



Gas Powered Leaf Blower Flyers Are Arriving at Your Door: Now is the Time to Transition to More Sustainable Gardening

I spent the last weekend walking Surrey Street and portions of other streets knocking on doors and speaking to neighbors about the upcoming September 1 gas-powered blower ban. I met an overwhelming response from appreciative neighbors who have been disturbed by the loud penetrating low-frequency noises of these polluting machines, especially during the pandemic. The front side of these flyers discusses the hazards of these machines. The back side describes and encourages more sustainable garden practices, including encouraging neighbors to no longer blow leaves from lawns and flowerbeds but rather mow them into the grass as mulch. I thought incorrectly for years that my white oak leaves would be bad for my lawn, but after three consecutive seasons of mowing the leaves from our enormous 200-year-old tree, I am surprised and happy to report that not only is my grass healthier than ever but the leaf bits/mulch covering the soil between the grass blades have not allowed any weeds or crab grass to grow! Other suggestions include cutting your grass every two weeks because longer grass is healthier and more durable. Last, electric or battery-powered leaf blowers should primarily be used to clear hard surfaces and drains.

More Environment Committee members will be coming to other homes in Somerset in the coming weekends to distribute flyers. As a reminder, these flyers (both in English and Spanish at <https://bit.ly/3D6yysx>) have been created



for you to read—but most importantly, for you to share with your landscapers (employees and owners), who may otherwise not be aware of the hazards of gas-powered leaf blowers or of the Town's ban of them.

In summary, please tell your landscaper to begin the transition to electric blowers and ask them to stop blowing the leaves from your lawns and flowerbeds. Instead, encourage them to mow your leaves. Mowing leaves replaces the soil deterioration caused by blowers—and produces **free mulch!**

If you have ideas regarding how our Town can become more sustainable and carbon-free, please reach out to the Environment Committee at: tos.environmentcommittee@gmail.com.