

Wellesley

Let's Maintain Our Landscapes Cleanly and Quietly

[Quiet Communities](#)

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Landscape Maintenance Pollution

In the past few years, many MA towns have been degraded by the widespread use of gas leaf blowers (GLBs) and other commercial grade gas maintenance equipment. There's no escaping the high-pitched, whining drone of the GLB and the loud noise of mowers, trimmers, and saws. They penetrate walls and windows at levels that far exceed safe standards, disrupt entire neighborhoods, and harm health and quality of life.

What's worse, these machines are gross polluters! The smoky, 2-stroke engines of leaf blowers, edgers, and trimmers burn a dirty oil-gas mixture and emit high levels of toxic and carcinogenic pollutants. Mowers emit 11-times more pollution than cars. These pollutants include **ozone-forming chemicals** and **fine particulate matter (PM2.5)** that can be inhaled deep into the lungs and cause disease.

Ozone and PM2.5 are not simply a nuisance, they **threaten the health of our children and families**. Leading medical agencies report that they cause or contribute to cancer, heart attack, stroke, asthma, other respiratory diseases, and early death.

Young children, pregnant women, seniors, physically active people, and people with chronic diseases are particularly vulnerable to adverse health effects, as are workers. Yet, this pollution is being regularly spewed into our neighborhoods, school yards, parks, and other public spaces.



Hazardous to Our Families' Health

Gas-powered blowers and other equipment produce **concentrated amounts** of ground level ozone and particulate matter. The US EPA warns about their serious threats to our health.

- **ASTHMA**
- **COPD**
- **EARLY DEATH**
- **HEART ATTACKS**
- **STROKE**
- **CONGESTIVE HEART FAILURE**
- **CANCER**

The American Heart Association, American Lung Association, and World Health Organization all agree! Learn more at [Quiet Communities](#).

Did you know...?

- 30 minutes of GLB use pollutes as much as 3,900 miles in a 6,200 pound [Ford Raptor](#) truck!
- One leaf blower creates 2-4 lbs of PM per hour, including fine PM which is most harmful to our health.
- Small children are especially vulnerable to the health effects of leaf blower noise and pollution.
- High level noise from leaf blowers and other equipment are harmful to our mental and physical health.
- Landscape maintenance equipment consumes 1.6 billion gallons of gas per year.

Quiet Communities, Inc. is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization providing education and outreach on environmental and health issues related to gas-powered outdoor maintenance practices and on quieter, more sustainable, healthier solutions.

HERE'S A SAMPLE OF WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

American Lung Association: *Ozone and particle pollution threaten the health of millions of Americans. Use hand-powered or electric lawn care equipment rather than gasoline-powered.*

American Heart Association: *Short term increases in PM2.5 [fine PM] levels lead to the early death of tens of thousands of Americans every year. Cardiovascular changes [from exposure to ozone] may cause heart attacks and sudden cardiac arrest in sensitive populations, such as those with a preexisting heart condition, children, and the elderly.*

Centers for Disease Control: *Noise is an increasing public health problem that can lead to a variety of adverse health effects.*

Children's Environmental Health Network: *Noise pollution can come from sources such as...lawn mowers [and] leaf blowers [and can include] hearing loss, stress, high blood pressure, interference with speech, headaches, disturbance of rest and sleep, productivity and mental health effects, and a general reduction in one's quality of life.*

US Environmental Protection Agency: *Volatile organic compounds, released from gas-powered yard equipment, can form ground-level ozone and cause breathing difficulties especially for the young, elderly, or those with existing respiratory problems such as asthma.*

World Health Organization: *We now know that outdoor air pollution is not only a major risk to health in general, but also a leading environmental cause of cancer deaths. Particulate matter is classified as carcinogenic to humans.*



Why are Children So Vulnerable?

- Children receive relatively higher doses of pollution than adults because they breath more air relative to their body weight and lung surface area.
- Children spend more time outdoors, often midday, when pollution levels are highest. They're also 3 times more active than adults, significantly increasing their breathing rates.
- Children spend more time near the ground and are more exposed to ground level pollution like exhaust and fine PM from leaf blowers, trimmers, mowers, etc.
- Children tend to breath more through the mouth than the nose, thus bypassing one level of the body's filtration defense.

Actions You Can Take Today!

- Use quieter, greener, healthier alternatives - lithium battery powered equipment and manual tools. Insist that your contractor do the same. ***You are the customer!***
- **Create a list of contractors willing to practice clean quiet maintenance.** Check listings from your local landscape association or the [Ecological Landscaping Alliance](#).
- **Create an [AGZA Green Zone](#)**® where only low noise, zero emissions maintenance is used.
- **Speak to town officials and others** about the noise and air pollution caused by gas-powered leaf blowers and other equipment. Distribute this flyer.
- **Contact us at info@quietcommunities.org** with questions.

Hold Your Breath! What's in That Dust?

- Pesticides and herbicides
- Animal feces
- Molds, spores, fungi, pollen
- Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides, hydrocarbons
- Lead, carbon, cadmium, chromium
- Brake lining dust and tire particles
- Diesel soot