GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS

Spring Lake Environmental Commission Initiatives
2021-2023
New Normal

BEING HOME

Work from home

School from home
4 Major Hazards

Health & Environment

- Noise
- Exhaust Pollution
- Particulate Matter Pollution
- Quantity of Pollution
Noise Levels

- GAS LEAF BLOWERS: 110 decibels
- FIREWORKS: 150 decibels
- JET ENGINES: 140 decibels
Noise Hazards for humans

- World Health Organization < 55 decibels
- Hearing loss > 85 decibels
- Gas leaf blowers = 110 decibels
Noise Hazards for pets

- Dog’s hearing = 125% more sensitive
- Cat’s hearing = 220% more sensitive

Pets work from home
Health Hazards from noise

Mental and Physical

- Tinnitus
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Cardiac and digestive disorders
- Cognitive impairment
- Sleep disturbance
- Diminished school performance
- Stress
Health Hazards from pollution

**Exhaust Pollution = Carbon Monoxide**
- Seeps into blood, affects respiration

**Particulate Matter Pollution**
- Respiratory infections
- Asthma
- COPD
- COVID related deaths
- Heart disease
- Mortality from pulmonary or lung disease
1 hour GLB = 17 car emissions
Hydrocarbons = acid rain, brown smog
87 million tons of smog per day
23x carbon monoxide, 300x more non-methane hydrocarbons than pick-up truck
Ozone pollution = more than all CA cars

Unburned Fuel...30%
17 million gallons of gasoline spilled per year...more than Exxon Valdez.
Environmental Hazards

Insect Habitats
- 200 mph wind disrupts animal habitats and ecosystems

Climate Change
- Sea level rise; floods
- Storms; Sandy
Quiet July & August 2021

- Mayor Naughton approves letter to residents + over 150 landscapers via June 2021 water bill outlining hazards, suggesting suspension of gas-powered leaf blower use - July & August.
2021 Actions – Survey

FOLLOW-UP Survey sent to residents in water bill December 2021

SURVEY METHODOLOGY:

- 1,782 property owners received 2-question survey in December 14, 2021
  water/sewer bill. Survey also available on Borough website
- Response options - mail back or complete on-line by January 7, 2022
2021 Actions – Survey Results

PARTICIPATION:
- 358 Responded (20%); 305 Talled
- 114 Participated in 2021 Initiative

ACTION PREFERRED:
- 94 Voluntary initiative (31%)
- 113 Mandatory suspension (37%)
- 97 No initiative (32%)
RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2022 Ordinance: No GLB use for June, July, August
- Public Education
- DPW participation: Commercial electric blowers June, July August; 4-stroke remainder of year
- Support state legislation
2022 Actions

E-NEWSLETTER TO RESIDENTS MAY 2022 – Mayor Naughton approves

- Hazards of GLB’s
- Urging participation in Quiet June, July August
- DPW Participation
GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWERS
HEALTH HAZARDS & SAFETY TIPS

REDUCE THE USE
Quiet June, July & August 2022

health hazards
1. Can cause permanent hearing loss
2. Spread dangerous herbicides & pesticides into the air, cars & homes through windows
3. Release toxic fumes from unburned gas & oil emissions compromising lung, cardiovascular & overall health
4. Disrupt the ecosystem disturbing insect eggs and nesting

safety tips
1. Use noise canceling head gear
2. Wear dust mask & safety goggles
3. Do not blow gravel, dirt, concrete dust, garden topsoil, or any dust that could contain crystalline silica or hazardous material
4. Use at a distance of 50 feet from people

benevolent
1. Noise encroaches on peaceful porch & property use
2. Fumes & dust carry to adjacent properties
3. Noise, fumes & dirt infringes on child-play
4. Learning & concentration are affected
5. Outdoor activities suffer random & frequent disruption

alternatives
1. Ask your landscaper to use the alternatives listed below
2. Use a rake or broom
3. Keep leaves under shrubs & grass clippings on lawn as mulch
4. Use a mulching mower or mower with collecting bin
5. Use electric leaf blower, leaf vacuum or lawn sweeper
6. Convert more of your lawn to native plants
2022 DPW Actions

PURCHASED NEW BLOWERS

- 2021 - 1 hand-held, battery-powered electric blower
- 2022 - 2 more hand-held electric blowers, 1 commercial electric backpack blower
- 2022 - 4-stroke gas-powered blower - significantly lower emissions than the standard 2-stroke blower
2022 DPW Actions

ADJUSTED PRACTICES

- Cut grass at higher setting – results in less grass clippings
- Refrain from blowing center of public grounds; blow sidewalks + concrete - ‘blow as needed’ / ‘conscious cutting’
- Monitor use of safety equipment.
- “Practices will get better with time”
- Home use, 1 battery backpack blower should be sufficient
2022 Actions

- Formed a coalition modeling Quiet Princeton + Quiet Montclair
- Keeps new actions moving forward, not inhibited by Council affiliations
- Developed Quiet Spring Lake website...https://quietspringlake.com/
- Began to illicit help from more residents

2023 Actions

A Quiet Spring Lake

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Pilot Program, initial step.

- Council passed Resolution to ban gas leaf blowers seasonally in 2016. Code Enforcement and police enforced ban via non-emergency phone number.
- Assessed results of Pilot leading to unanimous vote to seasonal ban of gas blowers in 2017.
- Passed a year-long permanent ban gas-powered blower starting 2023.

**Princeton**

Ordinance #2021-32


From May 16 to September 30 each calendar year, and from December 16 to March 14 the following calendar year, no person shall operate, or cause or permit the operation of, any gas-powered leaf blower at any time.

**Montclair**

Ordinance #O-21-01

By law in Montclair, gas-powered (“internal combustion”) leaf blowers may only be used at certain times of day and during certain times of year. As of 2021, the law allows their use only from March 15 to May 15 and from October 15 to December 15, except in emergencies.
RESOURCES


REGULATION RESOURCES

- City of Long Beach
- Montclair  [https://ecode360.com/7187000](https://ecode360.com/7187000)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Quiet Princeton, quietprinceton.org
- Tree Hugger, treehugger.com
- Quiet Communities Inc., quietcommunities.org
- Quiet Clean PDX, [https://www.quietcleanpdx.org/](https://www.quietcleanpdx.org/)
- ASHA, American Speech-Language Hearing Assoc.
  [https://huntingtoncalm.org/public-health-issues/](https://huntingtoncalm.org/public-health-issues/)
- [https://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/Comnoise-4.pdf](https://www.who.int/docstore/peh/noise/Comnoise-4.pdf)
- [https://www.momsclenaireforce.org/leaf-blowers-health/](https://www.momsclenaireforce.org/leaf-blowers-health/)

- YouTube:
  - Nancy Adams  [https://youtu.be/VI5kQlee8sw](https://youtu.be/VI5kQlee8sw)
  - CBS News  [https://youtu.be/1YPcYnuSTa4](https://youtu.be/1YPcYnuSTa4)
  - Orange County Report  [https://youtu.be/N9Pkck37f7k](https://youtu.be/N9Pkck37f7k)