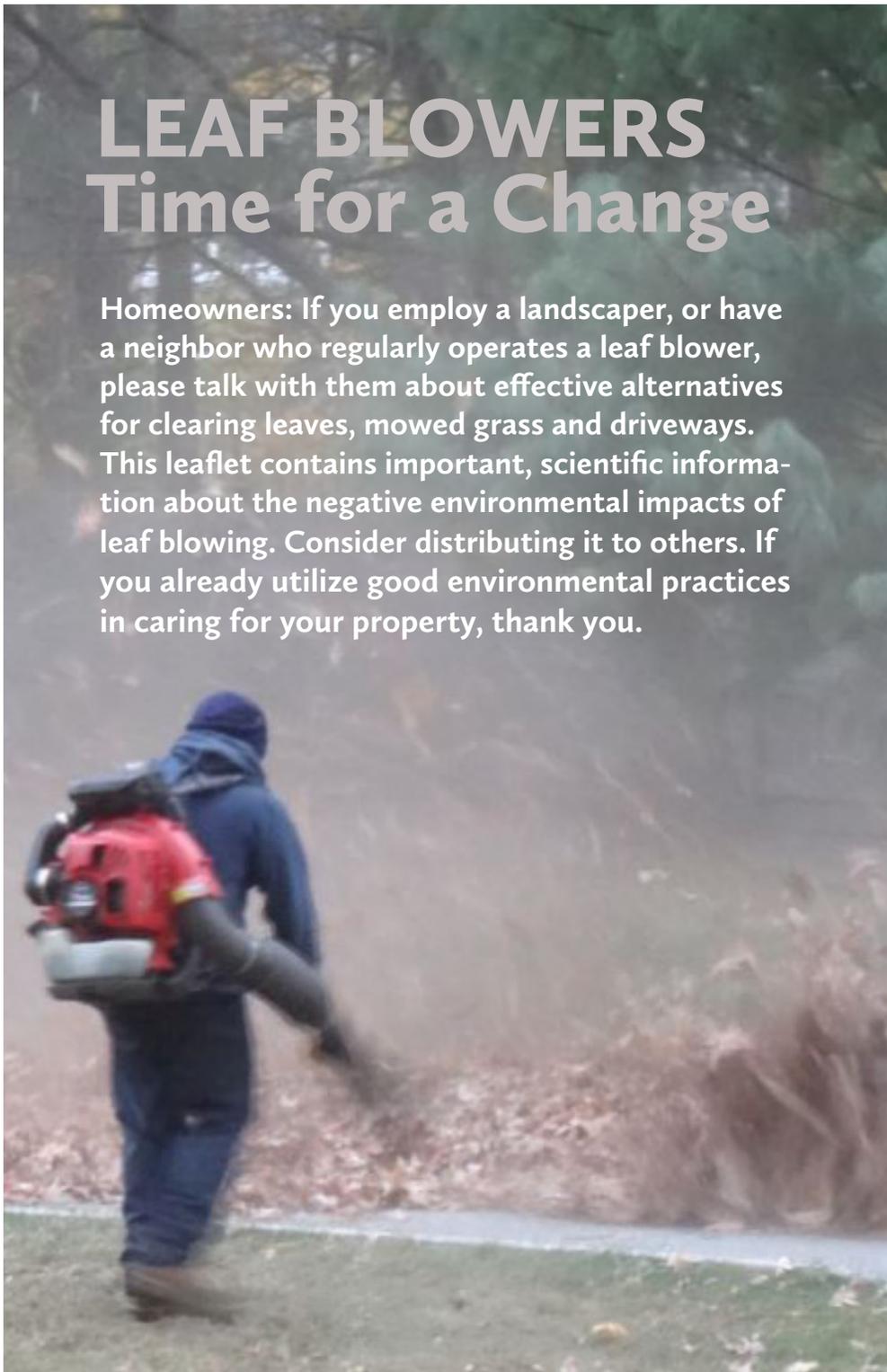


LEAF BLOWERS Time for a Change

Homeowners: If you employ a landscaper, or have a neighbor who regularly operates a leaf blower, please talk with them about effective alternatives for clearing leaves, mowed grass and driveways. This leaflet contains important, scientific information about the negative environmental impacts of leaf blowing. Consider distributing it to others. If you already utilize good environmental practices in caring for your property, thank you.



Several municipalities in Westchester County and across the nation now regulate the use of leaf blowers. Policies range from seasonal restrictions on their use to outright prohibition. Behind the drive to limit their use is rising public concern over the noise, air pollution, and health hazards caused by leaf blowers, especially gas-powered ones.

According to a recent Katonah Improvement Society survey, half of the village's residents who responded to the survey favor at least a limited ban on leaf blowing, and another 30 percent want more information. The Town of Bedford is considering regulation that would take effect within the three hamlets in 2018. We will be evaluating regulations used in other communities. Before developing specific proposals, we will solicit input from homeowners and landscapers.

Why are we considering taking action?

Communities become quieter and less polluted, and lawns are better fed without leaf blowing.

- Gas-powered leaf blowers disrupt peace and quiet in neighborhoods; their operation often exceeds the town noise ordinance.
- Leaf blowers can spread plant disease, damage plants and destroy habitats.
- Valuable topsoil can be blown away and remaining soil compacted.
- Fallen leaves, rather than being blown and removed from a property, can be mulched to feed lawn and garden soil.

Air quality improves when leaf blowers are not used, bringing health benefits to everyone.

- Leaf blowers propel into the air particulates and dangerous contaminants – dirt, dust, pollen, fecal matter, mold, fungus spores, pesticides, herbicides, lead, and organic and elemental carbon. Absorbed into the lungs, particulate matter can increase the number and severity of asthma attacks, bronchitis, and other lung diseases, particularly among children and the elderly as well as landscapers.
- The hydrocarbon emission of a half-hour of yard work with a two-stroke leaf blower is equivalent to that of 40 cars idling for an hour. In one hour, a gas leaf blower can send five pounds of particulates into the air, while the engine emits carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, and hydrocarbons.
- A ban on leaf blowing in the summer months is especially beneficial because emissions from gas powered machines are worse in warm weather.

Consider stopping use of leaf blowers. But if you feel you have to, please follow these practices.

- Use electric blowers, which are quieter and less polluting, and now cost no more than gas-powered machines.
- Instead of blowing leaves off a lawn, set your lawnmower blades on high and mow right over the leaves, creating nutritious mulch for the grass.
- Leave cut grass on the lawn: it's a soil nutrient and decomposes quickly.
- On pavement and driveways, do final clean up with a broom.
- Avoid blowing debris into neighbors' yards, the street and towards windows and doors.



Leaf mulching is less polluting and better for lawns than using a leaf blower.



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For more information:
<http://bedford2020.org/water-and-land-use-task-force/>