



## Gas Powered Leaf Blower (GPLB) Considerations

## Toxicity/Cancer Risks

Unlike four-stroke engines, the two-stroke engines in gas powered leaf blowers do not completely combust fuel, exposing operators & others to harmful levels of toxic and carcinogenic fumes<sup>1</sup> including:

- carbon monoxide<sup>1</sup>
- benzene<sup>2</sup>
- toxic aromatic hydrocarbons<sup>2</sup>
- formaldehyde,<sup>3</sup> and more.

## Did You Know...

- Since 2010, Sleepy Hollow Village Code has banned gas-powered leaf blowers between Memorial Day Saturday and September 30.
- Any ban on gas-powered leaf blowers still allows you to use electric leaf blowers at any time. So there is no need to give up using a leaf blower if that solution works best for you.
- There are equivalently powerful electric and gas-powered leaf blower options as measured by:
  - speed of leaf clearance (cubic feet per minute or cfm)
  - power of engine (miles per hour or mph).

There is no need to give up efficiency by switching to healthier electric models!

- If you are a customer of a landscaping company that has clients outside of Sleepy Hollow, many neighboring municipalities have already banned gas-powered leaf blowers (see "Local Bans"). So many landscapers have already begun conversion to electric units.
- Residents and landscapers using electric leaf blowers typically have more than one battery to avoid downtime.
- Questions or comments? Email Sustainable Sleepy Hollow at [sleepy.hollow.eac@gmail.com](mailto:sleepy.hollow.eac@gmail.com)

## Positive ROI

Switching to equivalently powered electric blowers (e.g., Stihl BGA 200 for municipalities & large properties) yields a positive return on investment (ROI) in under 1.5 years (adjusted for Westchester gas & electric costs)<sup>8</sup>. Landscaping companies doing business in neighboring communities with bans have already advanced along this return on investment timeline.



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## Time to Adjust

Any ban on gas-powered leaf blowers would include a phase-in period to allow residents & landscapers to plan. And our village DPW has already begun conversion with 3 electric leaf blowers out of a 6 fleet total. Village Parks has 2 electric out of 5 total.

## Special Risk To Children

The Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU) of Mount Sinai Hospital supports leaf blower bans because of heightened impact on children's respiratory health.<sup>10</sup> PEHSU states that children are more vulnerable to respiratory danger from gas-powered (internal combustion) leaf blowers because they breathe faster, are rarely wearing protective equipment, are closer to the ground, and have still-developing organs.

## Health Damage from Noise

GPLB sound exceeds safe thresholds even 800 feet away from the source,<sup>5</sup> negatively impacting productivity, health, and quality of life.<sup>7</sup> Also, low-frequency sound is a common cause of annoyance and other stress-induced adverse consequences.<sup>5</sup> GPLBs typically exceed 95 A-weighted decibels (dBA).<sup>7</sup> Prolonged exposure >85 dBA is found to cause hearing loss and permanent ringing in ears.<sup>4</sup> Electric leaf blowers are quieter and operate below harmful thresholds.<sup>6</sup>

## Emissions

30 minutes of yard work with a two-stroke GPLB produces about the same hydrocarbon emissions as a 3,900-mile drive from Texas to Alaska in a Ford Raptor.<sup>9</sup>

## Sources

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## Local Bans

Many municipalities that share landscaping companies with Sleepy Hollow have already instituted year-round GPLB bans: Irvington, Dobbs Ferry, Hastings, Larchmont, White Plains, Bedford, Nyack, Mamaroneck & more.



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