



Children have immature immune systems, are active and breathe deeply. Clean air is vital to their health!

Acton Lawn Care Situation: Gas-powered leaf blower usage continues to rise, as does the health risk to residents and the planet.

Gas-powered Leaf Blowers (GLBs) emit staggering amounts of pollution:

- 4 of the “Top 10” carcinogens
- 100+ decibels of noise
- 600,000 lbs. of CO2 in Acton annually
- A GLB creates as much smog-forming air pollution in 1 hour as driving your car 1,100 miles!

HARMFUL NOISE



Formaldehyde
Acetaldehyde
TOXIC FUMES CO2
Butadiene
GREENHOUSE GAS
Airborne Dirt CO
Benzene PM 2.5



>> What Can You Do? <<

3 Steps to Sustainable Lawn Care

1. Reduce

REDUCE or eliminate gas-powered blowing of grass clippings especially in summer months. Tell your landscaper it is not required after mowing.



REDUCE the amount of lawn that needs mowing, fertilizer, weed killer, pesticides and leaf removal.



2. Reuse

REUSE leaves by turning them into nutritious lawn and garden mulch, a natural way to fertilize, reduce weed growth, and reduce harmful leaf blowing.



3. Replace

REPLACE GLBs with quiet, clean, green battery-powered leaf blowers (BLBs). If you use a landscaper, find one who uses BLBs in Acton at greenacton.org/landscapers



Ask your landscaper to **REPLACE** long distance leaf blowing with faster, more efficient, quieter, leaf plowing.



1. REDUCE the Frequency and Need for Lawn Cleanups

A. REDUCE or eliminate gas-powered blowing of grass clippings in summer months. If you use a landscaper, tell them that blowing is not required after mowing, or to use a quieter, healthier battery-powered leaf blower. Many towns have already banned the use of GLBs in summer months (see example policy in [Newton](#)).



Pristine lawns can have big carbon footprints. Life is messy -- it's the way of nature. So let your lawn be a bit messy, and more sustainable!

B. REDUCE the number of leaf cleanups. In the fall, use *mow mulching* or *bag mulching* (see next slide) until the very end for a final cleanup. If a few leaves return afterwards, leave them for the spring or simply mow mulch them into the lawn.



C. REDUCE your amount of lawn to reduce the need for mowing, fertilizer, weed killer, pesticides, watering, and leaf blowing. By replacing lawn with pollinator-friendly plants, you help the planet even more!



UN Definition of Sustainability:

Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

2. REUSE: Mulch Leaves to Add Nutrients, Reduce Blowing

Why Mulch Leaves? 5 Reasons

Leaf mulching is a key practice in organic composting. You can do this yourself or ask your landscaper to do it.

- **Better for the Environment:** Many leaves hauled away end up in a land fill instead of used as a natural fertilizer.
- **Enhances Growth and Reduces Weeds in Your Lawn and Gardens:** Enriches the soil with valuable micronutrients and avoids chemical fertilizers; replaces non-nutritive bark mulch
- **Saves Time and Money:** Less weeding, watering, fertilizing, and blowing. Also, lower or no disposal (tipping) fees for leaves hauled away, and reduced need to pay for bark mulch, which is full of dye.
- **Improves Water Retention in the Ground**
- **Less Noisy and Polluting than Using Gas-powered Leaf Blowers**



3 Ways to Mulch Leaves:

Do this yourself or ask your landscaper to!

1. Mow Mulching

(No blowing required!)

- Mulch leaves into lawn when mowing (no bag on lawn mower)*
- Overlap mowing path to increase mulching effectiveness as needed*



2. Bag Mulching

(No blowing required!)

- Mow with bag on lawn mower. When bag is full, simply drive mower to mulch site.*
- Use leaf mulch from the bag in gardens and around trees*



3. Pile Mulching:

(Reduced blowing required!)

- When leaf cover is too heavy to mow or bag mulch, rake or blow leaves into piles*
- Mulch leaf pile with lawn mower (goes very quickly, even with residential equipment). Leaf volume is reduced by over 10x!*
- Rake mulched leaves back into a pile and then shovel into a wheelbarrow or rake onto a tarp (or mulch leaves next to where they will be used)*
- Spread leaf mulch into garden beds and around trees to add nutrition and reduce weed growth*



Notes:

- Most lawn mowers come with mulching blades
- Make sure your mower blade is sharp
- Adjust mower height and forward speed for optimal effectiveness

3. REPLACE GLBs with BLBs and Leaf Plows

Gas-powered Leaf Blowing Is Easy to Replace!

Gas-powered leaf blowers (GLBs) are unhealthy for residents, operators, and the planet because they emit harmful levels of:

- Noise
- Air pollution
- Greenhouse gas



A + B: BLBs and leaf plows make a great combination!

B. Replace Long Distance Leaf Blowing with Leaf Plowing (for Landscapers):

Leaf plows mount on the front of commercial lawn mowers.



"I bought a JRCO leaf plow last year after hearing so many praises. All I can say is I should have bought one 10 years ago. The plow has reduced my time by 50% on some properties. Best \$500.00 I have ever spent!"

-- Landscaper on LawnSite

A. Replace GLBs with BLBs:

Rapidly improving battery-powered leaf blowers (BLBs) are less expensive to operate and beneficial to both people and planet as they are:

- Quiet
- Clean
- Green



EGO LB7654

In addition, BLBs are safe (no gasoline), maintenance-free, and easy to start (no fussing with choke or pull cord).

Many Models of BLBs Are Available for Residents & Landscapers



Toro 66100



GREENWORKS 755



EGO LBPX8004-2



Ryobi RY404170



Stihl BGA 300



Husqvarna 550iBTX



Kress KC500.9



Milwaukee M18 FUEL



Echo DPB 5800T

Example Battery-powered Leaf Blower

Prices from Amazon (as of 10/15/24)

Note: Other models with less power, lighter weight, and lower cost are also available



- EGO LB7654 set:**
- 765 CFM blower
 - 5Ah, 56V battery
 - 320W charger
 - 10 lbs.
 - \$300



- Extra 5Ah batteries:**
- EGO: \$289
 - 3rd Party: \$100-140



- EGO Fast Charger (700W)**
- \$179
 - Charge 5Ah battery in 25 mins.
 - Phone app, Wi-Fi ready



- EGO Backpack Adapter**
- \$199
 - Battery goes on back
 - Less weight on arm
 - Or use shoulder strap

Long Runtime Configuration:



With 2 batteries & fast charger you can run 24x7 swapping batteries between blower and charger









Total Cost = \$580: \$58/yr. over 10 years

Calculate GLB to BLB Fuel Cost Savings!

Stihl, a leading manufacturer of GLBs and BLBs has an online annual fuel cost savings calculator. Just enter gasoline cost/gal. and usage. Note that GLBs use about 0.5 gals/hour of gasoline.

[Stihl Calculator Link](#)

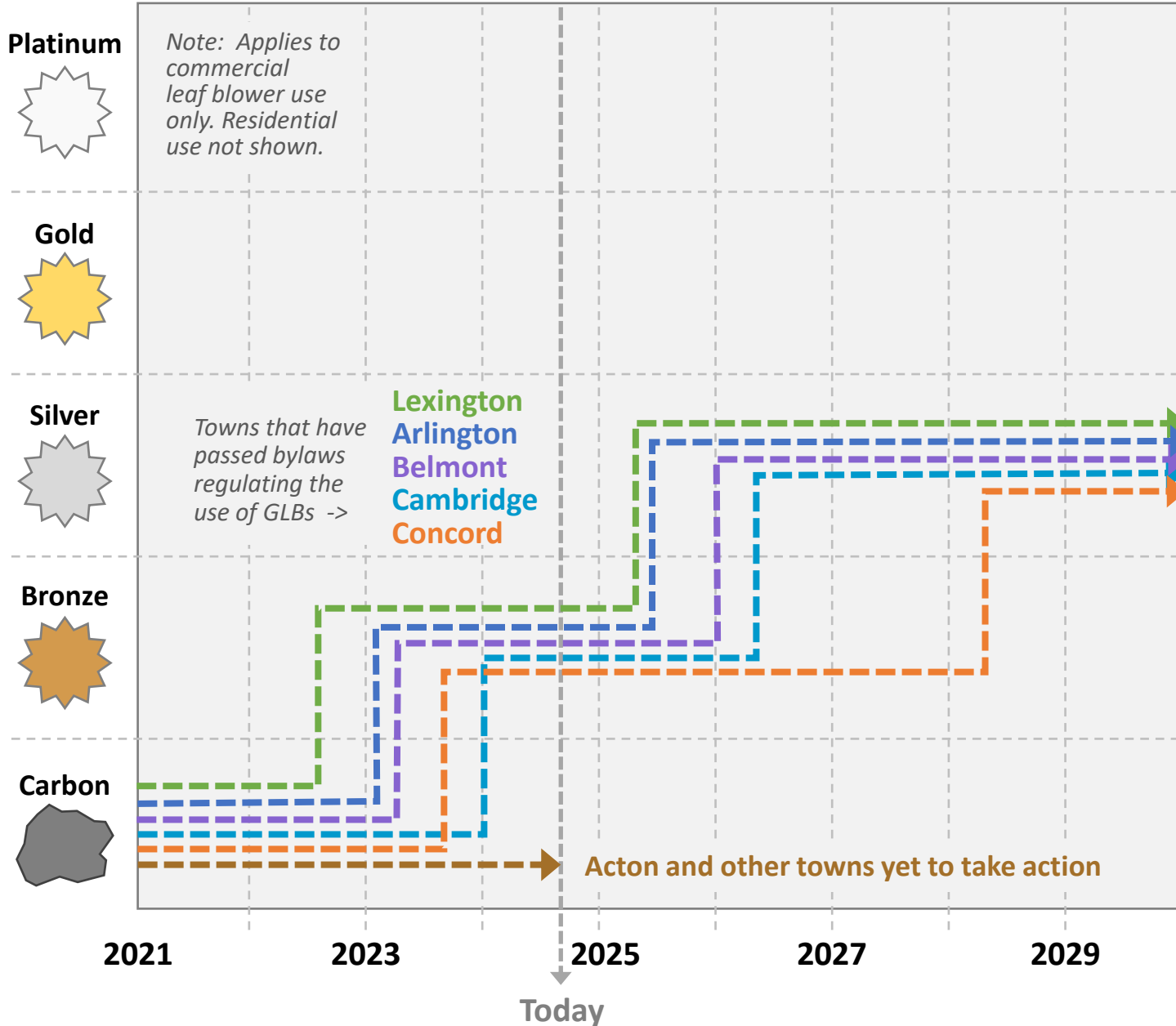
Assess Your Level of Lawn Care Sustainability

			Mower:	Blower:	Trimmer:	Noise Impact:
Platinum  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or small lawn Lawn for child/adult play is okay! No fossil fuel needed Minimal use of fertilizers, pesticides Leaves are mulched, composted onsite 	House with no front lawn 		Battery	Battery	Battery	1
Gold  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawn No fossil fuel needed Leaves are mulched, composted onsite 	Mulching leaves with mower creates nutritious mulch 		Battery	Battery	Battery	5
Silver  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawn Gas mower Leaves are mulched, composted onsite 	 Use leaf mulch around trees, in garden beds		Gas	Battery	Battery	20
Bronze  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawn Gas mower Gas blowing only Oct-Dec, Mar-May Leaves hauled away and/or composted onsite 	<div style="border: 1px dashed green; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> USING A LANDSCAPER? Go to greenacton.org/landscapers to find one serving Acton who uses battery-powered leaf blowers </div>		Gas	Battery Gas	Battery	20 95
Carbon  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lawn Gas mower, blower, trimmer Leaves hauled away and/or composted onsite 			Gas	Gas	Gas	100

Notes: Raking is not shown but encouraged! Leaves are mulched using a lawn mower.

Noise Impact is on a 0-100 scale; higher is worse. Noise impact is based on amplitude (dB), frequency, and duration of noise (est'd from measured data; can vary based on equipment, technique, conditions). By far the biggest contributor to noise impact is gas-powered leaf blowers (75 points).

How Green Are Local Towns When It Comes to Lawn Equipment?



Links to Additional Resources:

Green Acton:

- [List of landscapers using BLBs](#)

Lawn Care News Segments:

- [WGBH](#)
- [WBZ](#)

Leaf Mulching Links:

- [Little Falls Watershed](#)
- [Michigan State Video](#)
- [Bob Vila](#)

Battery Leaf Blower Links:

- [Milwaukee Tool](#)
- [Toro](#)
- [Stihl](#)
- [EGO](#)

Leaf Plowing Link:

- [Leaf plowing video](#)

Town/City Ordinance Links:

- [Lexington](#)
- [Belmont](#)
- [Newton](#)
- [Washington D.C.](#)

MASS SAVE:

- [Lawn Equipment Rebates](#)

Why Cambridge is phasing out GLBs:

Statement of Purpose of Cambridge Leaf Blower Ordinance:

The Cambridge City Council hereby finds that the reduction of noise pollution; air pollution; harm to wildlife, soil, and plants; and general negative public health outcomes from the combustion of petroleum-based fuels provide the basis for the public purposes of this Leaf Blowers Chapter. (12/4/2023)