

Bayit Bytes for Your Health and the Earth

Yard Care for Life

Troublesome Tools of the Trade

Leaf Blowers:

In addition to being noisy, leaf blowers create air pollution through fuel combustion & by stirring up dirt, pollen, mold & other irritants. They're also big energy wasters.

Children and the elderly tend to be the most vulnerable to respiratory problems and hearing loss but everyone benefits from reducing noise & air pollution throughout the neighborhood.

Alternatives:

- ✚ *Cross the street or change your route when you hear the noise or see clouds of dust raised by leaf blowers*
- ✚ *Ask your gardener or maintenance team to use rakes, brooms, and rolling leaf sweepers for tidying up - it will cost more but consider the health and environmental gains*
- ✚ *Accept the presence of a few leaves or petals on the ground at times v. "blow it all away" immaculate tidiness*
- ✚ *Break down fall leaves with a mulching lawn mower, then rake them into planting beds to make your own nourishing compost over the winter (Bronx Green-Up email bronxgreenup@nybg.org for composting guidance)*

Diesel-powered Lawn Mowers:

Another noisy, polluter

Alternatives:

- ✚ *For small areas, the new lighter, low-maintenance hand-pushed mowers can be quiet, effective, and nonpolluting(www.ucsusa.org/gardenguide)*
- ✚ *Electric corded or rechargeable lawn*

Spending time outdoors is beneficial for people of all ages. Here are some simple steps for making your time outdoors safer. Please share these ideas for ways you can help to create a healthier neighborhood environment.

Avoid use of Common Pesticides & Herbicides on lawns, gardens & in homes

There are many alternatives to chemical pesticides & fertilizers which pollute the environment & may be associated with health problems that can range from allergic reactions to organ damage & cancer. In 2015 the World Health Organization found glyphosate, a common ingredient in pesticide products, to be a probable carcinogen.

Select organic products

For example - organic grass seed v. genetically modified seed designed to be used with pesticides (<http://www.grassrootsinfo.org>)

Use Integrative Pest Management

Limit damage from insects & rodents without toxic chemicals (<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/>)

Spread Organic Mulch (shredded bark)

Suppresses weeds and conserves water around plantings

Consult the Experts

Seek out gardeners trained in safe gardening methods or willing to learn them

Remove shoes at the door

Avoid tracking in toxins from the street; keep children & pets off properties with little yellow pesticide warning signs

Abandon the "Perfect Lawn"

Allow grass to grow to 2 1/2-3 inches high to naturally shade out sun-loving weeds; Learn to live with a small amount of weeds, weed them by hand, or seed over them

Use Grass Lawn Alternatives

Food for thought: Grow herbs & vegetables (www.sierraclub.org/sierra)

Color my world: Plant flowers & flowering shrubs that nourish pollinators like bees and butterflies

Run for cover: Ground cover doesn't need mowing, naturally

*mowers are quieter and less polluting
(some are solar-powered)*

Action:

Talk with local legislators about what the current regulations are in regards to noise pollution and emissions standards. Share your concerns and urge them to support legislation restricting loud, polluting yard equipment.

At least 15 Westchester municipalities have passed leaf blower bans/restrictions including New Rochelle, Scarsdale, Yonkers, Hastings & White Plains (Eastchester Environmental Committee Resolution 20101). Local gardeners have all adapted to the restrictions.

suppresses weeds, and once established requires little to no water

Educate Your Friends & Neighbors

Share the pesticide information sheet in the resource list(<http://www.grassrootsinfo.org>)

