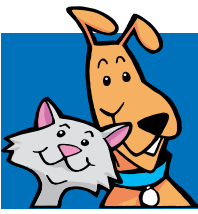




Southern Lakes **Pet Connection**

- Pets and new homes
- The Royal Canine
- Exotic pets



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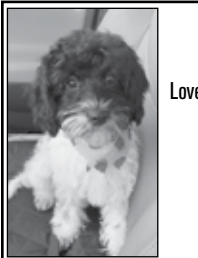


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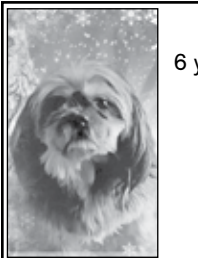


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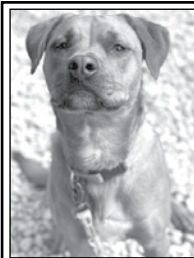


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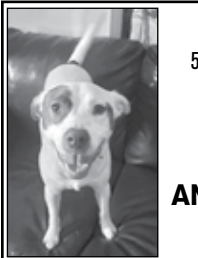


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How to help pets acclimate to new homes

Welcoming a new pet into a family can be an exciting time. Pets are wonderful companions and can even be beneficial to their owners' overall health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advises that pets may create increased opportunities for exercise. In addition, studies have shown that relationships with pets may help lower blood pressure and cholesterol and reduce triglyceride levels, feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and other ailments.

A new pet requires owners to make various changes to help both humans and companion animals. It can take a period of transition for everyone involved to determine their new roles.

Here are some strategies to help pets and people acclimate to new living situations.

CREATE A SAFE PLACE

Any person who has moved understands that relocating can be stressful. Pets may be on edge when moving into a new home because they don't have the capacity to process why a move is taking place — even if the eventual result will be positive.

Establish a quiet spot that is away from high-traffic areas so the new pet can grow accustomed to the sounds, smells and routine of its new environment. Then he or she can retreat there when necessary.

CONSIDER THE 3-3-3 RULE

Animal rescue and training organizations, such as Alpha and Omega Dog Training, say the general rule is that pet owners can expect three days of a new dog feeling overwhelmed and nervous; three weeks of settling in; and three months of building trust and bonding with new owners.

New pet owners should not feel disappointed if it takes some time for a pet to settle in. Cats and other animals may acclimate differently.



There are several strategies people can apply in an effort to help pets acclimate to new living situations.

METRO CREATIVE *Pet Connection*

RETAIN SOME OF THE PET'S ITEMS

Owners may want to buy their pets new toys and supplies, but they should utilize some of the pet's original and familiar items — if available — to make it easier for the animal to adjust. This familiarity can be comforting for the animals.

BE PATIENT WITH BEHAVIOR

Pets who have moved to new places may temporarily forget their training. This means engaging in undesirable behavior, such as having indoor accidents (or those outside a litter box), jumping up on people, howling, barking or meowing, and more.

It will take some time for pets to feel safe, so reinforce training with patience.

STICK TO A ROUTINE

Animals prefer knowing what is coming next and are creatures of habit, says the American Kennel Club. Individuals should establish and stick to daily routines where feedings, play time, walks, and other activities occur at roughly the same time. This will help pets feel more relaxed.

It can take some time for new pets to settle in, but with patient and reassuring owners, pets will eventually acclimate to their new homes.

(METRO CREATIVE)

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Considerations before adopting a dog

Energy levels and exercise needs can vary among breeds

Dogs add a whole new element to a family dynamic. Parents may adopt a dog not only because they love these loyal animals, but also because they hope to instill a sense of responsibility in young children who will be tasked with helping to take care of the family's furry new friend.

The level of interaction dogs require can vary greatly among the breeds. There's no shortage of breeds to consider as families look for a new dog, and it can help to recognize which dogs are especially energetic and which might be more enthusiastic about cuddle sessions on the couch.

It's also worth noting that each individual dog is unique, so just because a dog is a certain breed does not mean it will automatically behave exactly the same as other dogs of the same breed.

However, breed reputation can be a good barometer as families look to bring a new dog into the fold.

Below are a several popular breeds and their corresponding exercise needs, generally speaking.

- **Akita:** Akitas originated in Japan, and it's not uncommon to refer to this beautiful

breed as the Japanese Akita.

American Akitas also are popular, and these dogs may have higher energy levels than those from Japan.

Furthermore, akitas are large dogs and require regular walks and daily play sessions with their owners.

- **Bichon Frise:** These small, cheerful pups require ample attention.

Bichons typically weight between 10 and 18 pounds, so owners are unlikely to be exhausted by daily play sessions, which are necessary to ensure the dogs do not become overwhelmed by separation anxiety.

- **Dachshund (standard):** These highly affectionate dogs typically weigh between 16 and 32 pounds. Their stature can be deceptive in relation to their energy levels, however.

The American Kennel Club notes these dogs love to play and can even make for fine watchdogs.

Additionally, ample exercise is vital to ensure dachshunds don't gain a lot of weight. Physical activity also helps them build strong muscles that support and protect their backs, which are lengthy and

therefore vulnerable to disc damage if the dogs don't stay fit.

- **French bulldog:** French bulldogs do not require an especially high level of exercise. According to the AKC, a short walk or outdoor play session should be enough daily exercise for these lovable, bat-eared pups to stay in shape.

Like English bulldogs, French bulldogs are flat-faced, which means they should be monitored closely and prevented from exerting themselves in hot or humid weather.

- **German shepherd:** German shepherds are large, agile and muscular, and those characteristics alone likely give prospective owners an idea of what to expect from these beautiful dogs in relation to exercise.

The AKC notes German shepherds are very active and athletic, so they will need lots of exercise. Without sufficient exercise, German shepherds may develop problematic behaviors.

Consideration of a breed's energy levels and exercise requirements can help families find a dog that will suit their situations and schedules at home.

(METRO CREATIVE)

The level of interaction dogs require can vary greatly among different breeds. Before adopting a dog, it's advised families research to try and look for a dog that will fit in with their lifestyle.

METRO CREATIVE Pet Connection

Tips to care for outdoor cats



Pet preferences vary across the world, but dogs and cats are beloved companion animals in many corners of the globe.

According to a recent Statista Global Consumer Survey, dogs have a good lead over their feline counterparts in the United States, mainland China, the United Kingdom, and Japan. However, in Germany, cats and dogs are kept by a nearly equal number of pet owners.

Even though cats may not be as popular as dogs, they are widely found in homes. They also may be spending time outside of homes. While there are plenty of feral cats, or those that have grown up outdoors with little to no social interaction with humans, even many domesticated cats spend ample time outdoors.

Most veterinarians feel it is safer to keep cats indoors, where they are not exposed to disease or trauma. However, many cats are simply not happy without fresh air.

In such instances, here's how pet parents can care for cats who need some breathing room.

LEASH-TRAIN THE CAT

The American Humane Society suggests leash-training cats that want to be outdoors.

Much like having a dog on a leash prevents the pet from running off and getting lost or injured, cats who may be a little too independent for their own good can be curtailed with leashes.

VACCINATE AND FIX THE ANIMAL

Cats that are exposed to the outdoors are more susceptible to diseases that can be harmful or even fatal. Speak with a vet about which vaccines the cat will require if he or she is going to be spending considerable time outdoors.

Also, while it is recommended for all companion animals to be spayed or neutered, it is especially important for those with access to the outdoors to prevent unwanted mating that can exacerbate overpopulation issues. Plus, animals that are fixed are less likely to roam or fight.

CREATE A SHELTER

In addition to providing free access to the home by way of a cat door, outdoor access cats may benefit from a home in the yard. This can protect the cat from weather or other animals.

A pet owner can build a shelter or

purchase pre-made varieties that resemble a chicken coop. It's also best to ensure cats have access to fresh water while outside. Regularly inspect the shelter to keep it clean and in good repair.

CONSIDER A "CATIO"

Some cats will be satisfied with something that lets fresh air in without having to be completely outdoors.

A "catio" is an outdoor ledge or enclosure for cats that is covered by grating or mesh, according to Habitat Have. It can be attached to a window or be freestanding in an area of the yard, providing a lounging spot that is outdoors but protected.

PROVIDE IDENTIFICATION

Cat caregivers can microchip cats and ensure they are wearing the proper identification. If the cat cannot find its way home, there is a greater chance the animal will be found if identification is present or a chip has been installed.

Although cats are safest indoors, with some precautions, cats can enjoy the fresh air and sunshine.

(METRO CREATIVE)

There are several ways pet parents can care for cats who need some breathing room.

METRO CREATIVE Pet Connection



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Prevent pets from fighting like cats and dogs

Animal interactions are often portrayed as confrontational. Many people have undoubtedly watched a cartoon mouse outsmart a cat, or laughed as the Road Runner stays a few steps ahead of Wile E. Coyote.

Common companion animals also have reputations for confrontation when forced to coexist under one roof.

Reality often differs from such depictions. Potential pet owners can rest assured that many animals of all different breeds and species have the potential to cohabitate peacefully.

It's just a matter of doing your homework and facilitating the process of companionship. Here's how to get started.

PLAN AN INITIAL MEET AND GREET

When thinking about welcoming a new pet into the home, particularly one who has not previously bonded with another animal that you are adopting together, you should always bring your current pet along to gauge their interactions.

Also, it is wise to get a disposition report from the rescue about whether the available animal has a history of confrontation with other pets. Rescues

typically let prospective pet parents know if a pet is good with dogs, cats, small animals, and even children.

UTILIZE A GATE OR SCREEN

After a few days, new pets can be given a chance to see one another separately through a baby gate or screen door without the risk of fights. When the pets are calm enough to meet without barriers, arrange the meeting in a neutral room, rather than in a sanctuary space.

OFFER EQUAL MEASURES OF ATTENTION

Pets may covet their owners' attention, and that could lead to jealousy, especially among particularly needy pets.

While it's not always possible to be equal, offer adequate time with both animals, including time where each gets individualized attention.

CREATE SAFE SPACES

Whether it is two dogs, two cats, or one of each, animals may need time to spend alone, particularly if they have different energy levels or needs.

The Animal Humane Society says

sanctuary rooms can be set up so pets can separate. Rooms should be secure, with a door and a ceiling. These also are good spots to place new pets as they get used to the smells and sounds of other pets and the people in the home.

Think about placing items that smell like the other pet in the new pet's area along with treats, so the new animal comes to associate these items with good things, suggests the American Kennel Club.

SOMETIMES IT'S A NO-GO

Pets may not be able to get along. For example, a dog with a very high prey drive, such as a breed that has been bred to flush out small animals or birds, may find a parakeet or guinea pig simply too tempting to leave alone.

A large snake may not work out in a home that has gerbils or hamsters, as rodents are snakes' natural food sources.

Always take a pet's breed, disposition and natural inclination into consideration before bringing in a new pet.

Various strategies can be employed to help pets peacefully coexist. Pet owners who may need some additional guidance can work with qualified animal trainers.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Potential pet owners can rest assured that many animals of all different breeds and species have the potential to cohabitate peacefully.



Self-serve wash makes dog baths easier



The Royal Canine aims to be affordable and simple to use

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Dog owners looking to wash their canine companions at home oftentimes have the daunting task of cleaning up afterwards. Add to it challenges such as lifting their pet into a bathroom tub, and the chore can be even more burdensome.

The good news is there's an area business that offers a possible solution. The Royal Canine, 525 N. Pine St., Burlington, is a self-serve pet washing facility – an ideal option for dog owners who want to keep their canine companion smelling fresh and not have to clean up at home.

Owner Andora Byrne opened The Royal Canine last fall.

Above: Andora Byrne owns The Royal Canine, a self-serve dog washing facility in Burlington.

It's an ideal option for owners looking for a convenient place to wash their pet.

JASON ARNDT *Pet Connection*

Left: The business consists of two wash bays equipped with ramps so dogs can climb their way in safely. The \$15 cost includes all cycles of a complete service – shampoo, conditioner, scrubbing and blow-drying.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Pet Connection*

Byrne, who lived in Florida, moved to the Burlington area about five years ago with her husband and daughter. Her husband is a Kenosha County native, and they moved to this area to be closer to his family.

She decided to open the business as a convenience for dog owners might seeking to provide care for their pets, especially in between grooming appointments.

“I know there are some groomers in the area and there is a long wait time to get in,” Byrne said. “Sometimes you need to wash them in between grooms, or sometimes they roll in some dirt in yard and the groomer can’t get them in for awhile.”

Byrne said the affordable option her business offers – which costs \$15 for a 15-minute bathing session – also features items generally not available at home.

The amenities at the dog wash include an easy ramp for the animal to walk up – compared to a typical bathtub, which can turn into a wrestling match between the owner and their dog.

“I thought it was really important for owners to be able to bathe their dog and not hurt their back because their bathtubs are waist high... and, not mess up their bathroom,”

she explained. “People love the idea of not having to clean their bathroom after they have already gone through the effort of cleaning their dogs.”

The self-serve machines also mitigate potential plumbing issues at home, since dog owners may need to remove dog hair from bathtubs, and drains, once they finish the process.

“Nothing goes down the drain here. It saves people at home from worrying about that,” Byrne said.

AS EASY AS POSSIBLE

Most dog owners, unless they want to bring their own shampoo, only need to load their four-legged friends to The Royal Canine, as everything else needed is on hand at the facility.

The machines accept credit and debit cards using a terminal for \$15. That includes shampoo, conditioner, scrubbing and blow-drying components for their animals.

“Everything is included – shampoo, conditioner, flea shampoo if you want – and then blow dry,” Byrne said.

“The dogs can go right up the ramp. There are treats and towels. You really just have to show up with your dog,” she added.



Aprons at the self-serve dog wash are available to help owners stay relatively dry while bathing their pet.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Pet Connection*

While the machines offer full-service, Byrne said customers of course can bring their own supplies, if they use specific products for their pet, such as a medicated shampoo.

“If you want to bring your own shampoo, you just use the rinse water function and you can forget all of the other stuff,” she explained. “I know there are a lot of people out there that use a special medicated shampoo for their dogs.”

The Royal Canine also offers specials for those who plan to become regular visitors, including a token that allows people to purchase five dog washes and receive the sixth free.

Since opening, Byrne said she has seen countless customers come in through the doors and when finished, give favorable reviews of The Royal Canine and what it offers.

“It’s been really good and there is a really great response to the business,” she said.

Byrne said she decided on The Royal Canine because of

her own dog, Stella, whose picture sits along a wall at the business.

“Our dog is a princess. Her name is Stella,” she said. “She gets treated like royalty.”

While The Royal Canine tailors to dogs, Byrne said they have seen other animals come in for a wash, including a piglet called Margo.

“Margo is adorable,” Byrne said. “We don’t discriminate what kind of pets come in here. You can bring your pig, you can bring your dog, and you can bring your cat.”

However, since The Royal Canine primarily serves dogs, customers should be cognizant if they do bring other animals.

“You just have to be conscious of the possibility of having other dogs (in here),” she said. “We don’t want anyone to get scared or hurt.”

The Royal Canine is open 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. seven days a week and appointments are not required.

For more information, visit The Royal Canine on Facebook.



As a bonus after being subjected to a bath, dogs are welcome to a treat or two at The Royal Canine, if their owner approves, of course.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *Pet Connection*

THE LATEST ANIMAL SHELTER NUMBERS

Data from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals indicates that roughly 6.3 million companion animals enter animal shelters in the United States each year.

A nearly equal number of dogs (3.1 million) and cats (3.2 million) make up that population, and roughly two-thirds of those shelter animals are eventually adopted each year.

But the landscape for shelter animals is fluid, and the first half of 2023 was proof of that.

According to the Association for Animal Welfare Advancement, dog intakes at animal shelters had increased by 4 percent during the first two quarters of 2023 compared to the same period the year prior.

During that same time, cat intakes had declined by roughly 1 percent. One possible reason for the higher intake of dogs is related to how prospective dog owners begin their search.

A recent analysis of Google Trends found that the search term “buy a dog” is now as common as the term “adopt a dog.”

By choosing to adopt rather than buy a dog, prospective dog owners could save a dog’s life and help often overburdened local adoption shelters looking to ensure dogs in their care end up in safe and happy homes.

(METRO CREATIVE)



Approximately 6.3 million companion animals enter animal shelters in the United States each year, according to the latest data from the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

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Exotic animals can make great pets

Cats and dogs top the list of the most common pets among households across North America. But many people are drawn to more unusual pets. Unconventional pets typically categorized as “exotic pets” can be just as enjoyable as their feline and canine counterparts.

WHAT IS AN EXOTIC PET?

The definition of an exotic pet varies. The Spruce Pets says different companies, people, governments, and associations all will define an exotic pet differently from one another.

LEARN THE LEGALITIES

Exotic pets can be interesting creatures to care for and enable people to learn about the distinctive social behaviors and norms of less conventional animal friends.

While some pets billed as exotic are widely sold, not all are allowed to be kept as pets. Each state in the United States and each territory and province in Canada has its own laws regarding species of animals that can be kept as pets. It is best to research local laws before acquiring an exotic pet.

EXOTIC PET CONSIDERATIONS

Once you have established which pets you are allowed to own (with or without permit), these exotics may merit consideration:

- **Axolotls:** An axolotl is a type of salamander that doesn't go through metamorphosis. Axolotls can be an alternative to aquatic animals like fish or snails. They can live up to 15 years and are mainly solitary animals.

They can do well on worms and sinking salmon pellets as food, says Burlington Emergency & Veterinary Specialists.

- **Hermit crab:** A hermit crab is a decapod, which means it has five pairs of legs, including a pair of claws, says Monterey Bay Aquarium. Unlike some other crabs, a hermit crab does not have its own shell, but rather inhabits discarded shells from other animals, like sea snails.

Hermit crabs require a warm environment with food they can scavenge. It's good to provide a variety of shells so the crab can occupy new ones as it grows larger.

- **Macaws:** These large, colorful parrots are native to tropical areas in the Americas, advises Britannica.

Most macaws are large and need lots of social interaction to thrive. They are high-maintenance pets that also can be a lifelong commitment since they live many, many years.



- **Bearded dragon:** Sometimes called “beardies” among enthusiasts, these medium-sized lizards are native to Australia and have become popular pets.

They tend to be very docile in captivity and learn to be handled. They are most active during the day, and will require a combination of insects, vegetables, fruit, and leafy greens to thrive.

- **Domesticated hedgehog:** A hedgehog resembles a furry pin cushion. This small animal, which weighs roughly one pound, has an average life span of four to six years, says Good Housekeeping.

Hedgehogs are nocturnal so they should not be forced to be active during the day. Their quills can penetrate the skin when they are frightened or provoked, so that is



Unconventional pets, typically categorized as “exotic pets,” can be just as enjoyable as their feline and canine counterparts.

METRO CREATIVE PHOTOS *Pet Connection*

another variable to consider.

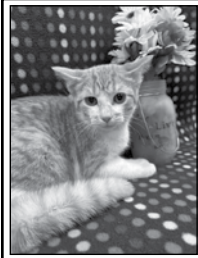
Exotic animals may be alternatives for people looking for something a little different in a pet.

(METRO CREATIVE)



adopt-a-pet

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5 Months Old • Neutered Male
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COLLIN

Terrier/Mix
5 Years Old • Neutered Male
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ELVIRA

Domestic Shorthair/Mix
1 Year Old • Spayed Female
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Sponsored by:

WARREN'S AUTO BODY
262-763-2116

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POSSOM

Domestic Shorthair/Mix
8 Months Old • Neutered Male
Lakeland Animal Shelter
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Sponsored by:

K & B ACCOUNTING
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LONI

Terrier/Mix
2 Years Old • Spayed Female
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SHILOH (ELEANOR)

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PIPER

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MARVIN

Terrier/Mix
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SOUTHERN LAKES PLUMBING & HEATING
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COTTON

Terrier/Mix
1 Year Old • Neutered Male
Lakeland Animal Shelter
262-723-1000

Sponsored by:

HUNTER'S AUTO SERVICE
262-728-5788

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RUDY

Bulldog/Mix
3 Year Old • Neutered Male
Lakeland Animal Shelter
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WISHING WELL FLORIST
262-723-6677

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LEO-JOHNNY

Terrier/Mix
6 Years Old • Neutered Male
Lakeland Animal Shelter
262-723-1000

Sponsored by:

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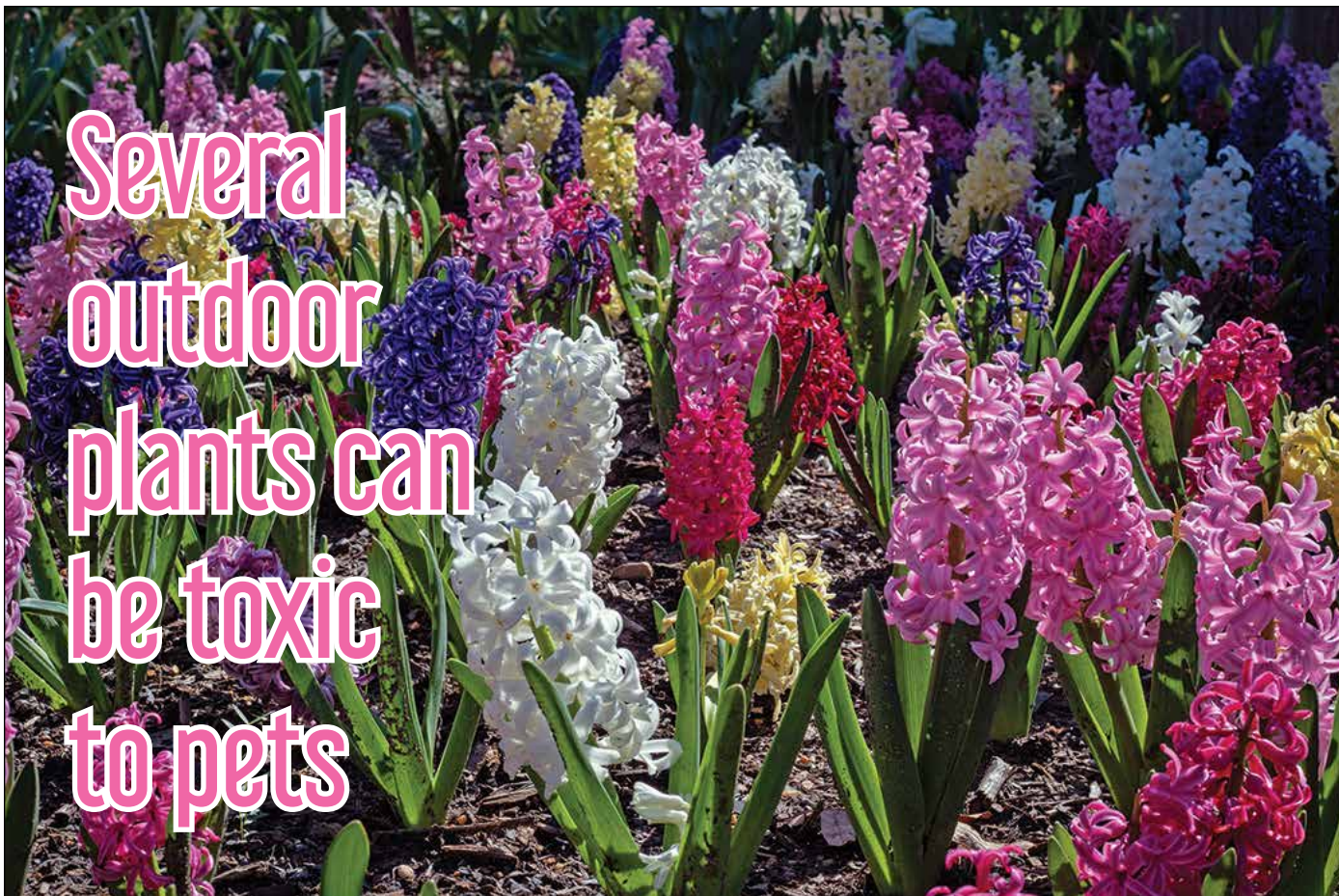
COOPER

Terrier, Yorkshire/Mix
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Lakeland Animal Shelter
262-723-1000

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WHITEWATER TRAVEL SERVICE
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Several outdoor plants can be toxic to pets

Pets bring many positive changes to households. Pets can make homes lively, and the companionship of animals can reduce feelings of loneliness while offering additional health benefits to pet owners.

Individuals who are preparing to get a pet need to be mindful that they may need to make changes at home to ensure residences are safe places for pets to reside.

Much in the way new parents must assess the environs for potential hazards to babies, pet owners should conduct similar inspections. These safety checks should occur inside and in the yard if pets will be spending time outdoors.

Poisonous plants are a potentially hidden hazard prospective pet owners must address before bringing a new pet home.

People generally do not give much thought to the plants they include in their homes and yards beyond the care instructions and how they can add to the aesthetic appeal.

Homeowners may know if a plant likes the sun or shade, but they may not realize its potential for toxicity. That's because adults in particular are not prone to ingesting the plants in their yard that are inedible, unlike curious pets that may sniff and nibble plants when exploring their environments.

For those with dogs and cats that will

spend time outdoors, it's best to be aware of these potentially toxic plants, courtesy of the ASPCA, Dr. Buzby's and Garden Design.

- Autumn crocus: There are various types of crocus plants, but the one most toxic to dogs is autumn crocus. The entire plant is toxic, but the highest concentration of toxic agent is found in the bulbs.

- Sago palm: People in warm climates may enjoy the look of palm trees on their properties. Despite its tropical and relaxing appearance, the Sago palm is extremely poisonous if ingested by pets, with the seeds being the most toxic part.

- Lily: Lilies are highly toxic to cats in particular. Even grooming pollen off of their fur or drinking water out of a vase where lilies are kept may cause kidney failure.

- Tulips and hyacinth: These early bloomers are beautiful flowers, but each contains a similar alkaloid toxin that is mild to moderately toxic to pets. Again, the highest concentration is found in the bulbs, which dogs or cats may dig up while exploring.

- Aloe vera: This soothing succulent may be part of an arid climate landscape. Aloe contains saponin, a toxin with foaming properties that can harm pets if ingested and cause severe dehydration.

- Begonia: A popular outdoor and houseplant, begonia has decorative flowers

and attractive leaves. However, the plant can be toxic to cats and dogs if ingested, particularly the underground tubers.

- Azalea: This flowering shrub produces flowers in many colors, so it's often present in household landscapes. It's important to note that azaleas can be toxic to dogs and cats.

- Yew: American, Canadian and Japanese yew may be found around properties. These shrubs produce small red berries with green centers (almost looking like the reverse of a Spanish olive with pimento). Yew is toxic to cats and dogs.

- Dahlia: Dahlias produce flowers in different colors, so they are common in flower beds. However, these plants also are mildly toxic to pets.

Many toxic plants can irritate the gastrointestinal system in pets, potentially resulting in vomiting, diarrhea or lethargy. Those who suspect a pet has ingested a poisonous plant should contact the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 888-426-4435 or their local veterinarian to learn how to respond to possible exposure.

(METRO CREATIVE)

For people with dogs and cats that will spend time outdoors, it's important to be aware of several potentially toxic plants, including hyacinth (above) and tulips.

STOCK PHOTO Pet Connection



Conditions that can affect pets' oral health

A happy and healthy pet can be a wonderful addition to a home. The unconditional love that companion animals provide is often well worth the devotion of time and resources that goes into ensuring pets live happy and healthy lives.

Oral health care is one of the common areas of pet health that some pet parents overlook, but it is just as important as other wellness issues. The American Veterinary Medical Association advises that dental health is a very important part of pets' overall health. Dental problems can cause certain issues, or they can be a byproduct of other health problems.

Understanding some of the conditions that can affect pets' teeth and gums may compel their owners to take swift action if such issues arise.

GUM DISEASES

Bacterial infections of the gums and other oral tissue can cause inflammation of the gums. If periodontal disease is untreated, Merck Veterinary Manual says tooth loss can occur.

Gum disease is caused by bacteria that leads to the formation of plaque at the gum line. Pet owners should be diligent in brushing their pets' teeth to reduce bacteria.

Eating crunchy foods and treats alone will not clean teeth.

Veterinarians also may recommend routine dental scaling treatments, particularly for breeds that are at elevated risk for periodontal disease.

BROKEN TEETH AND ROOTS

Broken teeth and roots are most often caused when pets bite into something that is too hard. The Cornell Richard P. Riney Canine Health Center says pet owners should employ the "fingernail test" on pet toys. In this test, one should be able to make a dent in the item with a fingernail to mark it as safe as a chew toy. Antlers, hooves and bones may fracture teeth. Pets also should not be allowed to chomp down on ice cubes.

Teeth also may become fractured through rough play, such as a tug-of-war session with a toy. Pet owners should carefully gauge the pressure at which they play such games.

TUMORS

Oral tumors are abnormal growths that can form in pets' mouths. Some tumors are benign, while others are malignant and can spread. All unusual growths should be

checked out by a veterinarian.

VCA Animal Hospitals says male dogs seem to be twice as likely to develop oral cancer than female dogs. Also, Akitas, Cocker Spaniels, Boxers, Dachshunds, Doberman Pinschers, Golden Retrievers, and Poodles are among the breeds that seem to be predisposed to oral cancers.

BAD BREATH

The most common cause of bad breath in pets is periodontal disease. Having pets' teeth cleaned and staying current on oral hygiene can help.

Additional causes of bad breath may include poor kidney or liver health, as the pet may be having issues filtering waste out of its body, says Apple Valley Animal Hospital.

Routine vet visits can alert pet owners to potential oral health issues. Taking dental care seriously can help keep pets healthy.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Understanding some of the conditions that can affect pets' teeth and gums may compel their owners to take swift action if such issues arise.

STOCK PHOTO *Pet Connection*



Establishing kids' roles in caring for the family pet

Children and pets living together can make for a boisterous but happy household. Having pets is an ideal opportunity to introduce children to some measure of responsibility, and it may encourage youngsters to become advocates for animal welfare.

Pets require all sorts of care and companionship. Introducing children to age-appropriate pet-related tasks can set the groundwork for a lifetime of loving and caring for companion animals.

Children shouldn't be given all of the responsibilities of caring for pets, but there are some notable roles they can play.

TEACH GENTLE INTERACTIONS

Toddlers and even kindergarteners may be unaware of how rough they are being. Therefore, they will need a lot of supervision and reinforcement to learn how to be gentle when petting or engaging with companion animals.

Young children also may think that pets are toys and that there are no consequences when animals are handled roughly. Parents and other caregivers may need to spend a lot of time emphasizing gentle play with pets.

START WITH PLAY SESSIONS

Playing together is a great way for kids and pets to bond and get some exercise.

Purina behaviorist Dr. Annie Valuska suggests games like high-five, rolling over, finding treats in hidden places, and practicing tricks or commands.

Children also may be able to do short training sessions with pets, like helping them get acclimated to a new pet carrier, wearing a leash, or even moving the vacuum cleaner nearby so the animal overcomes its fear of it.

FAMILY VET VISITS

Children can learn a lot about pet health and care at the vet's office. Bring youngsters along to help out and see what is involved in routine veterinary visits. Kids can soothe and distract the pet during the administration of vaccines and watch how a vet assesses an animal's overall health.

Watching a pet go through a physical examination also may help a child become more brave in relation to his or her own medical check-ups.

PARTICIPATE IN FEEDING AND BATHING

Children can be responsible for putting pre-measured scoops of food in the bowl for feeding and help refill the water. Kids also may be able to offer treats to pets who are able to take them gently out of hand.

When it comes time to groom a pet,

children can assist with scrub downs in the tub or at a grooming station in a nearby retail store. More hands available can help wrangle a wet and slippery animal, after all.

Kids may find it soothing to brush pets, but they must do so gently.

TEACH ABOUT QUIET TIME

Pets need opportunities to rest, and children should understand that quiet time means the pet should be left alone. Kids can help set up a cozy napping spot where a dog or cat can retreat when they need some rest.

Children can be taught responsible pet care when their parents feel they're ready. With trial and error, family members can see where kids' strengths lie in caring for pets and gauge the animals's tolerance for interaction with youngsters.

Pet owners must remember to ensure young children and animals are never together without adult supervision.

(METRO CREATIVE)

Children shouldn't be given all of the responsibilities of caring for pets, but there are some notable roles they can play. It's an ideal opportunity to lay the groundwork for a lifetime of loving and caring for companion animals.

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