

Alternatives

- ✓ Leave the leaves -- gather them into flower beds and mulch them into your lawn (*which helps fertilize the soil and provides habitat for wildlife*). Wait until June to clear beds to allow overwintering pollinators a chance to nest.
- ✓ Electric leaf blowers
- ✓ Shred leaves into mulch with a lawnmower
- ✓ Use push-powered leaf collectors
- ✓ Tow-behind lawn sweepers

Change the plantings in your lawn

1. Attempt to eliminate as much lawn grass as possible.
 - Plant native plants as large scale ground cover plantings to reduce lawn area or plant ornamental grasses like bunchgrasses.
2. Spread seeding mixtures of wildflowers to create meadows.
3. Set up your lawn so that leaves fall on planted areas rather than lawn.
 - Leaves will feed the microorganisms that improve the health of the soil and make your plants stronger.



More Information

- **Reducing the Use of Leaf Blowers by Ordinance**
<https://tinyurl.com/ywad5nbe>
- **American Green Zone Alliance (AGZA)**
<https://agza.net/>
- **Quiet Communities**
<https://quietcommunities.org/>
- **In Good Health: How chronic noise exposure affects the human body** <https://tinyurl.com/vzn694pn>
- **This Fall, Leave the Leaves!**
<https://tinyurl.com/2wzhmrhh>
- **How to Turn Fallen Leaves into Springtime Mulch**
<https://tinyurl.com/3k4dbek7>
- **The First Thing We Do, Let's Kill All the Leaf Blowers** <https://tinyurl.com/4c5b2hzz>
- **Advocates for Transforming Landscaping in NJ (ATL-NJ)** is a working group you can join to learn more and connect with others regarding resources. Email Atlnewjersey@gmail.com



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by Margot Lange



Gas-powered Leaf Blowers


Why are they so harmful?
What can be used instead?



ABOUT

We are all too familiar with the sound of gas-powered leaf blowers and the smell of the fumes that are released. Noise and air pollution upset neighbors and residents, however even greater problems exist.

Gas-powered leaf blowers have a negative impact on the environment and climate. These machines release carbon monoxide, nitrous oxide, and carcinogenic hydrocarbons into the atmosphere, which impact your health, the health of lawncare workers, and the health of the planet. Along with the chemical pollution generated, the dust produced is also hazardous as it can contain mold, animal feces, heavy metals, and chemicals from herbicides and pesticides. Health issues that can result from exposure include lung cancer, asthma, and cardiovascular disease. Serious hearing problems, such as hearing loss and tinnitus, often result from the noise pollution produced as well.



Wildlife is also disturbed as many organisms use leaves as a habitat. Although there are many alternatives to leaf blowers, it is always best to leave the leaves where they lie as they help generate a healthier soil and a healthier planet.

LAW & INCENTIVES

NJ LEGISLATION

- Bill A3906 (*introduced*)
 - Bans the sale and utilization of gas-powered lawn equipment in NJ and also provides CBT (Corporation Business Tax) and other tax credits for purchase of specified zero-emission lawn equipment.
- Bill NJ S217 (*In Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee*)
 - Bans the sale and utilization of gas-powered leaf blowers in NJ.
- Bill A4666 (*In Assembly Environment, Natural Resource, and Solid Waste Committee*)
 - Directs the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to create a rebate program for the purchasing of electric/battery-powered leaf blowers.

LOCAL ORDINANCES

- Township of Maplewood
 - Prohibits the utilization of gas-powered leaf blowers, except a turbo blower. Year round.
- Township of Montclair
 - Restricts the use of leaf blowers powered by internal combustion engines year round.
- Township of South Orange
 - Prohibits the use of gas-powered leaf blowers from May 1 - September 30 and leaf blowers are permitted on certain days and times.
- Municipality of Princeton
 - Prohibits the use of gas-powered leaf blowers from May 16 to September 30 and from December 16 to March 14.
 - Restricts the use of leaf blowers, mowers, and other lawncare equipment to certain days and certain times. Princeton requires landscaper registration to ensure that landscapers understand Princeton's regulations.

GAS BLOWERS

- Noisy
- Heavy
- High maintenance costs
- High cost of gas refuelling
- Air pollution
- Cost \$100 - \$500
- 150+ mph wind speed

ELECTRIC BLOWERS

- Less noisy
- Light
- Low maintenance costs
- Low cost of electric charging
- No air pollution
- Cost \$79 - \$150
- 50 - 100 mph wind speed

FUN FACTS

200 mph wind disrupts animal habitats and ecosystems.

Gas leaf blowers produce noise at a level of 110 decibels (a jet engine from 100 yards produces 135 dB and fireworks produce 150 dB).

The Hearing Health Foundation states that sounds over 70 dB can harm one's hearing over time.

The hydrocarbon emissions produced during 30 minutes of work with a gas-powered leaf blower are about equal to the emissions from a 3,900 mile drive in a Ford F-150 SVT Raptor pickup truck.