



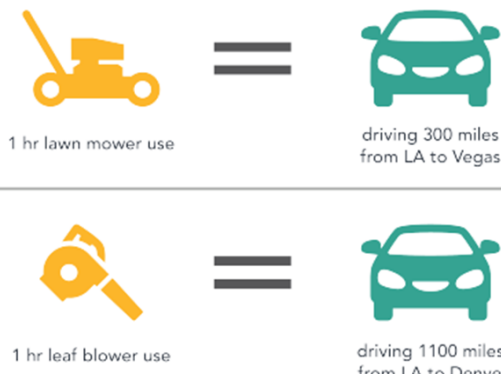
# Leaf Blowers

## Pollution, Health Risks, and Alternatives

### Pollution, Fumes, and Dust

Leaf blowers emit a surprising amount of greenhouse gases and carcinogens. Their engines are inefficient and pollute much more than the average car. Eliminating leaf blowers in Alameda County would have the same environmental impact as getting 1/6 of cars off the road.

Leaf blowers also emit toxic chemicals such as carbon-monoxide and hydrocarbons, and stir up dust particles that can travel deep into your lungs. Fumes and dust particles can cause headaches, dizziness, respiratory issues, and even cancer.



### Noise

Leaf blowers produce noise levels of 55 to over 100 dBA, equivalent to the noise levels of a jackhammer. For those frequently exposed, this is enough to cause hearing loss. If you do use a leaf blower, make sure to wear earmuffs and a mask. Keep in mind that the noise can also disrupt neighbors, especially during times people may be sleeping.

### Alternatives



A good, old-fashioned rake or broom can do the job of a leaf blower without the pollution, fumes, or noise. Plus, for some, raking or sweeping leaves can be a relaxing experience! If you or your gardener/landscaper don't have the time, think about which leaves really need to be raked and which can be left alone to decompose on the spot.

Lawn-sweepers are a great alternative that save time as well. Just manually push the lawn-sweeper and it will gather the leaves. Then, empty the bag in your organics cart.



If you still love your leaf blower, try switching to an all-electric version. These versions are quieter, cause less pollution, and don't emit toxic fumes.

Embrace the fall! Try leaving your leaves in the yard. Fallen leaves create habitat for important pollinators when left whole. If you chop or crunch them, they are fantastic mulch for lawns and gardens.

### Resources

Pollution Information: <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/our-work/programs/small-off-road-engines-sore/about>

Information on Health Risks: <https://www.quietcommunities.org/>

Pollinator Habitat Information: <https://www.xerces.org/blog/leave-the-leaves>

Mulching Tips: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/landscape/leaf-management-plan/>

### Contact Us

Albany Community Development  
Department, Sustainability Division  
1000 San Pablo Avenue  
(510) 528-5760  
<https://www.albanycalifornia.org/departments/sustainability>