

Greener Yard Maintenance

Why we care

Ah, the sounds of summer: songbirds, peepers, crowded playgrounds and—buzzing motors. It's hard to walk down the street or open a window in early summer without hearing a lawn mower, power edger, or leaf blower. Unfortunately, they aren't just a bothersome noise. The average lawn mower emits as much smog-forming pollution in one hour as eight new cars traveling at 55 miles per hour. Plus, the fuel used to power two-stroke lawn mowers or leaf blowers is an especially toxic gasoline-oil mixture.

Simple, practical steps

- Choose manual tools—push mowers, shears, and rakes. They save money, are quiet, and are a good way to get some exercise.
- If you have a large lawn, mow it in pieces so that the job is invigorating rather than exhausting. Keep in mind that newer push mowers are light and actually easier to push than most motorized mowers.
- Push mowers are low maintenance. Newer ones only have to be sharpened and adjusted every 3 to 10 years.
- If you don't want to spend much, look for reconditioned push mowers. Check the Yellow Pages.
- If manual equipment isn't an option, consider electric-powered models. They are up to 50 percent less expensive to operate over a 10-year life span because of lower fuel costs.
- If you need gasoline-powered equipment choose models with a four-stroke rather than a two-stroke engine. Generally speaking, four-stroke engines are far more efficient and generate fewer pollutants.

Questions or feedback? Contact Jeanne Roy at info@earthleaders.org.