

Creating a Pet

Pets play a beneficial role in our lives and are an important part of the family. Over 60% of Australian households have a pet. So when you think about the outdoor space and how you might use it, do you consider the pet pooch or moggie as well? This article provides some helpful tips on creating a garden that meets the needs of the four legged members of the family as well as the two legged.



Room to move

Space is important, particularly for dogs that may be left alone for large parts of the day. Dogs become destructive when they are bored. They like space to run or roam, particularly along the boundaries of a property. If space permits you can section off a part of the garden as a dog run. If space does not permit for a designated dog run then you need to integrate space into your garden. Leaving a gap between the boundary fence and the garden and having well defined paths in the garden will give dogs the freedom to move around in the places you want them to. Dogs love to dig, so provide an area where they are allowed to dig and encourage them to use it by burying some treats.



Consider a cat enclosure

Cats are more difficult to contain to your property. In the City of Whitehorse cats "must be confined indoors or in a suitable enclosure on the owners property between 8pm and 6am". A great way to give your feline friends outdoor enjoyment is to provide a cat run in your garden. The City of Whitehorse website provides a document on how to build cat proof fencing and cat enclosures.

Shade, shelter and water

Does your pet have a shaded, cool area for those hot days? Is there a warm, dry spot for colder weather? Ensure that your garden has areas like these and clean, fresh water is available to your pets at all times.

Plants

There are some plants that are toxic to dogs and cats and should not be used in a pet friendly garden. These include (but are not limited to) azaleas, rhododendrons, cycad (sago palm), oleander, many bulbs (including tulips and daffodils), lilies, wisteria and cyclamens. Other

Friendly Garden

by Noni Young

plants, such as Wandering Jew, can cause skin irritation and should be removed. It is also wise to avoid plants with spikes or thorns that can injure your pets. Once your pets are protected from the plants, how do you protect your plants from your pets? Using hardy, tough plants in the garden is ideal. Raised garden beds will also help and individual pots are best for your precious or delicate plants.



Surfaces

Grass can be difficult to maintain with an active dog. The tougher, hardier grass varieties, such as Buffalo, would be the best option but you will

still need to manage wear and tear. Synthetic turf is another option and is well suited for small, shaded areas. Hard surfacing in the garden such as smooth paving, granitic sand paths, tan bark and decking are all friendly on tender paws.

Safety

Finally, but not least, is to ensure that your garden is safe for your pets. Ensure that the boundary fencing is secure, there are no toxic plants and all pesticides and herbicides are locked away.

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