
Checklist for a Dog-friendly Backyard



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When you're staying safe at home and can't escape for a destination vacation, a staycation might be exactly what you and your furry friend need. The longer, warmer days of summer invite us to play in the grass and bask in the sunshine. Rather than heading to a busy hiking trail or crowded dog park, your very own backyard can be an oasis — or a playground — for your pup. But is your backyard a pet-friendly destination you both can enjoy?

From fences to plants to activities, check out this checklist with tips to create a dog-friendly backyard where you can both chill out or play hard all season long.



Steps to Create a Dog-friendly Yard

Before your trusty sidekick heads outside, take some time to get your backyard ready for dog-friendly fun.

Ensure your yard has a dog fence for your pup's safety. Inspect the fence to make sure your bestie can't escape — and unwanted critters can't get in.



Watch out for harmful plants. Not all flowers and bushes are safe for pets. Do your research to make sure your yard's greenery is safe for your pup. Avoid plants such as azaleas and lilies, which can be harmful if dogs eat them.



While there's no need to rip out and replace your grass, if major landscaping changes are on your to-do list, consider planting hardy grass that can bounce back from your pup's shenanigans. Some of the most dog-friendly grasses include Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass and fescue.

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Ward off pesky bugs. From fleas and ticks to mosquitoes and wasps, insects can disrupt playtime fun. Make sure your pup has a regular flea and tick medication schedule. Look for pet-friendly yard treatments to keep pests to a minimum, and consider buying bug spray designed for dogs.



Keep Your Dog Safe and Cool in the Summer

In the dog days of summer, it's important to protect your pup from the sun and heat while you enjoy quality time outside.

- Don't overdo your time outdoors, as the heat can be harmful to you both. Take breaks from the heat by going indoors, especially in the middle of the day when it's hottest.
- Create a shady area where you can both escape the hot sun, cool down and relax. From shady trees to umbrellas, lounge cushions or even a doghouse, make sure your pooch can unwind and beat the heat.
- Build your dog a hydration station. Summer temperatures can soar, and it's vital to make sure your pup has plenty of fresh, clean drinking water whenever he's outside.
- Wear sunscreen! Did you know dogs can get sunburned, too? Hairless breeds, dogs with white or thin coats, and dogs with light-pigmented eyelids and noses are especially prone to sunburn. Look for sunscreen specifically designed for dogs, or talk with your vet to find out what's best for your pet.



Summer Activities for You and Your Dog

When it comes to fun backyard ideas for dogs, the sky's the limit

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- Let's swim! Keep your pup cool and refreshed splashing around in a kiddie pool, sprinkler or deeper wading ponds. Water fun can be had for every dog and every

budget.

- Treat your sidekick to an obstacle course. Dogs love to be challenged and are great at learning new tricks. Household items like hula hoops, pool noodles, play tunnels and PVC pipes can make an exciting challenge for your dog. And don't forget [the treats](#) for a job well done!
- Play scent hide-and-seek. While your pup is inside, hide a [yummy treat](#) somewhere in the yard. Then let your dog loose so they can put their nose to work and be rewarded with a tasty treat!

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