



## EARTH CARE @LEWINSVILLE

### Waste Watching During the Holidays (and Beyond!)

Reducing food waste is one of the most important things we can do to care for God's creation. The US Department of Agriculture estimates that Americans waste between 30 and 40 percent of our food each year, with the heaviest losses occurring during the winter holiday period.

Throwing away food affects our ecosystem by wasting the water and energy it takes to grow, harvest and package it. Food that ends up in landfills produces methane, a dangerous greenhouse gas that contributes to climate change.

While food waste occurs throughout the entire food chain, consumers are responsible for the largest portion. Actions we can take include:

- Don't overbuy. Plan and shop carefully for the number of people you will be feeding. Beware of recommendations from stores and packages for portion sizes far in excess of what people actually eat.
- 'Shop' your pantry before shopping at the store to be sure of what you already have on hand; use older items first if you do stock extra.
- Use leftovers. Share with guests or neighbors; warm them up or upcycle into something new; research what freezes well, and have a system for keeping track of what is in your freezer.
- Store leftovers and food that will spoil quickly in a prominent place in your refrigerator, in clear containers for easy identification.
- Compost what you don't use: join a community compost program (advocate for one, if your community doesn't offer service!) or use a home compost bin.
- Educate yourself and share knowledge with others. Check out:
  - [General information about food waste](#)
  - [Tips on food storage and planning, with helpful digital tools](#)
  - [Comprehensive USDA report on food waste.](#)

-- [From the December 2020 Newsletter](#)