

LESS EXPENSIVE Alternatives to leaf blowers:

- Use a broom, rake, or manual leaf sweeper.
- Purchase, rent, or borrow an electric leaf blower (see mowelectric.org for info. on electric lawn care). *Over time electric blowers save you money versus buying fuel for gas-powered blowers and engine maintenance.*
- Leave leaves on the ground when possible!

The good news: Lawn care contractors are starting to change over to electric because it's the *sustainable* way of the future!

"All of my equipment performs beautifully, and I save time by never having to gas anything up or perform any of the regular maintenance that goes along with running gasoline powered equipment. I love being all electric and my customers love it too."

– Tim Roper, Owner
Green Bee Lawn & Garden

Gas- Powered Leaf Blowers

The negative effects on our neighborhood and our planet

Want to learn more?

Contact Sustainable Woodstock's Energy and Transportation Action Group
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Air Pollution

Did you know?

- Operating a gas-powered leaf blower for an hour can create as much smog-forming pollution as driving a Toyota Camry 1,100 miles.
- Leaf blowers use 2-stroke engine fuel—a gas-oil mixture that is especially toxic compared to automobile emissions.



Leaf Blower Pollutants:

- Hydrocarbons
- Nitrous oxides (components of smog)
- Carbon dioxide
- VOCs (volatile organic compounds)

Fine Particulate Pollutants:

- Dust
- Pollen
- Mold
- Animal feces
- Heavy metals
- Herbicides and pesticides

Fine particulate matter can remain airborne for long periods of time, infiltrate buildings, and penetrate the body.



Health effects of exhaust and particulate pollution:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Stroke
- Respiratory disease
- Cancer
- Neurological conditions
- Premature death
- Effects on prenatal development

Leaf blowers can generate an air blast of over 200 mph— greater than a category 5 hurricane!

Noise Pollution

The constant throttling up and down and high decibel range of gas leaf blowers exceeds noise safety standards established by the World Health Organization and the EPA. General ambient noise in a home is 40-45 decibels, whereas the decibel range of a leaf blower is 100-115; it is even as high as 90 decibels from 50 feet away! It carries over long distances, and penetrates walls and windows.

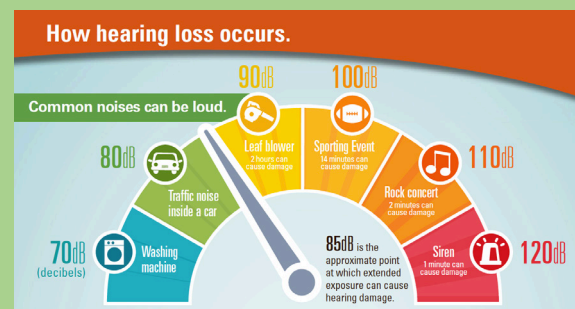


Health Risks of Noise Pollution

- Increased stress hormones of the sympathetic nervous system
- High blood pressure
- Sleep disruption
- Stroke and heart disease
- Hearing loss and tinnitus resulting in impaired communication
- Lost productivity and focus
- Hyperactivity

How Hearing Loss Occurs

Sound vibrates the eardrum and the tiny bones in the middle ear, which then vibrate the hair cells in the inner ear. Regular exposure to more than 85 decibels for eight hours or longer—such as lawn care workers experience—can cause hearing loss by permanently damaging the hair cells.



Ecological and Horticultural

Fallen leaves are nature's mulch and provide habitat for many creatures.



Butterflies:

Do you love butterflies? Leave leaves alone. Many butterfly species overwinter as pupae in the leaf litter layer.

Birds:

Within the leaf litter layer there are creatures that eat other creatures and, in turn, are eaten by others. Like songbirds? Keep your leaves in place. The vast majority of songbirds feed insects to their young, and the leaf litter layer is an insect buffet.

Other creatures:

The leaf litter is alive with small creatures that are essential to the health and function of our ecosystems—from microscopic fungi to ants, beetles, snails, salamanders, and many others.

Leaf blowers expose and compact the soil, resulting in unhealthy soil that is susceptible to desiccation and erosion.