

Digging Dogs

Dogs dig for pleasure, curiosity, exploration, and out of boredom. Wild canines dig for prey and to build a den, so our domestic dogs come with the same instincts. This can be a problem when Fido decides to dig up the rose bushes in your beautifully landscaped back yard. There are ways to curb this behavior, but it is best to stop it early before a dog develops a frustrating and destructive habit.

Boredom can play a big role in causing a dog to find his own entertainment. In fact, many behavioral problems with dogs stem from boredom. High energy dogs such as working breeds require an outlet for their energy. Digging for buried treasure serves this purpose well. Be sure your dog has plenty of activity each day to exercise his mind and body. Digging can be just the start of many inappropriate behaviors like chewing and barking.

Certain types of dogs are bred for digging. Dachshunds and terriers have been used for hundreds of years to tunnel for rodents and badgers. These dogs must be given other jobs to curb their appetite for digging. If you have burrowing rodents like moles or gophers in your yard, it will be difficult to stop your dog from hunting them.

There are products on the market to deter a dog from digging, some of which work with limited results. Addressing why your dog wants to dig will be more effective. Crate training a puppy helps to establish a schedule of rest and play. This method can teach a dog to look forward to "people time" and helps reduce separation anxiety related behavior. Giving a dog a job to do everyday, whether it's fetching a Frisbee or a walk around the block, can be an outlet for pent up energy. Practicing new tricks is another good way to give your dog mental and physical exercise. Digging can result from too much time alone in the yard without companionship.

A quick remedy to stop a dog from digging in a particular spot is to bury his stools in the hole that he created, and then cover it with soil. Dogs will usually not dig again in that location, but they will probably move on to another spot until the entire yard has been excavated.

The best method to prevent digging is to keep it from becoming an established habit to begin with. Dogs are intelligent animals that need mental stimulation and physical activity on a daily basis.