

Leaf Blowers

Why we care

While gas-powered leaf blowers may make quick work of leaves, they pose risks to human health and the environment. According to a national study, they are an important source of toxic and carcinogenic exhaust and fine particulate matter. They also raise clouds of dust that may include pollen, mold, and animal dander. The exhaust and dust are especially dangerous for asthmatics and for children who breathe more air per pound of body weight than adults. And, at 70-90 decibels, the engines are loud. According to the EPA, noise levels over 75 decibels can cause hearing loss. Even from 50 feet away decibel levels range from 62 to 75, negatively affecting our quality of life. Leaf blowers also deprive flowers, shrubs and trees of natural mulch needed to stop erosion, water evaporation, and loss of nutrients. Currently 16 California cities have banned gas-powered leaf blowers.

Simple, positive steps

- Use a push broom, rake, mulching mower, or leaf sweeper.
- Put leaves to good use. Left in place they help enrich the soil and retain moisture.
- Compost leaves on site or put them in a green yard debris cart.
- Do NOT hose down or sweep leaves into the street unless you live in a [city leaf collection area](#).
- Transform lawns into gardens that don't need mowing, edging, or blowing.
- Consider an electric leaf blower that is quieter and avoids harmful emissions.
- If you desire changes in leaf blower regulations, contact [Quiet Clean PDX](#).

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at jeanne@earthleaders.org.