



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

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Environmental Officials Encourage Commonwealth Residents to 'Gift Local' This Holiday Season

BOSTON – December 16, 2011 – With December holiday celebrations underway, officials of several Energy and Environmental Affairs agencies – the Departments of Agricultural Resources (DAR), Conservation and Recreation (DCR), and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) - are reminding Massachusetts residents of the many great gift ideas that support local agriculture and promote outdoor recreation.

“With a host of unique locally-grown foods, beverages, and decorations, there are a variety of options to delight all the senses,” said DAR Commissioner Scott J. Soares. “Everyone comes out a winner when locally-grown and made products are the choice. Buying local this season long promotes Massachusetts businesses and stimulates the Commonwealth’s economy.”

Here are some holiday gift ideas from DAR:

- **Poinsettia Plants** – Massachusetts growers produce half a million poinsettia plants annually. These harbingers of the holiday season are available in traditional red, as well as white, pink, and bi-color, from local independent garden centers, farm stands and florists. Wreaths, swags and a variety of plants are also available.
- **2012 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar** – Published by Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, Inc, in cooperation with the DAR, these colorful calendars feature photos illustrating Bay State farming selected through an annual photo contest. Calendars cost \$10 and proceeds benefit Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom (MAC), a non-profit organization that works with teachers to develop classroom materials on agricultural and environmental topics. Visit the [MAC website](#) for more information.
- **Gift Baskets** – The [Massachusetts Specialty Foods Association](#) offers “The Flavors of Massachusetts” gift baskets. Available in several sizes, assortments include Massachusetts sparkling cider, fruit jams and jellies, honey, maple syrup, cranberry chutney and candies, and more.
- **Award Winning Cheeses** – Many dairy farms around the state produce top notch cheeses. You can find the perfect gift from award winning cheese makers including Cricket Creek Farm in Williamstown, Westfield Farms in Hubbardston and fiore di nonno in Somerville. For a list of cheese producers and their products and a Google maps feature that will help you locate Massachusetts-made gifts, visit DAR’s [MassGrown & Fresher website](#).

For more local holiday gift ideas, check out at DAR’s [Local Holiday Food Buying Guide](#).

DFG and DCR recommend a selection of gift ideas that could be perfect for those who love the outdoors.

“DCR offers something for everyone – including a selection of perfect budget-friendly last minute gifts for the nature lover, outdoor enthusiast, recreation buff, or golf fanatic on your holiday list,” said DCR Commissioner Edward M. Lambert, Jr. “And the revenue from these great gifts goes to support local parks around Massachusetts.”

Here are some holiday gift ideas from DCR:

- **2012 Massachusetts ParksPasses** – Now available for purchase, the [ParksPass](#) provides unlimited day-use parking at more than 50 DCR state park facilities and it is valid until December 31, 2012. Passes can be used at ocean beaches, swimming ponds, mountain summits and historic sites such as Salisbury Beach State Reservation, Hopkinton State Park, Walden Pond State Reservation and Wachusett Mountain. Passes cost \$35 for Massachusetts residents and \$45 for non-residents. Note: orders for passes received after December 19 cannot be guaranteed to arrive by December 25. To purchase a ParksPass by phone, call 617-626-4969.
- **Golf Gift Certificates** – Gift certificates are available for [DCR's public golf courses](#): the Ponkapoag Golf Course in Canton and the Leo J. Martin Memorial Golf Course in Weston. Ponkapoag has one 18-hole course and one 9-hole course, and the Martin Memorial has an 18-hole course. Both facilities open in early April and prices vary depending on number of holes and day of the week. Gift certificates can be purchased in any amount. For Ponkapoag Golf Course (2167 Washington Street, Canton), call 781-828-4242. For Leo J. Martin Memorial Golf Course (190 Park Road, Weston), call 781-894-4903, ext. 23.
- **Donations** – For friends and family with a love of nature and a conservation ethic, consider making a donation in their name either to DCR's **Conservation Trust** or **Urban Parks Trust Fund**. The trusts' assets are used to enhance the natural, cultural, and recreational resources of the Commonwealth and contributions are tax-deductible. They can be earmarked for a favorite park, facility, or program, and can be made on behalf of an individual or organization. For information, contact Sharon Hoey at 617-626-1267.

“There is an exciting range of gift ideas for the naturalist in your life,” said DFG Commissioner Mary Griffin. “From fun, educational tools to licenses that give you access to all of the great fishing in the Commonwealth, purchase a gift that supports and promotes wildlife conservation and management in the state.”

Holiday gift ideas from DFG include:

- **Wildlife Publications** – DFG's MassWildlife offers variety of magazines, books and videos for every level of nature lover. A two-year subscription to *Massachusetts Wildlife* magazine delivers eight full-color issues of the Commonwealth's best wildlife publication. For the budding conservationist, try a copy of the *Critters of Massachusetts* book. For the more advanced naturalist, the *Field Guide to Dragonflies and Damselflies* or *A Field Guide to the Animals of Vernal Pools* might be just the ticket. In-depth descriptions and detailed photographs help the reader identify and learn more about these creatures. The turtle enthusiast in your life may also enjoy the *Introduction to the Threatened Turtles of Massachusetts*, a video available from MassWildlife's Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program. For more information go to [MassWildlife's publications page](#).
- **Outdoor Sporting Licenses** – The sportsman or sportswoman in your life will appreciate a 2012 hunting, fishing, or sporting (combination) [license](#). New this year, freshwater fishing licenses for minors ages 15-17 years of age are free. (Minors under 15 do not need a license to fish.) 2012 licenses are available for sale online or through license vendors throughout the state. For the salt water angler on your list, a recreational salt water fishing permit or recreational

lobster permit can be purchased [online](#), by calling 1-866-703-1925, or [at Division of Marine Fisheries offices in Boston, Gloucester, and New Bedford.](#)

- **Outdoor Workshops** – Purchase a gift certificate for one of the 2012 [Becoming an Outdoors-Woman](#) workshops. Additional workshops on skills such as animal tracking, shooting, fishing, kayaking, and photography are designed for adults and families new to that particular skill. The 2012 schedule of workshops will be posted in January. A terrific outdoor experience for teen girls and boys, 13-17 years old, is the [Junior Conservation Camp](#), a two-week overnight camp session in August packed with outdoor skills learning such as shooting, fishing, canoeing, and camping and field trips with biologists.



DAR’s mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth’s agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture’s role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR’s website at www.mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/agcommishsoares.

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, dams, and parkways. Led by Commissioner Edward M. Lambert Jr., the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.

The Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is responsible for promoting the conservation and enjoyment of the Commonwealth's natural resources. DFG carries out this mission through land protection and wildlife habitat management, management of inland and marine fish and wildlife species, and ecological restoration of fresh water, salt water, and terrestrial habitats. DFG promotes enjoyment of the Massachusetts environment through outdoor skills workshops, fishing festivals and other educational programs, and by enhancing access to the Commonwealth's rivers, lakes, and coastal waters.

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