

My Dog Loves Digging

Many of us share our lives with a dog that appears to get so much enjoyment out of digging holes in the garden, and its safe to say that the majority of pet owners do not appreciate this behaviour, especially if your dogs chosen area is a flower bed or freshly laid lawn.

Why Do Dogs Dig?

Digging used to be most commonly seen in breed groups such as Hounds and Terriers. This is due to these breeds being bred for their ability to dig out game such as badgers, foxes and otters. However, although Terriers and Hounds may have a higher digging instinct compared to another breed, it is not unusual for other breeds to perform this behaviour to.

There are a variety of reasons why dogs dig, including:

-  **Boredom** - if you leave your dog in the garden to entertain themselves, then digging might be how they do this.
-  **Burying** - dogs love to save items that are important to them, so some dogs may dig to bury their bones or toys.
-  **Escape** - digging can often be used as a means of escape. There may be something more exciting elsewhere and your dog is digging to escape under the garden fence. Digging behaviour can also increase if your dog or bitch is not neutered and they are escaping to try and find a suitable mate.
-  **Den** - some bitches will dig to build a den for their puppies. This behaviour can occur if they are pregnant or not.
-  **Heat** - dogs may dig during the summer months as the deeper layers of soil are much cooler to lie in, and provide some relief from the heat.
-  **Enjoyment** - some dogs will dig for no apparent reason other than the pure enjoyment that they get from this behaviour.

What Should I Do?

If you believe that your dog is digging due to boredom or trying to escape, then you need to make the garden a really exciting place to be. You can do this by playing games and interacting with your dog so that they will not have the urge to dig.

If your dog is digging to find some relief from the heat then you should ensure that your dog has plenty of shade and access to water so that they do not get too hot. A paddling pool is a great way of allowing dogs to cool down if this is the reason why your dog is digging.

If your dog is digging to bury items, to build a den, or for the enjoyment of the behaviour, then the best thing to do is select an area of the garden and allow them this area to perform this natural behaviour. You can either select an area of the garden that you are happy for your dog to dig, or alternatively you can buy a wooden sand pit and fill it with compost. You should then encourage your dog to dig in this area with the use of treats and reward. If your dog has been clicker trained then you can click and reward every time they enter and dig in the chosen area.

Why Should I Allow My Dog to Dig?

If your dog is prevented from performing a behaviour that is natural to them, then they may find alternative ways to satisfy this urge. The best thing to do is encourage these behaviours in ways that are mutually agreeable for you and your dog.

Fancy a Chat?

Us too! If you have any questions or would like some assistance with your dogs digging then give us a call on 07538 032 508 or 07432 153 674. We are always here to help!