



National Gardening Week: it's time to pet-proof your garden

To celebrate National Gardening Week (29th April – 5th May 2019), the UK's leading pet emergency providers, [Vets Now](#), has put together their essential guide to help beloved pets make the most of your garden, safely this spring.

Thousands of 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 during the spring and summer months as a result of accidents in the garden or becoming unwell after coming into contact with toxic substances such as weedkiller, slug bait or poisonous plants and flowers.

Dr Laura Playforth, Vets Now's head of veterinary standards, said: "We see a big rise in pet emergency cases during the spring and summer months, and some of these are a result of dogs coming into contact with garden hazards. Gardens are the perfect place for dogs to exercise and have fun but even those that are fenced in can be potentially dangerous if common sense isn't applied.

"There are several popular garden plants and substances you should always protect your pet from. If you suspect your dog has eaten any of these, contact your vet or, out of hours, your nearest Vets Now pet emergency clinic or 24/7 hospital straight away. And remember, always try to take a sample of the dangerous item or substance, or a label containing its ingredients, to the vet."

Beware of these common garden dangers for dogs

Here, the UK's leading pet emergency provider, [Vets Now](#), has compiled essential tips on keeping pets safe in the garden.

Note to media: these tips can be attributed to Dr Laura Playforth, Vets Now's head of veterinary standards, an authority in emergency and critical care in pets.



Dog-proofing your garden

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 battering.

Ensure fencing is secure with no gaps or holes to prevent dogs escaping. Look at your pet's habits too — is he a digger? If so, give him an area where it's ok to dig and encourage him to use it by hiding toys or treats in it, rather than the lawn.

11 deadly hazards you'll never find 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.

1. Compost

Compost is usually full of mouldy food and garden waste. Some of this can produce dangerous mycotoxins which are highly dangerous to dogs. Mycotoxicosis, which is poisoning by-products contaminated by fungi, can be fatal. Dog owners should always keep compost out of reach and seek urgent veterinary advice if they suspect their dog has raided the compost bin. Read how [beautiful Bandit](#) nearly died after he got into a compost bin and ate the contents.

2. 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.

3. 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.



4. 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 if there's a potential risk.

5. 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.

6. 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. Read how Riley the playful Labrador had a [lucky escape](#) after eating a daffodil.

7. Mushrooms and toadstools

While some mushrooms are edible, others are highly toxic, and it's often difficult to tell which is which. Symptoms of eating poisonous fungi can vary dramatically but may include sickness, hallucinations and even kidney or liver failure. Dog owner Tony Sutton [discovered the hard way](#) while out for a walk with pets Shep and Sweep.

8. Cocoa mulch

This contains theobromine — the same poisonous ingredient that's in chocolate. It has similar properties to caffeine and can cause vomiting or diarrhoea and possibly muscle tremors, seizures and elevated heart rate. There have been several cases of dogs falling ill after eating cocoa mulch.

9. Stones from Prunus species

Believe it or not, the stones and pits of plums, cherries, apricots, and peaches contain cyanide. As a result, these are dangerous if crushed or broken before being eaten. The stems and leaves can also be toxic. It's worth bearing in mind that larger stones can cause obstructions if swallowed whole.



10. Slug and snail pellets

Metaldehyde-based slug and snail pellets are among the most dangerous and common poisonings our vets see. Ingestion can cause severe poisoning and signs often occur within an hour. One dog who did not survive swallowing slug and snail pellets was [Japanese Akita Boris](#). He tragically died within hours of coming across the pellets during a walk in the park.

11. Toads

Toads produce a venom through their skin when they're under attack and toad venom poisoning can be fatal if left untreated. The toxins can cause dogs to foam at the mouth, vomit and show signs of distress such as pawing at the mouth and eyes. [Playful Buddy](#) thought his luck was in when he chanced upon a lively toad in the garden but he got the shock of his life when he picked it up.

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. www.vets-now.com

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

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Vets Now notes to editor:

- 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.