

# CITIZENS FOR A CLEANER, BETTER LINCOLN

## DEBRIS & DUST (LEAF) BLOWERS

Home Other Cities & Town Background Documents Who We Are

### NULLUM GRATUITUM PRANDIUM

LATIN: " There's no free lunch ... "

## FACT SHEET

### Lincoln: Custodian of its Environment

Lincoln has long been proud of its 'conservation' ethic and its concern for the 'natural environment'. Water, forest, farmland, and open spaces are protected by a long tradition of acquisition and permanent conservation of lands.

### Gas "Blowers"

Source: [www.zapla.org/overview/o1.html](http://www.zapla.org/overview/o1.html)

"Gasoline powered blowers are two stroke. Two stroke designation refers to the number of piston movements during an engine cycle. Two-stroke engines have only one revolution and must use a mixture of oil and fuel that burns incompletely. Researchers say as much as 25% of that oil and fuel is then spit out, unburned, through exhaust. and blowers . . . use fuel as a coolant, spitting unburned gasoline - an ingredient of smog—into the air to keep themselves from overheating. Two-stroke pollution includes the carcinogen benzene. Yet, this motor is used daily . . . in the form of dirt blowers and lawn edgers."

There are also **four-stroke** engines, larger and less noisy but still emitting the high pitch, high velocity air flow.

### How many of these machines are there?

In the year 2000, the State of California estimated 410,000 "gas blowers" in that State alone (**405,000** were two-stroke and 5,000 four stroke - bigger and less polluting) plus 600,000 electric blowers. They operate an estimated **114,000 hours per day**. Some have estimated up to 26 million in use in the US (Steinberg: "American Green").

### Who uses "blowers"

A high number of Lincoln home-owners hire **landscape contractors**. So, too, for the Town and local businesses to maintain outdoor areas both green and hard surfaces such as parking lots. All such contractors use "blowers" as a **tool**. Blowers are used **year-round** and can no longer be termed 'leaf-blowers'. Hence the use of the words: "Dust, Debris and Leaf Blowers" by the CCBL. [SEE](#) one company's **product description** which includes a **177 mph** (miles /per/hour) air stream.

### Noise and Pollution

The most common complaint is about **noise** from "gas blowers." High decibels and high-frequency pitches are disturbing to the ear and intrude on home conversations, home business offices, or calm outdoor days. **Pollution** is a second most stated concern. Two-stroke engines are considered the **most inefficient** gasoline powered engine in use. You might be **surprised** at the extent of the polluting effects and fuel waste. [See](#) Table 9 from scientific studies comparing blowers and cars by the California EPA.

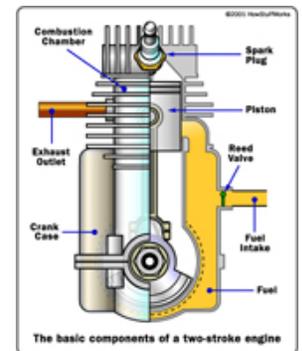
### Health

Controlling water and air pollution is considered critical to **human health** but also to the **vitality of the natural flora and fauna**. If "gas blowers" are indeed the least efficient internal combustion engines why do we permit their use at the very same time that we seek to limit fuel consumption and pollution in cars or trucks?

### Outright bans and noise ordinances - 350 communities in the U.S.

An increasing number of communities, most recently Palo Alto ([see](#)), decided to issue **outright bans** for air "blowers." These bans differentiate in some cases between 'gas' and 'electric' blowers; or 'residential' and 'commercial' zones. Other communities have resorted to **noise" regulations**. The latter are harder to monitor and enforce especially when involving neighbors and lack of precise metering equipment or on-the-spot enforcement.

### [SEE HOW IT WORKS](#)



### LOUDNESS AND PITCH

"Sound can be measured scientifically in two ways. Intensity, or loudness of sound, is measured in **decibels (Db)**. Pitch is measured in **frequency** of sound vibrations per second (Hz). A low pitch, such as a deep voice or a tuba, makes fewer vibrations per second than a high voice or violin."

Source: AAO-HNS ([site](#))

**Cost-benefit: two sides to the story**

Those favoring use of blowers, generally commercial landscapers and gardening services, argue that the 'blower' tools are important labor saving devices and thus lower the costs they charge. Those against blowers argue that there is little time saving and in fact only a very small labor cost differential and a high environmental price. For a substantive **commentary**: [read](#).