



Pet Proof Your Garden This Spring



- National Pet Month 1st April - 10th May 2020 -

As spring makes its welcome return, our pets can once again make the most of the garden and enjoy being outside after a wet and stormy winter.

To celebrate the return of National Pet Month, the the UK's leading garden centre, [Dobbies](#) has teamed up with pet emergency service, [Vets Now](#), to put together their essential guide to help beloved pets make the most of your garden, safely this spring.

Officially a nation of pet lovers, according to latest reports, 50% of UK adults own a pet with an estimated population of 10.9 million pet cats and 9.9 million pet dogs*. A space to play, relax or cool off in the shade, be prepared for the season ahead with top tips to both protect your pet and your garden.

With a rise in emergency cases during the spring summer months, thousands of cats and dogs are expected to be admitted to the UK's leading pet emergency provider, Vets Now's, out-of-hours clinics and 24/7 pet emergency hospitals as a result of becoming unwell, or accidents in the garden.



Resident gardening expert at Dobbies, Louise Golden, commented - *“Creating a space that the whole family can enjoy will mean you get maximum enjoyment from it. For many, pets are an integral part of the household and when the weather is good, they very often want to be the first out of the door and into the garden to play.*

The best thing to do to protect pets from garden hazards is to take some time to plan and prep your outdoor space. Some elements are easy to incorporate, such as providing a shady spot to shelter in when a heatwave strikes, others take a little more careful planning, such as the plants and flowers you choose to grow. Your garden is an extension of your home and the best way to get maximum enjoyment from it, is to take some time to consider how best to make it a space that suits the whole family, pets included.”





Louise Golden, resident gardener at Dobbies shares her top tips to create a pet-friendly outdoor oasis -

- **Plant Protection** - Raised beds and clearly designed pathways help to keep dogs out of flower beds and protect more delicate plants. For areas where dogs will be letting off steam choose hardy plants or shrubs that can withstand a bit of beating.
- **Safe & Secure** - Ensure fencing is secure with no gaps or holes to prevent dogs escaping, plus that it is tall enough that they can't jump over it. Look at your pet's habits too — are they a digger? If so, give them an area where it's ok to dig and encourage them to use it by hiding toys or treats in it, rather than the lawn.
- **Avoid making a splash** - If you have a pond in your garden, the best way to protect the fish that may call it home and your dog or cat from falling in, is to cover ponds. Measure the pond before choosing a cover, as you'll want to have extra netting to ensure cats can't simply lift it with paws to reach for fish below the surface.
- **In the shade** - The past few summers have seen record-breaking temperatures reached in the UK and, as much as pets love basking in the sunshine, overheating is dangerous for both cats and dogs and can happen easily. Providing an area of shade for them to shelter will mean they can still be outside, but offers a space for them to cool down. Pergolas and large trees will throw shade on your garden, or invest in a dog kennel to give them a designated area out of the sun.
- **Drink up** - A small but welcome addition for any pet-friendly garden during the warmer months is a dedicated outdoor water bowl, replenished regularly with fresh drinking water. Choose a sturdy feeder that's suitable for outdoor use and move inside when autumn returns to protect it from the worst of the weather.



Essential advice on keeping pets safe in the garden from Vets Now Professional Standards Director, Dr Laura Playforth -

Dangerous hazards to avoid in a dog-friendly garden: These are some of the most common garden hazards for dogs. If you're intent on creating a dog friendly garden, keep these well away.



- **Compost** - Although great for your garden, compost can be highly dangerous to dogs, so owners should always keep it out of reach and seek urgent veterinary advice if they suspect their dog has raided the compost bin.
- **Fertilisers** - Fertilisers come in granular, solid and liquid form. While most aren't hazardous, some can cause sickness and diarrhoea if swallowed or irritate your dog's skin if brushed against. Products with additives such as insecticides are often the most dangerous.
- **Weed killer** - Many weed killers contain glyphosate which can be dangerous if swallowed, licked or brushed against. Dogs who consume a significant enough amount may suffer breathing problems, heart rate issues and convulsions. If you plan to use weed killer, make sure your dog is safe inside to avoid any problems.
- **Insecticides and pesticides** - Insecticides and pesticides are typically used to get rid of so-called garden pests. But many contain dangerous chemicals such as



metaldehyde or disulfoton, which are both very toxic to dogs. Read the instructions carefully and don't use them if there's a potential risk.

- **Lawn feed and moss killer** - These products usually include fertilisers, weed killer or ferrous sulphate (iron) which kills moss. All of these have the potential to harm your dog's skin or cause gastrointestinal problems. Those that contain iron may also cause iron poisoning.
- **Daffodil, lily and spring crocus bulbs** - Several popular garden plants are poisonous to dogs but, often, it's the bulbs that pose the biggest risk. For example, daffodil, lily and spring crocus bulbs are all highly toxic. Symptoms of plant or bulb poisoning can include vomiting, upset stomach and heart and kidney problems.

What to do if your pet has been poisoned? If you think your pet may have eaten any of these please contact your vet immediately or, out of hours, find your nearest [Vets Now](#) pet emergency clinic or 24/7 hospital.

At your local Dobbies, there is something for every member of the family, including your four-legged friends. From food to accessories, toys and gifts, and a dog-friendly policy meaning you can bring them along for the experience, find your local store at [Dobbies.com](#).

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Notes to Editors

Issued on behalf of Dobbies Garden Centres by Attention Media

*Source - PDSA Animal Wellbeing (PAW) 2019 Report

About Dobbies:

- Founded by James Dobbie in 1865, Dobbies has today grown to become the UK's leading garden centre retail business with 69 centres across the UK.
- Customers can also shop online at [dobbies.com](#)
- Dobbies exists to enrich peoples' lives by using its knowledge and passion to nurture connections between people, community and the environment by offering destination garden centres with carefully considered ranges, high quality services, great restaurants and cafes as well as engaging experiences.
- Since being acquired by a consortium led by Midlothian Capital Partners Limited and Hattington Capital LLP in 2016, Dobbies has acquired 37 garden centres from Wyevale,



expanding its national footprint and strengthening its position as the UK's leading garden centre retailer.

- For more details visit dobbies.com or contact pressoffice@dobbies.com

About Vets Now:

- Vets Now was established in 2001 and is the leading provider of emergency veterinary care for companion animals in the UK.
- With 24/7 Pet Emergency Hospitals in Glasgow, Manchester and Swindon, and 59 out-of-hours clinics nationwide, Vets Now is committed to delivering a responsive emergency and critical care service for cats, dogs and other small animals.
- Vets Now also partners with more than 1,400 veterinary practices across the UK to provide their clients with a seamless out-of-hours emergency care service.
- Vets Now employs over 1000 staff.
- Vets Now remains at the forefront of emergency veterinary care through its commitment to clinical excellence and training, employing many of the country's top Emergency & Critical Care Specialists.

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For additional expert comment, product enquiries, further information or high-resolution images, please contact:

Laura Quick | Email: laura@attention-media.co.uk | Mobile: 07807 809 1190.9-7