

## LEAF BLOWERS IN CONTEXT: A COMPARISON WITH OTHER ABANDONED PRACTICES

Each of the social practices shown here has undergone a paradigm shift: a complete change in its social acceptability. Initially each had been considered normal behavior. Its harmful impact upon others became increasingly apparent. There was initial resistance to change, partly because people could not see alternatives. Ultimately each practice became no longer accepted or was prohibited. People learned new behaviors.

Leaf blowers are in the middle stages of this paradigm shift.



SPITTING was common and considered normal before the late 19th century. Concern grew about spreading of diseases such as tuberculosis and influenza. Spitting is considered rude and is tabooed or outlawed in many parts of the world.



SMOKING used to be allowed wherever smokers wished, regardless of its effect on the health and comfort of others. In the last 3 decades of the 20th century, smoking has been banned in many public places in the United States and throughout the world.



For millennia, DOG DEFECATION was not considered the responsibility of the owner. In the late 20th century, views began to change. Since 1978 “Pooper Scooper” laws have been introduced in many cities and countries.



Before 1970 leaves were raked or left in place. LEAF BLOWERS were introduced in the 1970's. Despite the severe pollution, noise, health issues, and disturbance to others that they cause, their use has increased substantially. *“Calling noise a nuisance is like calling smog an inconvenience. Noise must be considered a hazard to the health of people everywhere.”* – U.S. Surgeon General William H. Stewart (1978). *“Gas Leaf Blowers will become the leading source of ozone-forming emissions in the state by 2020, ahead of cars”* – The California Air Resources Board. Since 1998, programs to restrict use of these devices due to their noise and pollution are under way in many communities around the world.

**You can help by discontinuing leaf blower use right now. Mulching mowers, raking, or leaving leaves in place are superior and ecological alternatives. If you use a landscaper, instruct them “no leaf blowers”.**

See QuietPrinceton.org for detailed recommendations.



QuietPrinceton.org