

Draft Leaf blower Ordinance April 1, 2023

VILLAGE OF RIDGEWOOD
ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND CHAPTER 222, POWER TOOLS, LANDSCAPING
AND YARD MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT

Leaf Blower Limitation of Use

A. **Purpose and intent.** Gas-powered leaf blowers emit high amounts of pollutants, such as carbon monoxide, nitrous oxides, hydrocarbons and unburnt gasoline. In addition, they generate noise at a level capable of causing hearing loss while sending into the air dust and other small particles such as animal feces, fertilizer, pollen and mold. Leaf blowing also disrupts the habitat of insects and pollinators.

The Green Ridgewood Committee and the Village Council have found that there are alternatives to the use of gas-powered leaf blowers, such as electric equipment, and that reasonable regulation limiting the use of gas-powered leaf blowing to certain seasons of the year can ameliorate some of the negative impacts of gas-powered leaf blowing. The Village of Ridgewood hereby finds that unlimited use of leaf blowers powered by two-stroke internal combustion engines impairs not only local ecology but also the economic and social welfare, health, peace and quality of life of Ridgewood residents. The purpose of this section is to minimize the adverse impact of such leaf blowers by restricting their use within the Village.

B. Definitions.

1. TWO STROKE GAS-POWERED LEAF BLOWER -- A leaf blower powered by a two-stroke (two-cycle) engine using gasoline or a mixture of gasoline and oil blend as fuel and used primarily, but not exclusively, for yard and lawn maintenance. This Section does not regulate the use of leaf vacuums or equipment that operates by attachment to a tractor.

2. LEAF BLOWER MUFFLER – An original equipment manufacturer part, usually provided by the leaf blower manufacturer at time of purchase, which reduces noise as well as exhaust that can potentially cause a fire.

4. PERSON -- shall mean any individual or entity whose existence is recognized by law, including but not limited to, any partnership, corporation (for-profit or nonprofit), firm, association, or any combination of the foregoing. The term “person” specifically includes homeowners, tenants, landscapers, paving and gutter cleaning businesses.

C. **Limitations on times of use.** In each calendar year, persons may operate a two-stroke, gas-powered leaf blower between March 15 and May 15, inclusive, and between October 15 and December 15, inclusive. The Village Manager shall have the authority to extend or modify such dates as warranted in his or her sole discretion on an annual basis if desired.

From May 16 to October 14 each calendar year, and from December 16 to March 14 the following calendar year, no person shall operate, or cause or permit the operation of any two-stroke gas-powered leaf blower at any time within the boundaries of the Village of Ridgewood.

D. **Mufflers.** It shall be a violation hereof to operate any such two-stroke gas-powered leaf blower in the Village of Ridgewood without a properly functioning original equipment manufacturer muffler with spark arrestor.

E. **Emergencies.** The Village Manager may suspend any one or more of the provisions of this Section for a period of time necessary in the discretion of the Village Manager whenever he or she determines that an emergency exists in the Village. The Village Manager may renew the suspension each day during the continuance of such emergency.

F. **Enforcement.** The Village Code Enforcement Officer shall enforce this Section. In addition, the Village Manager may designate at his or her discretion other Village employees as authorized to enforce this section.

G. **Violation.** It shall be a violation of this Section to operate a two-stroke gas-powered leaf blower at times other than those permitted in Paragraph C above or without a muffler as required in Paragraph D above.

H. The effective date of this Section will be May 16, 2024.

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Violations and Fines

A. Any person or entity that violates the provisions of Section C or D shall be subject to a fine as follows:

1. First offense: \$100, court appearance is not necessary;
2. Second offense: \$250, court appearance is not necessary;
3. Third or subsequent offense: up to \$500, court appearance is necessary.

B. Each day a violation continues shall be deemed a separate offense.