



Lake Oswego Sustainability Network
[Electrify Your Landscaping / Healthy Yard Care](#)
It's Clean, It's Quiet, It's Healthy

Letters to the Editor Archive: The Oregonian

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Readers respond: Leave the leaves

Dec. 10, 2024

By Letters to the editor | The Oregonian

I live in the Palisades neighborhood of Lake Oswego. Nearly every day, especially during the fall months, I hear a droning chorus of loud and obtrusive gas-powered leaf blowers coming from every direction. Not only are these blowers noisy and disruptive, but they pose significant health risks to the people using them and destroy precious habitat for the small wildlife residing in the leaves. According to [the Xerces Society](#), "A layer of leaves is vital insulation from the cold for the many animals that hide within (or in the soil beneath), like quite a few butterflies. Others, like many native bees, nest within stems, flower heads, or pieces of wood."

I would like to strongly encourage my neighbors and the wider community to stop using gas-powered leaf blowers. Instead, please leave the leaves where they are so they can nourish the soil. Certainly, sidewalks and streets should be cleared, but that can easily be accomplished with a rake, broom or - if necessary - an electric leaf blower.

Rachel Melissa, Lake Oswego

Schmidt, Diana. "Readers respond: Better lawn blowers are shared responsibility." *The Oregonian* (OR), sec. Letters to the editor, 4 Sep. 2024.

Readers respond: Better lawn blowers are shared responsibility

Sep. 04, 2024

By Letters to the editor | The Oregonian

Gas-powered leaf blowers are so loud and ubiquitous they've become impossible to ignore. Originally developed as a way to save water in drought-impacted landscapes, they're now impossible to escape and have become the soundtrack of our lives.

But they aren't just noisy. Their emissions are toxic. Small combustion engines produce exhaust fumes high in benzene, butadiene, formaldehyde and fine particulates. These are known carcinogens associated with respiratory, cardiovascular and neurological harm.

We all suffer from their use. If the noise doesn't make you run around closing your windows, the dangerous emissions should. Yet it's the operators who are affected most. It is prolonged use - day after day, year upon year - that most negatively impacts users. The hazardous emissions are not just inhaled but also accumulate on clothing, exposing users' homes and families. Those with less economic power or fewer resources suffer disproportionately.

These gas-powered blowers should be prohibited. It's an issue of public health. And those who make their living caring for our yards shouldn't be expected to bear the financial burden of transitioning an entire industry away from harmful equipment and practices. If we really care about those who work for and with us, we must share in that investment. Through personal action, legislation, public funds, or all three, we must take collective action. This is about the air we all breathe, the health of all our children and the well-being of all those we purport to care about.

Diana Schmidt, Lake Oswego

Wiens, Jeff. "Readers respond: Lake Oswego should eliminate gas leaf blowers." *The Oregonian* (OR), sec. Letters to the editor, 22 Jul. 2024.

Readers respond: Lake Oswego should eliminate gas leaf blowers

Jul. 22, 2024

By Letters to the editor | The Oregonian

Gas powered leaf blowers are horrible. We need to get rid of them. There are electric leaf blowers that work really well. If we use electric leaf blowers, this would lower the noise and eliminate the toxic fumes.

At our home in the First Addition neighborhood, we are surrounded by gas powered leaf blowers all week long. The clouds of dirt and fumes keep us from going out to our yard or driveway. We even need to shut our windows. This is ridiculous, and it shouldn't be allowed.

Having a yard service is one thing, but it has evolved into a super loud gas-powered leaf blower assault. This affects workers and neighbors for several blocks. Couldn't yardwork be done with rakes or electric leaf blowers? How about using a rake to remove the leaves from walkways, and leave the rest in the planter beds. The planter bed leaves would promote healthier soil and a healthier garden.

If you hire a landscaper that uses gas leaf blowers, ask them to go electric. You can even purchase your own and tell them to use your electric leaf blower in your yard. Not having to deal with that nasty gasoline, the fumes and the loud noise will be a welcome change for them and your neighbors. I think Lake Oswego should follow the example of Portland and ban gas powered leaf blowers, (["Ban on gas leaf blowers passed in Portland: gradual phase-out begins in 2026,"](#) March 13).

Jeff Wiens, Lake Oswego

Puhlman, Mark. "Readers respond: Expand ban on gas-powered leaf blowers." The Oregonian (OR), sec. Letters to the editor, 9 Jul. 2024.

Readers respond: Expand ban on gas-powered leaf blowers

Jul. 09, 2024

By Letters to the editor | The Oregonian

I live in the Forest Highlands neighborhood of Lake Oswego and sit on the neighborhood association board, as well as the city's sustainability advisory board and sustainability network.

I've been so discouraged by the constant noise and fumes from gas-powered landscape equipment. These gas-powered tools, especially blowers, are harmful to the people operating them. They produce [exhaust fumes](#) with high levels of known carcinogens like benzene, butadiene, formaldehyde, along with fine particulates associated with respiratory, cardiovascular, and neurological harm. They send dust into the air that can contain pollen, mold, animal feces, heavy metals, and chemicals from herbicides and pesticides. The high-decibel, low-frequency noise they generate causes [hearing loss](#). The noise travels farther and penetrates walls more easily than higher-pitched sounds.

Happily, there is an easy solution. I use rakes and brooms. I leave the leaves in landscaped areas, where they retain moisture in the soil, decompose to provide nutrients for the trees and plants, act as a springtime weed suppressant, and provide critical habitat for pollinators like bees and butterflies. I have purchased an electric lawn mower and trimmer. I have been extremely satisfied with their performance. They're exponentially quieter, cleaner, and healthier. Doing so has benefited me, my neighborhood, and the environment.

I personally encourage Lake Oswego to follow the lead of Portland and ban gas-powered leaf blowers in our city, ("[Ban on gas leaf blowers passed in Portland: gradual phase-out begins in 2026](#)," March 13).

Mark Puhlman, Lake Oswego