

Sonoma CALM

For Earth's sake, use a rake!

Myth Busters



"I like to think we aren't so much anti-science as we are pro-myth."

“A lie told often enough becomes the truth.” – Vladimir Lenin

Arguments you are likely to hear over and over and over again...

“A ban on leaf blowers puts hard working landscapers out of work.”

There is no evidence, or even anecdotal reports, of any landscapers closing or landscape workers losing their jobs in any of the 20+ California cities that have banned gas leaf blowers. What a ban actually does is protect the respiratory health and hearing of landscape workers. Sonoma CALM, and leaf blower committees in Sacramento, Burlingame, and elsewhere have conducted interviews with public works employees and landscapers in many of these towns, and found no evidence of any hardship.

It stands to reason that if some jobs will take longer, there will be MORE work not less.

“I can’t clean my half-mile long gravel driveway without a leaf blower.”

Somehow we managed before the advent of leaf blowers, and can still manage, to clean our properties without offensive and polluting gas-powered leaf blowers. Options include the new, highly effective lithium ion battery blowers; manual sweepers; and good old rakes and brooms!

“Electric leaf blowers are just as bad. What about the batteries?”

The new lithium ion battery technology has advanced rapidly even in the last couple of years. These batteries last longer, hold a charge longer, contain no heavy metals, and are fully recyclable.

Above all they are QUIETER than ever!

They also do not stir up as much dust and particulate matter (PM) — their nozzle speeds are far less than the gas blowers' 200 mph winds and, according to the American Green Zone Alliance, they are engineered to stir up less PM.

Batteries are fully recyclable and they do not end up in the landfill.

“Leaf blowers are faster than rakes and brooms.”

Not necessarily. When it comes to blowing a handful of leaves and debris as one often sees being done around Sonoma, a broom or rake can be faster, and without the added costs in terms of harmful pollution and stressful noise.

Moreover, sustainable landscaping practices advocate leaving more leaves as compost and mulch to retain water, improve soil health, nourish native trees and plants, and to attract pollinators and other critters that depend on leaf litter. This also eliminates the need for chemical fertilizers.

“The cost of landscaping services will become prohibitive without leaf blowers.”

In the 20+ California cities that have banned gas leaf blowers, there have been no reports of increased costs. The cost of an electric blower is soon offset by the savings from not having to buy gas and oil, and not having to clean the blower. Leaving more leaves as mulch and compost also reduces costs for fertilizers and soil amendments.

“Industrial noise is part of modern life. Get used to it!”

It's true that our world gets noisier and noisier, and that's another reason to cut back on excessive noise pollution wherever we can! The harmful effects of excessive noise have been well documented in the scientific literature. See our Resources page and scroll down to "Noise."

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