



QuietPrinceton.org

You can help to make your neighborhood quieter

How to convert to “Quiet Landscaping”



Our town is justly renowned for its beauty. An important aspect of its beauty is peacefulness. However, urban noise is an increasing societal problem. In our neighborhoods, the peace is all too often destroyed by the use of powerful leaf blowers. Their noise disturbs scores of people who live a block or several blocks away.

The scene above does not necessarily have to suffer the event pictured below.



There are alternatives! You can take action.

How Quiet Landscaping works:

The 2021 Princeton ordinance allows electric leaf blowers, and gas-powered ones only in some months. But you can go beyond this. It is quite possible to eliminate use of leaf blowers altogether in most cases. If felt needed, we strongly recommend that electric leaf blowers be used only sparingly and on very limited areas—perhaps on walkways only. Never on streets or grass. But a wide, lightweight, broom can quickly clear a walkway, for example, almost as well with zero noise. Avoid using gas-powered leaf blowers even in the allowed spring and fall periods. Other methods—rakes, brooms, mulching, leave-in-

place, plus some electric blowers (see step 1 above)—can deal with fall leaves without disturbing neighbors.

It is important to realize that “Scorched earth” removal of everything, as is often done with leaf blowers, is very bad for the topsoil, birds, and garden life. It removes desirable mulch and blows particulates and animal feces into the air. It is not recommended and should be avoided.

Option 1: **MAINTAINING YOUR OWN LAWN**

You can learn methods that avoid use of leaf blowers. See “what to do with the leaves” below. You can acquire a lightweight wide broom to clear your walkways nearly as well as a blower would.

Option 2: **WITH YOUR CURRENT LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR**

When you hire a landscaping contractor, you are in control of how the work is performed. If you already have a landscape contractor, instruct him or her to “stop using leaf blowers”. Don’t accept using blowers “a bit.” Say no leaf blowers, and that you will be happy if every single leaf is not removed.

Option 3: **HIRE A NEW LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR**

If your current landscape contractor won’t stop using leaf blowers, you can hire a new landscaper who will—see the latest list of “Quiet Landscapers” on the QuietPrinceton.org website.

WHAT TO DO WITH THE LEAVES

If you maintain your own lawn, see the alternatives below.

If you employ a landscape contractor, you will need to have a discussion with your current or new landscaper about the treatment of leaves and grass clippings. This is key to your mutual satisfaction, to cost, and to the environment.



Alternatives include:

- leaving grass clippings in place (best; returns nutrition to the soil)
- using a mulching mower for leaves on the lawns

- blowing leaves into beds with a mower
- raking leaves into beds or into a corner of your yard
- raking only in limited, selected places
- raking of most areas previously cleared by leaf blowers (This option may cost more because raking can take more time. In most cases it is ecologically undesirable).

Questions? Comments? Problems?
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