



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 & bystanders to harmful levels of toxic and carcinogenic fumes¹ including:

- carbon monoxide,¹
- benzene,²
- toxic aromatic hydrocarbons,²
- formaldehyde,³ and more.

Did You Know...

- Since 2010, Sleepy Hollow Village Code has banned gas-powered leaf blowers (GPLBs) between Memorial Day Saturday & Sept. 30.
- A ban on GPLBs still allows you to use an electric leaf blower. So no need to give up a leaf blower if that solution works best for you.
- There are equivalently powerful electric & gas leaf blower options for commercial landscapers as measured by:

- speed of leaf clearance (cubic feet per minute or cfm)
- power of engine (miles per hour or mph).

Argento & Sons (supplier for many local landscapers and municipalities) carries Greenworks Optimus 26N backpack (742 cfm, 169 mph) & Stihl BGA200 (571 cfm, 192 mph).

- Many neighboring municipalities have already banned GPLBs (see "Local Bans"). As such, many landscapers operating across multiple villages already have electric units.
- Residents and landscapers using electric leaf blowers usually have multiple batteries or use a heavy duty battery pack (see "\$ Considerations") to minimize downtime.
- Questions or comments? Reach Sustainable Sleepy Hollow at sleepy.hollow.eac@gmail.com

\$ Considerations

Electric blower prices have dropped & run time has improved in recent years. A well-cited study⁸ compared purchase & operating cost of a commercial-strength electric blower with extended battery pack (Stihl BGA 200 with Stihl AR3000 battery unit) to an equivalently powered GPLB (both for five hour daily run times). The electric option, including battery cost, yielded a positive return on investment (ROI) in under 1.5 years due to the lower cost of electricity vs. gas. That said, conversion to electric, including purchase of multiple batteries, does put financial pressure on landscapers in the short term.



Time to Adjust

GPLB bans often include a phase-in period to help residents & landscapers plan. Bans by nearby municipalities have already started landscaper migration to electric units. Sleepy Hollow has also begun electric conversion (DPW: 3 electric out of 6 total fleet; Parks: 2 electric out of 5 total fleet).

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. PEHSU states that children are more vulnerable to respiratory danger from gas-powered (2 stroke partial combustion) leaf blowers because they breathe faster, rarely wear protective equipment, are closer to the ground, and have still-developing organs.¹⁰

Health Damage from Noise

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

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.⁹

Sources

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8. olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Downloads/PublicTestimonyDocument/42652 Note: the findings of this study were adjusted for lower Westchester county gas prices to yield an ROI of 1.5 years.
9. <https://www.edmunds.com/about/press/leaf-blowers-emissions-dirtier-than-high-performance-pick-up-trucks-says-edmunds-insidelinecom.html>
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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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