



June 22, 2023

To Infrastructure and Environment Committee, City of Toronto

Item - 2023.IE5.1

Please vote to **end the use of noisy gas-fired leaf-blowers** by the end of this year – 2023.

TFN has been observing and speaking up for Toronto's urban nature for the last century; we review and comment on city policies when they impact urban nature and biodiversity.

The noise, dust and air pollution of leaf blowers stresses us all as human beings. Leaf blowers are often the last straw for harried city dwellers, already coping with far too much ambient city noise. Therefore, human mental health should be reason enough for Toronto to follow the lead of other North American cities and ban leaf blowers as unnecessary annoyances.

But urban noise is not just bad for humans; it's bad for wildlife habitat too. Toronto's residential streets and backyards are important habitat for many kinds of native birds, pollinating insects and other wildlife. Even small green patches have habitat value as refuges from the rapid growth of our city and the accelerating loss of rural greenspaces across southern Ontario.

Damaging effects of noise on birds and other wildlife include interfering with their [communication, mating, navigation and foraging](#). For example, one [recent study on grassland songbirds](#) found that short periods of unpredictable noise can make it much harder for birds to raise offspring than ongoing background noise. In [another study](#) at the University of Colorado, the fitness of mountain bluebirds was decreased at sites with noise pollution. A [recent UK study](#) also found human noise can interfere with bird communications.

The City of Toronto has recognized the need to protect and restore urban patches of habitat through enabling policies such as the 2019 [Biodiversity Strategy](#) and the 2018 [Pollinator Protection Strategy](#), as well as Toronto's 2021 certification as a [Bird-Friendly City](#). But good intentions need to be followed by practical steps to improve urban habitats. Let's end the unnecessary and damaging noise of leaf blowers in our residential areas and greenspaces.

With thanks,
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