

# 4 Reasons Not to Use a Leaf Blower

## Plus 4 Greener Alternatives

October 20, 2008 at 11:31AM by Diane MacEachern | [Comment](#)



Citizens in my town of Takoma Park, MD are asking the city council to ban gas-powered leaf blowers because they are so noisy and generate so much air pollution. If the council agrees, our community will join many others around the U.S. that believe it is cleaner and healthier to rake leaves rather than blow them into bags or down to the street for pick-up.

Why are gas leaf blowers so offensive?

1. **They pollute the air.**

A single gas-powered leaf blower can emit [as much pollution in a year as 80 cars](#).

2. **They're noisy.**

A normal decibel level, considered acceptable in residential areas, is about 60 decibels (60dB). Every increase in decibels means noise that is 10 times louder. Leaf-blowers usually generate about 70-75 dB. According to the U.S. EPA this level of noise actually [degrades quality of life](#) by interfering with communication and sleep, leads to reduced accuracy of work and increased levels of aggravation, which can linger hours after exposure.

3. **They worsen allergies and asthma and irritate the lungs.**

Because they operate at such high velocities, leaf blowers stir up the mold, allergens, and dust particles that otherwise have been tamped down with rain and decomposition.

4. **They waste gas.**

Rakes and even electric-lawn blowers offer a petroleum-free alternative.

If you need a new rake, choose one that's at least 24 inches across for maximum efficiency, with tines made from either metal or plastic (wood or bamboo tines tend to break or rot). Here are

more [tips on buying a great rake](#). Shop at any local hardware store, garden supply center or big box store like Target, Lowe's, Home Depot, or Wal-Mart.



You can also try a [leaf sweeper](#). It swoops up leaves into a handy collection bag as you roll it over your lawn or driveway.

If you opt for a leaf blower, [make it electric](#). Notes Lowe's:

Electric leaf blowers are lighter, quieter and vibrate less than gas units. An electric motor drives the fan, so there's no need to mix fuel or refill. Smaller and medium-sized yards are especially good candidates for electric blowers. There are two types:

- Corded leaf blowers provide constant power as long as you have access to an electrical outlet. The attached cord limits mobility so this may not be the best choice for a lawn with lots of trees. Look for a cord retention system to prevent the cord from being accidentally unplugged during use. Also, use an electrical cord that's rated for outdoor use.
- Rechargeable/battery-operated leaf blowers are good alternatives for smaller areas or jobs. They work well on solid surfaces like driveways and garages. They're limited by their run time and the fact that they move less air than larger models.

Want information on other power tools? See this [landscaping information](#).

Read more: [4 Reasons Not to Use a Leaf Blower - The Daily Green](#)  
Follow us: [@the\\_daily\\_green on Twitter](#) | [thedailygreen on Facebook](#)  
Visit us at [TheDailyGreen.com](#)