



Create a DOG-FRIENDLY GARDEN

IT'S SAID YOU CAN HAVE A GARDEN OR A DOG, BUT NOT BOTH. WE DISAGREE. HERE'S HOW TO CREATE A GREEN SPACE BOTH YOU AND YOUR PETS CAN ENJOY

Digging up your prize petunias, beating a path through your favourite flowerbed to bark at the postman or burying a bone in the middle of the lawn – it's not surprising that our beloved canines aren't always a keen gardener's best friend. However, with a bit of planning a garden can be designed to accommodate both pets and plants.

✓ PERIMETER PATHS

Dogs love to patrol the border of the garden and repel intruders such as squirrels and birds. **Study your dogs' favourite routes, then create interesting paths that wind around the perimeter of the garden, making it easier for them to get exercise** and pace out their territory without impinging on the flowerbeds. Use paw-friendly surfaces such as bark or smooth gravel to make paths comfortable to walk on.

✓ OPEN AREA

An open area is essential for play. While a manicured lawn provides the space, why not get creative and make a mini wild-grass meadow too? This allows far more opportunities for both cat and dog exploration and fun. When they are chasing butterflies and playing hide and seek, they are less likely to be digging holes and indulging in boredom-provoked destructive behaviour. A meadow also provides

long blades of grass that pets love to chew on, making them less likely to munch your bedding plants.

✓ BORDERS

Edge flowerbeds with sturdy box hedges or plant resilient ground cover such as creeping thyme as a buffer zone. Use pieces of driftwood or river stones to create an obvious boundary between play area and flowerbed, and to protect more delicate plants from roughhousing.

✓ OUTDOOR LOUNGE

After energetic play, dogs tend to flop down in the coolest spot they can find, too often in the middle of a shady flowerbed. **Make a cool lounge space for them under a tree or on the stoep, provide a big water bowl and a comfy outdoor dog bed**, and your favourite flowers will have a better chance of not being used as a chill-out zone.

✓ VERTICAL GARDENS

In small gardens or with persistent diggers, consider using vertical-garden methods (see page 26 of our February 2015 issue) to keep herbs, vegetables and flowers out of reach of pets and leave more space for them to run.

✓ DIGGING ZONE

Some dogs just have digging in their genes. **If you have an incurable digger, create a dog sandpit in a shady corner, where digging is allowed.** This is especially enjoyed on hot days, when many dogs love to scoop out a hollow in the cool earth for a siesta.

✗ TOXIC PLANTS

Many dogs aren't interested in snacking on your garden plants, especially if there are long grasses available to them, but if your dog is a dedicated plant chewer, research which ones are a danger to canine health. A few common examples are oleander, syringa berries, chinkerinchee, foxgloves and arum lilies.

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