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## New leaf blowers are quieter and cleaner

April 1, 2009 by [Valley Bugler](#)



Manufacturers of leaf blowers have heard you loud and clear. After years of research, they have come up with units rated at 65 decibels. In many cases, that's 10 decibels lower than older models. Users say they can hear the difference.

The newer leaf blowers are quiet, more fuel efficient and produce fewer emissions, though the best ones cost a little more.

Sales of leaf blowers in the United States increased to 2.8 million in 2007. They are used all around the country except in areas where ordinances prohibit them.

They are used for more than blowing leaves. Keeping patios, driveways and sidewalks clean is a job blowers do almost all year. In colder areas they are used to blow away light snow.

People say they are bad for the environment. Ten years ago that might have been true, but new models meet EPA standards for small engines. In some cases, that means hydrocarbon emissions have been reduced by 90 percent. Still, it's not a good idea for children and people with lung problems to stand near a blower and inhale the exhaust.

The electric Toro Ultra Blower Vac 51599 (\$75) has been praised as light and quiet. It is perfect for people who use it within 150 feet of the house.

The gas-powered Echo ProLite BP 260L (\$260) at 65 decibels, weighs about 13 pounds and is recommended for homeowners with large yards. It is easy to start.

So don't be afraid of leaf blowers any more! Enjoy it!

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