside to armour the banks against erosion of waterways and creeks, and provide habitat for fish and wildlife. The

Children's Foundation of Guelph and Wellington last year picked up more than 3,000 trees which were mulched for local naturalization projects.

If you have the space on your property, a used tree can be placed to provide winter cover and habitats for birds and small animals. The same concept works for fish and aquatic critters when the trees are submerged in ponds or lakes with the owner's permission.

Crafty people have been known to upcycle small branches into rustic hooks and slice the tree trunk into handy drink coasters. Even the 50-foot white spruce at the Toronto Christmas Market, supplied by Forests Ontario is put to re-use. "The big tree at the Distillery Historic District is given a second life by turning the tree into mulch, protecting newly planted city trees, and has produced useable timber for Habitat for Humanity's home building programs" says Rob Keen,

Forests Ontario CEO.

One thing you should not try to do is burn it in your wood stove or fireplace, unless it has dried at least over the summer. The softwood of the Christmas conifer is not a good fuel, until the moisture level is below 20 per cent.

"Artificial trees are not recyclable as they are usually composed of a mix of plastic and metal, which make them difficult to disassemble. Unfortunately, most artificial trees, when they reach end of life, also end up in disposal," says Jo-Anne St. Godard, executive director, Recycling Council of Ontario. "The value of real Christmas trees is that they can maintain value in other ways once the holiday season is over, whether through composting or other uses."

So, don't shed a tear for the discarded tree at the curb, since it is just getting ready for its next round of Tree-cycling.



## Liver pâté truffles with pear coulis and maple jelly

Wow your guests this holiday season with these delightfully easy and delicious liver pâté truffles from DuBreton Certified Humane and Organic Pork. They're the perfect, impressive, hors d'oeuvre when you're entertaining.

Prep time: 30 minutes  
Cook time: 10-12 minutes  
Servings: 6 (4 pieces per serving)

- Ingredients:
- 1 tsp. (5mL) olive oil
  - 2 pears, peeled and cut into chunks
  - 1/2 shallot, chopped
  - 1 sprig fresh rosemary
  - 1/4 cup (60mL) water
  - Sea salt and fresh ground pepper
  - 4 slices brioche bread
  - 1 Tbsp. (15mL) butter, melted

- 1/2 cup (125mL) grain crackers
- 2 - 100 g packages duBreton Roasted Onion and Maple Organic Liver Pâté
- Approx. 1/4 cup (60mL) maple jelly, cut into small cubes (homemade or store bought)
- 1 cup (250mL) sprouts

Directions:

1. In a pan, heat oil over medium heat and sauté the shallot for 2 minutes. Add pears, rosemary and water. Bring to a boil, cover and cook for 5 minutes or until the pears are tender. Remove rosemary then purée the pear mixture into a coulis using an immersion blender, season to taste and let cool.

2. Preheat oven to 425°F (210°C).
3. Remove crusts from bread and cut each slice into 6 squares. Arrange on a baking sheet, brush with butter and season with salt and pepper. Bake for 5 to 7 minutes or until the bread is golden brown. Remove from oven and let cool.

4. Crush the crackers into fine crumbs and transfer to a small plate. Cut each pâté into 12 pieces and from into balls. Roll each ball in cracker crumbs to create pâté truffles and set aside.

5. Spoon a line of pear coulis along a plate and set four pieces of bread along the coulis. Drizzle approx. 1/2 tsp. (2mL) of coulis directly onto each piece of bread, add a liver pâté truffle and top with jelly cubes.

6. Toss the sprouts in a little olive oil and season. Place a small bunch of sprouts on each plate.

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