

## Author

Finuala Barnes lives on the edge of the New Forest in Hampshire, England. She has loved, shown, worked (and occasionally bred) her Barhi Welsh Springer Spaniels for almost thirty years. Finuala has also written on gardening for Dog World, the UK's largest circulation canine newspaper. The Barhi garden has opened to the public under the National Gardens Scheme since 2007.

## Website

On our website you will find a number of articles on the topic of gardening and dogs. Topics include:

### Dogs

- Canine Waste
- Protecting Your Dog from the Garden
- Puppies and Gardens
- Snow and Ice
- Training
- Whose Garden Is It?

### Gardening

- Fencing
- Poisonous Plants
- Protecting the Garden from Your Dog
- Recommended Plants
- To Grass or Not To Grass
- Water in the Garden



# Create a beautiful garden Share with your dogs

<http://gardeninganddogs.wordpress.com>

## Links mentioned

- Croft ([http://www.croftonline.co.uk/mcp/Puppy\\_Play\\_Areas\\_and\\_Pens.html](http://www.croftonline.co.uk/mcp/Puppy_Play_Areas_and_Pens.html))
- Cornell University (<http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/plants/dogs/index.html>)
- Dogs Trust (<http://www.dogstrust.org.uk/resources/resources/factsheets09/factsheetpoisonoussubstances09.pdf>).
- Kennel Club Good Citizen (<http://www.thekennelclub.org.uk/dogtraining>)
- Inner Wolf (<http://www.innerwolf.co.uk/gbu0-catshow/WATERSPORTS.html?gclid=COyp--Z9gQCFYE14woddQioiQ>)

## Puppies and Gardens

Congratulations on your new puppy. I'm sure that you have made all sorts of preparation for your new arrival and that you have a new collar and lead, bed and toys all waiting to be used. Your family and house are all looking forward to the day when you bring your puppy home, but have you thought about your garden?

Until your puppy has his (or her) second injections, the garden will be the only outdoor space where your puppy will be able to be free, so you have to make sure that it is safe and secure for him.



## Fences

The first thing to think about is your garden boundary. Are there any little gaps that he might squeeze through? Remember, a young puppy is very small and can get through places that you would never think possible in his desire to investigate this new world. It may be that you choose to give your puppy a play pen. This way, he can be safe and secure and you don't have to watch him every second of the day. There are obviously many ways of making such a pen. I (and many UK breeders) get our panels from Croft. You can buy panels singly or as a set in a wide range of sizes to suit your needs.

## Poisonous Plants

Puppies really love exploring gardens, and it is wonderful to watch them do it, but you do have to teach them what they can or can't do in the garden, just as you have to in the house. I heard a very sad story of a family who lost their puppy after only three weeks. They think that he ate something in the garden. Being organic gardeners, they had thought that he would be safe, but they had forgotten that some plants are toxic to dogs.

There are two wonderful online resources regarding poisonous plants - Cornell University and Dogs Trust – but remember that no resource is infallible. Some plants are highly toxic and should be avoided in a garden shared with dogs at all costs. This would include plants such as Laburnum and Deadly Nightshade. However, some plants can be toxic in very large doses, but may be safely used in a garden shared with dogs so long as the dogs are taught not to eat plants and sensible precautions are taken.

## Training

You don't have to wait until your puppy goes to training classes to start training him; he is learning all sorts of things every minute of the day. You need to encourage the behaviours that you want and discourage those you don't.

Obviously training classes will help give you an idea of what you need to train your puppy and how to do it. Clubs that offer Kennel Club Good Citizen training are especially useful as there are three levels of award to gradually work your way through, as well as the Puppy Foundation.

Your puppy's training will help keep him safe in the garden. You will need to make sure that he understands your wishes indoors before being able to move on to training in the garden. This will be much harder than in the house as there are so many more distractions outdoors. Until he knows not to eat things in the house, you won't be able to rely on him not eating plants that might harm him. A recall is also important so that you can call him to you when required.



## Water

You will need to be careful if you have a garden pond, particularly if it is a ground level one. Puppies are fascinated by ponds and will want to explore this new environment.

You will need to teach him that the pond is not there for him to swim in if you want to avoid him disturbing the plants and pond life as well as frequently coming in from the garden soaking wet.

Remember swimming pools are really very large ponds, but obviously have an increased risk of drowning, especially if a puppy became caught under a pool cover. It is possible to get dog life jackets from companies such as Inner Wolf if this is a risk for your puppy.

## Protecting your Plants



Your plants will have a lot to cope with from your puppy, even assuming you train him not to eat them. Puppy play is unlikely to have any respect for your plants. You have to accept that there will be some degree of damage as the puppy flies past, but there are things you can do to mitigate the problems.

You can protect plants using supports. Even if the plant itself does not need them, a strong metal support provides a physical barrier to stop the puppy just running over your plants. As the plant grows, the support will disappear from view, but still provide the plant with the protection it needs. I have even used these supports to protect a newly planted rose from the onslaught of vigorous puppy play.

## Grass

It is highly likely that your puppy will have a detrimental affect on your grass. Most people are aware that the high nitrogen content of canine urine has a damaging effect on grass.

This problem is mainly associated with bitches as they are more likely to squat in the middle of a lawn whilst dogs will tend to choose to lift their legs against shrubs, walls or some other large object. However, male puppies will squat for some months before they learn to lift their legs so they can cause just as much damage as bitches, at least while they are young.

There are many potions available that are said to reduce the impact on grass. From reports that I have received, none seem to remove the problem, but some may improve the situation. I have also heard of people who follow their dog around with jugs of water to dilute the affect of urine, which may help but is exceedingly time consuming.

Assuming that none of these resolve the issue, you will need to repair any bald patches. The best time to do this is in the spring or autumn.

Remember, you can still have a garden without grass, for more ideas see our website.



With a bit of forethought, you can have a puppy and a beautiful garden – go on, just try it.