

Sport Not Just For Men

American Kennel Club Offers Tips On Dog-Friendly Gardening

March 20 marks the first day of spring, and many people will soon begin planting and tending to their gardens. While humans love their gardens, they can actually be dangerous to our four-legged friends. To help keep your garden dog-friendly this spring, the American Kennel Club (AKC®) offers the following tips:

- * Avoid using dangerous plants: It's important to do research on the plants that you will be using in your garden. There are common flowers and plants that can be unsafe or even fatal for dogs. Some plants to avoid are Calla Lilies, Sago Palm, Azalea, and Rhododendron, among others. Be mindful of flowers and plants, such as roses, that have thorns.

- * Be careful of pesticides: Pesticides used to control insects and weeds in your garden can be hazardous for your pup. Do not use pesticides with snail bait with metaldehyde and fly bait with methomyl. Be sure to follow directions and be sure that pesticides are stored in a place where your dog cannot get to them.

- * Designate a play area: Give your pup a designated area to play that is away from your garden. It's a space where your dog can run around, burn some energy or even do some digging. Having this des-

ignated play area will help prevent your pup from causing damage to your garden.

- * Establishing boundaries in your garden: To help keep Fido out the garden bed, you can use a fence or border. A low picket fence or a border using rocks or stones can help protect your garden. It's best to use vocal commands and treats to help your dog distinguish between where your dog can and cannot go. Raised garden beds or paving a path in your garden using brick or gravel can also help your dog distinguish boundaries.

AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB OFFERS TIPS ON HOW TO PREVENT YOUR DOG FROM DIGGING UP YOUR GARDEN

Have you planted your spring plants only to find that your dog has made a minefield out of your yard? The American Kennel Club (AKC®) notes that while certain breeds, terriers in particular, tend to dig more because it's in their genes, dogs dig as an outlet for frustration when they are left alone outside in the backyard. Digging provides something to do when an active, intelligent dog is bored out of his mind.

"Dogs dig for a number of reasons," said American Kennel Club® (AKC) Canine Good Citizen® Director and Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist, Mary Burch, Ph.D. "It is a common issue that dog owners face, but it can be fixed with a little time and planning."

Dr. Burch offers the following tips on why your dog is digging and how to help him stop.

What You Can Do

- * Providing mental stimulation through daily play and training sessions is the best thing you can do for a bored dog. The AKC Canine Good Citizen program is a great place to start by teaching your dog how to sit and stay down on command.

- * Try making a digging pit in your yard that is basically an acceptable place for your dog to dig. Burying bones or favorite toys will help your dog learn that this place is an approved area.

- * When it is hot outside, dogs will dig to try and expose cool earth for them to lay on and lower their body temperature. You can avoid this by bringing your dog inside so that he doesn't have to handle the heat on his own when it is very warm out. If you don't want to give your dog access to your whole house while you're gone, designate a climate controlled area with water and toys for your pooch to stay.