



Creating a Dog-Friendly BACKYARD



Letting your dog have a free romp in your backyard keeps him exercised, active and happy; however, dogs that are in a bland backyard all day are far more likely to misbehave. See tips from Bark Busters, the world's largest, most trusted dog training company, for making your backyard more comfortable and appealing to your dog.

Poisonous Ingestible

Dogs that are bored or hungry will be tempted to eat poisonous plants and flowers or mulch, which can be toxic or splinter in their mouths or stomachs. Ask your vet for a list of poisonous plants. Avoid gardening with your dog present—he may conclude that playing with plants and digging are acceptable activities. Also put away dangerous products like lawn chemicals like fertilisers and weed killers, antifreeze, pesticides, and outdoor grilling supplies like charcoal and lighter fluid.

Chewing

Dogs chew for various reasons, such as stress, boredom, teething or diet deficiency. The easiest way to stop your dog from chewing is to apply a foul-tasting product such as Crib Stop® Cream or Spray, Citronella or hot chili sauce to it. Give your dog an alternative and keep him entertained by providing high-quality puzzle toys that reward him with treats, such as the Gamechanger® and KONG® products. Every few days, rotate what toys are available to him.



Water

Be sure the backyard includes a large water bowl filled with fresh water in all seasons. If you choose to incorporate a water feature such as a small pond, be sure it circulates water to help avoid mosquitoes. Still-water ponds need harmful chemical additives to kill the larvae that will grow there.

Shade

While being outside can make for a happy dog, being stuck in the blazing sun is unhealthy. Create a cool spot for your pooch by scraping an indented area in a shady place where he can relax in comfort – otherwise, your dog may create his own spot in an area not of your choosing.

Digging

Dogs dig in search of food, to investigate sounds and smells, to improve their shelter, or to escape. Digging can be triggered by boredom, separation anxiety, chasing rodents or bugs, and/or a nutritional deficiency. A qualified dog behavioural therapist such as a Bark Busters trainer can help you determine the reason for your dog's digging, so that a possible training solution can be tried.

Scratching at Back Door

A dog will scratch at the back door because all the good, fun stuff is kept inside—including you! Consider giving your dog a bone or scatter food when you put them outside. Scatter food appeals to a dog's natural instinct to forage. Scatter bits of raw vegetables, dog kibble, and other foods that won't attract wasps around the backyard when you leave. Try hiding a few treats so your dog spends extra time looking for them.

If your dog scratches at the door and cries to come in, ignore him. Let him in only when he stops. If he begins to stress, correct him from inside the house. Do not go out.

Fences and Gates

A fence helps to keep your dog safely on your property and out of harm's way. If your backyard has a traditional fence (chain link or wood), be sure all gates latch correctly each time they are closed. If there are any holes, fill them with bricks or large stones.



Maintaining the Backyard

Maintain your backyard's cleanliness by regularly picking up after your dog. Some dogs can be trained to use one area for toileting. While the nitrogen in dog urine can be very hard on lawns, watering the area after the dog has urinated can help to minimise damage.

Keep your dog (and anyone else) off the lawn after any backyard treatments—fertilisers, herbicides or insecticides—until the chemicals have dried completely. Also be careful of metal lawn edging, which could seriously cut his paws.

Doghouses

Dogs are more relaxed when they are covered and in familiar surroundings. Place the doghouse next to your family's house so that your dog feels like it is an extension of the larger "den". Provide a blanket or other comfy bedding. Choose a house made of a naturally rot-resistant material such as plastic or red cedar, but do not use pressure-treated wood, which can contain arsenic. Use rustproof, galvanised nails and screws.

The house should be raised from the ground to insulate the dog from moisture and chills, and should be large enough for him to comfortably turn around but small enough to retain his body heat. In colder climates, your dog may appreciate a heated doghouse, whether created by a doghouse heater or a solar panel.

Training your dog will keep him mentally stimulated and help to decrease his overall level of stress. Remember, you can correct your dog for digging, barking, scratching at the door, etc., ONLY if you catch him in the act; correcting after the event is pointless. A qualified dog behavioural therapist can help you discover the source of the reasons for your dog's outdoor misbehaviours and can provide ways to correct the problems. Your dog and your family will be happier for it!



This information is brought to you as a public service by Bark Busters Home Dog Training—the world's largest, most trusted dog training company. Bark Busters is the only international dog training company that offers guaranteed lifetime support. Find out more information by contacting your local dog behavioural therapist at 0800 167 710 or by visiting www.barkbusters.co.nz.