

Dear neighbor,

I am reaching out to ask if you might consider asking your landscapers to reduce their use of gas leaf blowers, even when they are legal to use. I am sharing a few reasons, since I know many people are unaware of the problems that gas leaf blowers cause.



Noise. Gas leaf blowers are so loud that they can cause hearing loss fairly quickly for anyone within a 50-foot radius. Their noise has a strong low-frequency component that makes it travel especially far and pass through walls and windows easily. A typical crew operating multiple machines generates enough noise to exceed EPA community standards for 800 feet in all directions, making it difficult to concentrate for people working from home or attending school remotely.



Pollution. Gas leaf blowers use extremely inefficient “two-stroke” engines that spew large amounts of fine particulate matter and other pollutants into the air. The California Air Resources Board studied lawn and garden equipment and found that the best-selling commercial leaf blower puts out more smog-forming pollution in one hour than a Toyota Camry driving 1,100 miles!

Health of residents and workers. Leaf blowers blast air at 200+ miles an hour, kicking up huge clouds of dust, mold, pollen, animal feces, and other tiny particles that linger in the air for hours. These can irritate and cause health problems for both humans and pets. The pollutants leaf blowers emit are known to cause cancer, heart problems, respiratory issues, problems in pregnancy, and even premature death for those with certain conditions. The landscape workers suffer the most, due to chronic exposure.



Biodiversity. Leaf blowers destroy the natural layer of leaf litter that protects and nourishes plants and wildlife, including pollinators hibernating there for the winter.

Lawn and garden beauty. Simply leaving short grass clippings on the lawn recycles their nutrients into the soil. In the fall, leaves can be mulched with a lawn mower or left on garden beds, where they will protect plants through the winter, suppress weeds, and improve soil structure and health.



Instead of gas leaf blowers, I hope you will encourage your landscapers to use some combination of rakes, battery-powered tools, mulch-mowing, and “leaving the leaves” in garden beds.



Thanks for reading and for your consideration. If you are interested in learning more about this subject, check out www.quietmontclair.org.