

Why Dogscaping? Get a dog and there goes the garden. It can be “ruff” to have a landscape that looks nice and is dog friendly. That’s what many homeowners conclude. Can a dog and a landscape co-exist? If close to half of homes have a dog how do you get that homeowner to invest in their landscape?

According to the 2015-2016 APPA National Pet Owners Survey, 65% of U.S. households own a pet. Homeowners are thinking more and more about how to make their gardens pet-friendly and pet-safe.

It is estimated that 70-80 million dogs are owned in the United States and that approximately 37% to 47% of households have a dog.

Some “Paw”-sitive ideas for your landscape:

- Setting aside an area for the dog to relieve himself, not in the flower bed, lawn or landscape. Flagstone, pea gravel, bricks, cedar chips (no cocoa mulch), marking pole or post.
- Shade and shelter for the dog and fancy doghouses.
- Plant densely and wisely. Use romp proof plants like Ornamental grasses and avoid thorny spiny plants. Ornamental grasses are perfect because they have soft foliage but sturdy enough to handle canine rough housing.
- A winding path or running track for exercise and space to patrol the property line
- Avoiding poisonous plants like Castor Bean, Hellebore, Mushrooms, lilies, mums, daffodils
- Controlling pests and weeds organically....pet safe controls for lawn and landscape.
- Raised beds
- Alternatives to lawn
- Dig or tunnel proof barriers

Give Your Dog Some Entertainment...a new leash on life

Another way to prevent dog damage in your backyard is to give your dog a few “jobs” to do. As we know, a busy dog seems less likely to look for trouble. Here are a few ideas:

- A Lookout Platform: Remember, dogs are territorial; they have sharp instincts to guard their home. To help them perform their duties, consider adding a large flat rock as a lookout platform. You'll see how much your dog enjoys it.
- A Digging Pit: Believe it or not, a designated digging pit can efficiently deter your dog from tearing up your plants. Just bury some treats in the pit and fill the pit with sand or mulch. The smell of treats will entice your dog to dig only in the area you allow.
- Dog Toys: Dogs tend to act up when feeling bored. Hence, it's rather important to keep your dog entertained. Try putting some chew toys throughout your yard so your dog can play.

The fence line

Most dogs (especially sporting breeds) love to run the perimeter, just inside the fence line. This usually results in an ugly, over-trodden path right at the outskirts of the yard. Remember they like to run and patrol (dogs don't know how to parallel “bark”) So- don't put plants there! Make sure the ground

provides stable footing, such as pavers, or packed dirt. If you want to hide this barren border, plant taller plants about 1.5-2 feet inside the fence, so that your dogs still have room to do their thing. You'll also want to make sure you have breaks in the plantings so that your dog has easy access to their fence.

Just add water... dog's love water! Why not take this opportunity to add a water feature to your landscape – your pet will thank you. A fountain for drinking or a stream for wading is ideal. If you decide to add a pond or pool, make sure it's shallow enough for your dog, especially a small dog, to readily get out of. Another option is to add steps for easy accessibility.

Similar to adding paths for patrolling is creating a designated spot for surveying the land. What dog doesn't like to keep an eye on their domain? This can be a nice big flat rock, a high point in the garden or even a platform. It's a comfortable spot where your dog can sit and watch the world go by.

What if you have a digger? If you have a dog who loves to dig, this is especially true with terrier breeds, set aside an area out of view where this is permitted. Bury some toys and dog treats in a sand box or dirt patch to let your dog know, "this area is ok".

What dog isn't curious about what lies on the other side of the fence? Think about it, that's got to be tough, they can hear footsteps, smell something different... Why not satisfy your dog's curiosity by installing a Pet Peek in your fence. It's a sci-fi looking plastic bubble window that allows Fido to watch the world go by.



Hope some of these ideas are a diamond in the "ruff". And don't forget to sell some dog treats....a special "buy one dog get one flea!"