

# Create dog-friendly haven

## Think of furry friends in backyard landscape

By MAUREEN GILMER  
DIY NETWORK

Nobody speaks for Fido when it comes to the backyard landscape. Yet he spends more time there than anyone else in the family.

What I call a K-9 conscious garden design blends amenities for you and your dog into a harmonious space. It also addresses the most common safety problems that can hurt your pooch and send your vet bill into the stratosphere.

Dogs are naturally mobile creatures, forever on the hunt for food like their ancestors the wolves. When they are cooped up with nothing interesting or mysterious to explore, they adopt undesirable behaviors out of frustration and boredom.

Planting a tall grass meadow with flowers is not only a beautiful, wildlife-friendly form of gardening, it gives your dog hours of investigatory pleasure every day.

Sure, manicured lawns are great for Frisbee, but when you're at work that meadow becomes a primal bit of heaven for man's best friend.

If you live in the city and don't have room for a meadow, here's a good alternative. Wheat grass juice is a big health drink for us, and it's just as good for dogs.

They will naturally graze on it when they need the nutrients it contains rather than browsing your flowerpots.

Consider planting wheat grass in low, wide troughs. Use flat plastic under-the-bed storage boxes with holes drilled in the bottom for drainage. Fill the boxes with potting soil and sow with seed.

Dirt-cheap organic seed for wheat and oats can be found in the bread-making section of the health food store.

Since ancient times, herbs have been used to repel fleas in human dwellings. They'll also discourage fleas in the yard and in your dog's general hangout areas. If you grow enough of them you can cut the branches, dry and use them to stuff your dog's bed for a natural pesticide.

Many herbs were once known as fleabane because they are so widely used for this purpose, and some may also discourage ticks.

Plant a fleabane garden or incorporate fleabane plants around the garden. When my dog Dot rubs against them I can smell the aromatic oils on her fur, which not only discourages pests, it covers up dog smell with fragrance.

I recommend Menta pulegium, also known as pennyroyal. Wormwood (Artemisia absinthum) is also beautiful silvery gray plant and quite effective, too. Old-fashioned



SCRIPPS HOWARD PHOTO

A backyard prairie of tall grasses and perennials is an ideal dog habitat. No room for all that? Plant wheat grass in low troughs. Dogs will munch on it instead of on your flowers and other off-limits plants.

tansy (Tanacetum vulgare) is top of the list, as well. All are perennial. When you shop, insist on the botanical names to ensure you get the exact plant that repels fleas.

Keep in mind, too, that some plants and landscaping materials are very bad for dogs. Vets say that when dogs are bored they will chew on most anything, and when that something is toxic you have a problem.

Cocoa bean mulch contains caffeine and hulls of nuts falling from trees are rich in tannin, so both can be highly toxic if chewed. These include domestic walnuts or wild hickory. A few of the many plants poisonous to dogs are castor bean, foxglove, pokeweed, buckeye and yew.

A list of dog-toxic plants can be found at [www.aspc.org/toxicplants](http://www.aspc.org/toxicplants).

To create the ultimate K-9 conscious yard that looks great and works well for the entire

family, download the information-packed free eBook, "The Dog-scaped Yard," at [www.moplants.com](http://www.moplants.com).

It will give you solid ideas for dog-centered amenities as well as the full list of good and bad plants. There's even a useful recipe for cayenne pepper spray to keep Fido out of your prized flowers.

There's a lot more involved in adapting your yard to make it more appealing to you and your dog. Simply building a run and a doghouse far from the action isn't taking your dog's needs seriously.

Under those circumstances you'd be bored, too, and just might take up compulsive chewing or barking, too.

Maureen Gilmer is a horticulturist and host of "Weekend Gardening" on DIY Network.

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## • Men

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE C1)

This sounds like a set-up, Doc.

"Actually, the reason the man spends more is because he's playing catch-up. He's thinking, 'I've got to do something extra special on Valentine's Day because I forgot so many things the rest of the year, like her birthday.'"

So, it's the man's fault? "Men aren't trained to do these things."

Someone must have trained us to spend money?

"Men think, 'If I just go expensive, I can please her that way.' They see it as the surest way to a home run."

Isn't it?

"Many women would appreciate something creative rather than expensive from their man on Valentine's Day. But a lot of men don't want to do it."

Maybe we would if someone trained us properly.

"There are so many books on romance and how to knock the socks off a girl-

friend or a wife. If someone wanted to substitute sensitive and meaningful for expensive, they could do it if they put a little research into it."

Even a man?

"It's not brain surgery."

Maybe an example would help.

"I knew a guy who didn't like cats, but he got his wife a kitten from the humane society, because he knew it was something she would really like. It cost him \$15."

"Other men make their own coupons for back rubs and chick movies that she could use throughout the year. Just ask yourself, 'What would she like?' Not what you'd like. Then the mystery goes right out of it."

What was the best Valentine's Day gift a guy ever gave you, Doc?

"A little book of pictures of us together. It was really touching, and it was memorable."

It probably came with a diamond-encrusted album cover.

"Funny. No."

I'll bet he didn't wrap himself in red cellophane.

## Franklin parks department schedules events

Daily Journal staff report

Franklin Parks and Recreation Department has scheduled the following special events.

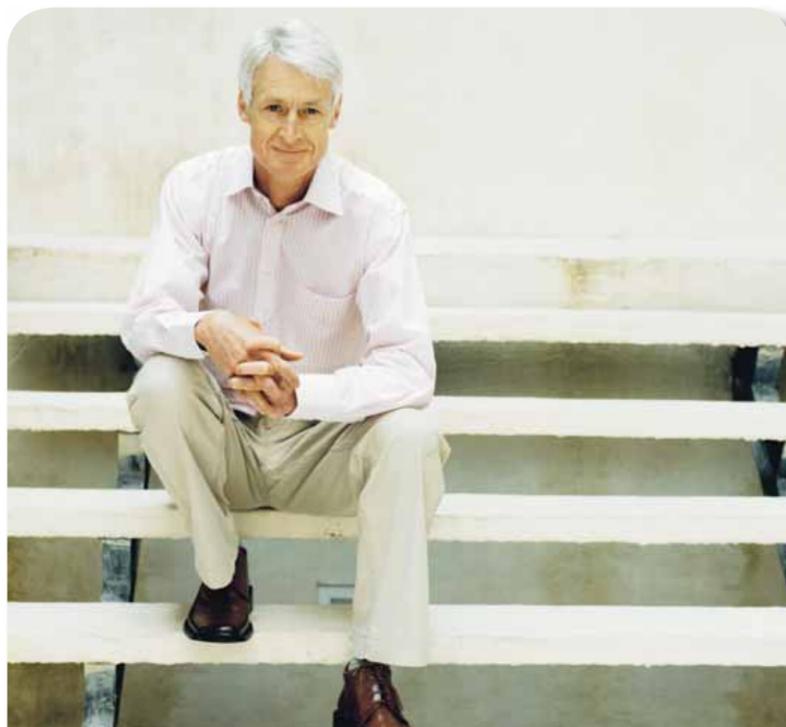
- Family swimming is available from 4 to 6 p.m. Sundays at the Franklin Community High School pool on U.S. 31.

- The Ethos Art show is scheduled from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. March 10 at the Franklin Cultural Arts and Recreation Center. Participating artist may enter three pieces. Entry forms are due by March 5. Cash prizes and ribbons will be given. For an entry form, call 346-1198

- Hands on the Arts Day is slated from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. March 10 at the cultural arts center. The free event of art activities is designed for children ages 3 and older.

- Kids can hunt for eggs at the Easter Egg Splash from 6:30 to 8 p.m. March 27 at the Franklin Community High School pool. Cost is \$10 for ages 12 and younger and includes a goody bag, egg hunt and open swim time.

Information: 346-1198



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