

Blowers

STIHL®

Blower History

■ The grandfather of today's leaf blower was designed to spread fertilizers and pesticides on crops and fruit trees. In the late 1960's and early 1970's, landscapers realized that this blower – without the container for chemicals (SR Mist blowers) – could be used to move leaves and other yard debris. Manufacturers responded by designing a leaf blower that could be used by homeowners and lawn care and landscape professionals. Today, STIHL continue to research and develop new improvements for further reducing leaf blower sound and emissions.

Introduction

- This presentation will go through the proper way to use a leaf blower, as well as the different types of leaf blowers and different jobs that leaf blowers perform. After you read this booklet, and your operator's manual, you'll have a greater understanding of how to use a leaf blower safely and courteously to protect both yourself and the people around you.

Why do we use leaf blowers?

- Since their introduction in the 1970's, leaf blowers have rapidly become an essential time and labor saving clean-up tool for landscape maintenance professionals and homeowners. Leaf blowers are extremely efficient for cleaning leaves, grass clippings, and debris from driveways, sidewalks, parking lots, sports arenas, parks and construction sites. In these situations, a leaf blower is more time and cost efficient than a rake or a broom. Leaf blowers also perform tasks like cleaning areas covered by mulch or bark more effectively than hand tools. When used properly, there is little disturbance to the surface.

What do leaf blowers do?

- **You can use a leaf blower to:**
 - Remove and gather leaves
 - Vacuum leaves and shred the leaves
 - Remove grass clippings
 - Dislodge or break up matted grass
 - Clean parking lots
 - Clean farm and construction equipment
 - Clean arenas and amusement parks
 - Remove light or fluffy snow
 - Dry off pavement
 - Clean rain gutters

Types of leaf blowers

- There are two main types of leaf blowers: hand-held and backpack models. Both types are usually powered by either a 2-stroke or 4- Mix engine.
- Some hand-held blowers also provide a blower-vacuum combination.
- There are many different models, attachments and performance options available for different applications. Compared to leaf blowers manufactured in the early 1990's, today's leaf blowers are quieter and cleaner.
- For more technical and performance information, check your operator's manual or ask your STIHL Dealer.

How to use a leaf blower

- Before you use a leaf blower, read the operator's manual provided with the blower. If you or your employer do not have an operator's manual, you can get one by contacting your local STIHL Dealer.
- You need to know how the leaf blower works and how to use it properly before you start a job.

General rules:

- Children should not use a leaf blower.
- Pay attention when using a leaf blower. Don't point an operating blower in the direction of people or pets.
- Make sure bystanders, including other operators, are at least 15 m away. Stop blowing if you are approached.
- Do not use a leaf blower if you are tired or sick, taking medication, or if you have used drugs or alcohol.
- Do not use a blower indoors or in poorly ventilated areas.
- Inspect the blower before and during use to make sure controls, parts and safety devices are not damaged and are working properly.
- Never modify a blower in a way not authorized by the manufacturer.
- Do not operate while standing on a ladder, rooftop, tree or other unstable surface. Use nozzle attachments to reach high places.

General rules:

- Work carefully. You need to be safe, courteous and responsible.
- **Safety!**
- Wear hearing protection when using a leaf blower – either ear plugs or earmuffs.
- Wear goggles that meet eye protection (SABS) standards.
- Wear work gloves.
- Wear sturdy clothing. Do not wear anything loose.
- Tie back long hair. Wear long pants to help protect your legs and long sleeves to help protect your arms.
- Wear sturdy shoes with non-slip soles.
- In dusty conditions, wear a respirator or dust mask as appropriate.

Handle Gas Carefully

- Don't spill when you fill! If you do spill, wipe leaf blower dry before using.
- Use the correct fuel/oil mix. Check the operator's manual.
- Refuel before you start the engine. If refueling during work, turn off the engine and allow it to cool before fueling. Loosen the cap slowly to relieve pressure in the tank. Always retighten the fuel cap securely.
- Never smoke while handling fuel.
- Start the blower at least 10m from the fueling spot.
- Store fuel in a well-ventilated area in a properly marked fuel container.
- Make sure the spark plug boot is secure to avoid sparks and possible ignition of fuel vapors.

Mixing 2 Stroke Fuel

- 2 Stroke Fuel Mixing
- **When using STIHL 2 stroke lubricant:**
 - Mix at 50:1 (20ml oil per 1lt fuel – 100ml per 5lt -1lt per 50lt)
- **When using any other brand of air cooled 2 stroke:**
 - Mix at 25:1 (40ml oil per 1lt fuel)
- *As petrol has limited shelf life, always mix with fresh regular unleaded, purchased from a reputable large volume fuel supplier*

Operating courtesy

- Follow local rules and ordinances about when to use leaf blowers.
- Do not use very early in the morning or very late in the day.
- Check wind direction and intensity. Never point the nozzle or blow debris toward people, pets, cars or houses.
- Do not blow debris toward open windows or doors.
- Always be considerate of people passing by and of property.
- Do not leave the blower running when unattended.
- Do not use a blower to spread or mist fertilizers, chemicals or other toxic substances, unless it is designed for these purposes and in an appropriate area.

Reducing sound

- Use the lowest possible throttle speed to do the job.
- Avoid using more than one blower at a time, especially in neighborhoods or around buildings where sound can be intensified.
- Check the condition of the leaf blower muffler, air intakes and air filter to make sure they're in good operating condition.

Reducing dust

- Start with nozzle close to the ground at first – then raise it to a height where it does not generate dust.
- Use the full lower nozzle extensions to control sound and minimize dust.
- Pay attention to what you are moving.
- Practice moving grass clippings or a paper cup without moving dust.
- Wet dusty areas down first before using a blower.
- Never use a leaf blower to move excessively dusty materials.

Reducing dust

- **A leaf blower should NOT be used to clean up:**
 - Large amounts of gravel or gravel dust
 - Construction dirt
 - Plaster dust
 - Cement and concrete dust
 - Dry garden topsoil
- Use a vacuum or power broom (KW) with water.

Being more efficient

- **You can improve your efficiency when using a leaf blower by:**
- Reading your operator's manual completely.
- Learning how to control the air velocity at the end of the nozzle to lift leaves without lifting dust.
- Practicing leaf blower nozzle movement and throttle control combinations.
- Practicing up and down and left and right motions starting close to the ground and the debris, but not close enough to lift excessive amounts of dust.

Quiet blowers

- Where blower sound is an issue, purchase sound-reduced blowers from ALLCUT POWER PRODUCTS.
- Blowers are now available that are as much as 75% quieter than older blowers (BR550 – 4-Mix).