

SUMMERTIME!

Some Handy Hints To Help Keep Your Dog Happy!

This is the time of year when we have school holidays so kids and puppy dogs will have a great time together! Some of the children are lucky enough to spend a lot of their time at the beach, keeping cool, or down by the local river, and if they are going to take their dog with them, please make sure they also take an extra towel, something to supply shade, and a bowl of water for the lucky dog! Let the dog lie on a wet towel to keep cool! Never drape a towel over the dog, as this would keep the heat in and might well kill him. Make sure your dog is wearing its licence tag! When you come home, your dog needs to be hosed down to get the salt out of coat, and here I thought I'd remind you too, that daily brushing is essential in hot weather, to check that the coat is healthy and the skin is clean.

When it is going to be really hot, it may be safer to leave your dog at home, in his cool dog-run, along the side of the house, rather than having him puff and pant in your hot car as you travel. Never leave the dog in your parked car, as even five minutes, with the window partly open, can cause the death of your dog on a warm day! Parking in the shade is not safe either, as the car becomes an oven that will cause heat stress and the loss of your dog.

For summer exercise, remember that "Mad dogs and Englishmen go out in the mid day sun" might be a jolly old song, but exercising in the heat of day may well lead to heat stress and the loss of our pet. Please take your dogs for their walk in the early morning, or the cool evening! Don't forget your "doggy doo bag" for the pick up laws need to be obeyed! After exercising give your dog a small drink, and then let him rest for a while before he can have a larger drink and a meal.

In summer time especially, food needs to be moist and easily digestible. If your dog is one of the lucky ones who has the fun of training during his walk, then part of his daily rations will be used up for the training sessions, and with the drink after coming home, the dog will be happy and relaxed for hours! Tired dogs are quiet dogs!

With the approaching hot weather, it is a good time to check that your pet will be well taken care of when you need to go out for a few hours without him. If your dog is going to be home alone for some time, he needs to be gainfully occupied, and barking all day, is not what we want! Some handy hints would be to freeze an ice-cream container of water with a handful of cubes of cooked meat floating in it. This will give the dog a couple of hours of blissfully happy licking and leisurely chewing, as the big block melts down and releases the tasty morsels. Every dog should have a couple of Kongs stuffed with biscuits and cheese or other treats, chilled in the fridge, or even frozen so that he has hours of something cool to chew on during the hours he is alone in his run. Don't forget to scrub them out with hot soapy water and a bottle brush every night, before re-stuffing the Kong for the next day!

For those dogs that are being kept in sandy runs instead of concrete and grass, once the summer heat sets in, it is a good idea to damp this area down, to keep the dog cool and prevent the kennel area becoming a dust bowl. Ideally the dog run should be shaded with shade cloth if you have not yet planted a shade giving tree or creepers to give relief from our burning sun. How about a citrus tree planted in your dog run? It gives ample shade, scents the air sweeter than any dog could do, and brings you wonderful fruit as well! If yours is a concrete run, a large tree planted in a tub would add a touch of welcome shade. We know that dogs suffer from sun burn – not just the rusty tinge to the black coat, but actual sunburn on the nose, so sun cream can be useful. Where fly damage is prevalent, the dog needs to have his ears sprayed or protected with cream every morning. White dogs, and dogs with light coloured skin should be kept out of the summer sun.

SUMMERTIME!
Some Handy Hints To Help Keep Your Dog Happy!

If your dog can not spend his days indoors with you, or on the verandah, then that shade giving tree or shrub in his dog run is a must to keep him cool and safe from heat stress. Some people recommend vines like Chokos or Passion Fruit for the fence, I have Honey Suckle and Jasmine!

The water bucket needs to be firmly tied, so it can not be tipped over, and any water dish needs to be cleaned out and filled up with fresh water daily. If you plant some creepers or shrubs near the dog's drinking area, you have a grateful plant waiting for the old water, and it will shade your dog in return! Shade giving trees and water buckets are a useful combination for any dog run! Dogs need to be able to put their whole muzzle into the water if they so wish, so even small dogs need a deep water dish to be able to do this! Remember, just like us, dogs need the Vit D and other properties given by sunshine, so your "dog run" needs sun and shade!

On especially hot days, it is best to keep the dog in the house with you, but if he must be in the run, then go out there and check up on him on a regular basis. If he gets too hot, there will be excessive panting. He needs to be cooled down quickly, by bringing him a wet towel to lie on, and sponging with cool water under arms, the groin area, and under the tail. Letting him rest in the shower recess generally works out well. If he doesn't recover quickly, take him to your vet!

Keep a dog kennel in the dog run at all times, as even in summer, the weather may turn suddenly and you will get that hoped for cool change with perhaps, even a wonderful downpour to refresh your garden and give you all a new lease of life! Your dog will need the shelter from the storm and rain! In the heat of summer, hose down his kennel too, and make sure it is always clean, and free of unwanted guests. Whilst we're talking about cleanliness, one thing that's better than "picking up" every day, is to pick up morning and night! It helps keep the flies down and keeps your dog run sweet. Sweet? That's why I planted Jasmine and Woodbine! Seriously! They are fast growing creepers that thrive in the heat and along with Morning Glory, give ample shade!

Our dogs are social animals, very social, and they need to spend as much time as they can, with their pack. That's us! If we do build a dog run for them, it must be close to the house for the emotional well being of our dogs, for kennels at the end of the property mean isolation and despair! Your social butterfly can not blossom so far away from you! Talking about being social:

Summer time means BBQ time and fun with lots of visitors! Keep your dog safe during these fun times! Some dogs love to socialize and be the life of the party, and this is fine as long as the crowd is not too large, and the dog is respected and supervised just as any child would be! Teasing and rough games in any situation can have serious consequences so do not tolerate them! It is safe to allow your dog to retire after some prime time togetherness with his favourite people, so give your dog a bone and let him retire to his den, his crate or his run for happy chewing time.

BBQs are wonderful, but chop bones, steak bones and the like, are killers, so keep them away from your dog, and warn your visitors not to feed this type of bone to your pet. At party time, it will not be safe to have a dog underfoot, so don't feel bad about your pet having his safe chew-bone in the privacy of his own den! At parties, even the usually calm kiddies can become over excited, so can our dogs! The cat will most likely watch the fun and games from the safety of the fence! She wouldn't get stepped on underfoot!

Summertime is party time, festive times, Christmas presents are still new and interesting well into the new year!! We wish you a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

Have a wonderful time, and drive safely, HONEY