

### Double trouble

Did the Ford GT suddenly become less exclusive?

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### Too close for comfort

Can tailgating be dangerous to your windshield?

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### Best in show

Who took home one of the area's most unique trophies in the Times Union car show?

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**Car show calendar**  
Because it's not below freezing yet.  
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## TEST DRIVE

# Leaves of Gas

## 2017 Ford Fusion SE Hybrid

DAN LYONS | text  
Special to the Times Union

A popular part of the dashboard display on the Ford Fusion Hybrid is the "Efficiency Leaves." This decidedly green graphic depicts the efficiency of your driving style in terms of leaves on a vine. Smoother driving is rewarded by new growth. A heavy shoe is met with leaf loss.

I have mentioned in the past that it's easy to get caught up in m.p.g. mania. Sadly competitive types like me and even more sane individuals can get hooked on the process of maximizing mileage. The Fusion hybrid's leafy scoreboard is a far more effective incentive than the negative, wagging finger of many dashboard alerts.

### 2017 Ford Fusion SE Hybrid

MSRP: \$26,480 · As Tested: \$34,115

There are, of course, times when you've just got to defoliate the 'ol dashboard. Merging with Northway traffic is no time to be collecting leaves, lest you be collected on the hood of a Canada-bound semi.

The Fusion hybrid's powertrain consists of a 2.0L Atkinson cycle four-cylinder gas engine, combined with an electric motor. Regenerative braking feeds the battery pack that powers the motor. A Continuously Variable Transmission transfers the power to the pavement. Total system horsepower is 188, which is good for a 0-60 mph trip in the low to mid 8 second range.

This is on par with comparable hybrids, and Fusion feels faster off the dime than the numbers suggest, because of the torquey nature of the electric motor. Fuel economy is impressive. EPA estimates are 43 miles per



PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE MANUFACTURER

THE 2017 FORD FUSION SE HYBRID features a leaves-on-a-vine dashboard graphic (below, left) that displays fuel efficiency, and is a far more effective incentive than the negative, wagging finger of many other hybrid's dashboard alerts.

gallon city/41 highway, and the 42 mpg's that I recorded were spot on the combined estimate 42. Fusion's suspension (MacPherson strut front, independent multilink rear) is scaled for a smooth ride, but the car corners confidently. While the Fusion hybrid is front-wheel-drive only, the gas powered Fusion line includes available AWD on some models.

Fusion will fit six-footers in the back seats, though it's a snug fit if those in front are similarly long of leg. Rear seat legroom measures 37.8 inches, as compared to 39.3 inches in Accord Hybrid, 38.9 inches in Camry Hybrid and 35.6 inches in Sonata Hybrid. All hybrids take a hit in trunk space, as the cargo hold shares the same real estate as the

hybrid system's lithium ion battery pack. Fusion's cargo capacity measures 12.0 cubic feet, down from 16 in gas powered Fusions. It compares with 13.7 cu. ft.

in Accord Hybrid, 13.1 in Camry Hybrid and 13.3 in Sonata Hybrid. Split, rear seatbacks fold to provide a pass-through for longer items. The trunk's utility is hurt less by its size than it is its shape, which has a two-level load floor.

Up front, driver visibility is generally good in all directions.

Standard rear-view camera and available blind spot monitoring with cross traffic alert fill in the typical blanks. Soft touch points are found almost everywhere you come in contact with. A user-

*Continued on page 2*



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