



## Chino Basin Water Conservation District

### Tips for a Pet-Friendly Garden



When designing or working in your garden, think about making it pet-friendly garden design, so your pet can enjoy being out in the yard and garden too. Remember, like you, your dog or cat needs shade and a place to get a drink on a hot day.

1. **Fencing:** If you have a dog, your pet-friendly garden needs a solid fence. Four feet is high enough for small dogs, but for some athletic dogs fences will need to be five or six feet high. Gaps can be problematical, as curious dogs can wedge their heads between boards. Avoid large gaps between the fence and the ground for canine escape artists looking to dig their way out.
2. **Paths:** Dogs often like to make their own path in your plants or on the lawn. If they wear the area down to a dirt trail, install a permanent path with pea gravel, mulch, pavers or stepping-stones (anything that allows water to infiltrate). Don't fight it, be creative and work with it.
3. **Plants:** When redesigning your yard or adding new plantings, choose larger-sized trees and shrubs that are water wise as well as sturdy so Fido does not mistake wimpy plants for chew toys. When first planting an area, consider installing a temporary chicken wire enclosure to keep pets out.
4. **Mass planting:** Planting masses of drought tolerant shrubs or ornamental grasses can help keep pets on the right path. Most will go around rather than through such plantings. Grasses are particularly tough plants that are unlikely to be injured even by the most rambunctious of dogs.
5. **Mulch:** Use an organic mulch to reduce evaporation, reduce weeds and to beautiful bare soil. Inorganic mulches, like pea gravel, are also appropriate in the right places. Adding compost, which you can make in your own backyard, is also a healthy addition to any garden.
6. **Vegetable gardens:** If you've planted vegetable seeds into the ground, keep the seed bed moist, as cats prefer to dig in dry, loose soil. Use straw mulch to cover the soil in between rows of vegetables or individual plants such as tomatoes. A permanent enclosure, such as an attractive picket fence is good idea for a herb or vegetable garden where you don't want any dog or cat toilet activities to occur.
7. **Digging problems:** The most pet-friendly garden solution here is to consider giving an unrepentant canine digger a fenced digging pit.



8. Dogs and lawns: Does your lawn have brown spots from your pet Spot? This is mainly an issue with female dogs. Either train your dog to pee-pee in a different area, or replace your water guzzling lawn with a drought tolerant ground cover like dymonida.
9. Avoid using toxic chemicals and poisons: Fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides can all be harmful to your pets. Use them sparingly and carefully. Choose the safest alternative whenever possible. When ridding your yard of rodents, use traps over poisons. Some methods include:

#### **Bunnies**

- Find their point of entry and block it off
- Sprinkle human hair around the garden (local salons will gladly donate it). When the hair eventually breaks down it serves as a good fertilizer.
- Sprinkle vinegar, hot pepper flakes and liquid chili sprays on and around plants
- Install chicken wire
- Electric fence and a small charger
- Garden hose – bunnies won't cross over it
- Cat, used cat litter or human urine

#### **Gophers**

- Invite predatory birds like owls and hawks into your yard
- Let your dogs and/or cats out at dusk and dawn when gophers are more active
- Install chicken wire
- Stick juicy fruit gum down their holes (wrapper and all)

10. Finally, if you're getting a dog, choose a dog that fits well with your lifestyle and your yard, and spend time training him or her! This is guaranteed to pay off in a happier relationship.

*Please contact us with any of your own helpful hints – especially safe pest management tips.*

To learn how to conserve water in your pet friendly yard, attend  
Chino Basin Water Conservation District's  
FREE Water Wise Landscaping Classes.

For more information, visit [www.cbwcd.org](http://www.cbwcd.org) or call 909-626-2711.



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