



Digging

Why do dogs dig?

- Dogs dig to bury bones, and later to dig them up again
- Dogs dig cooling hollows in the summer
- Dogs dig to flush out prey or dig for rodents
- Bitches dig dens when they are pregnant
- Dogs dig out of boredom
- Dogs dig to escape
- But by and large, most dogs dig for the sheer fun of it!

Digging is a perfectly normal and natural doggy activity. Most terriers consider digging to be their very reason for being. Keeping any sort of garden means preventing your dog from digging in inappropriate areas and redirecting your dog's natural digging-desire to a suitable area.

If you have a dig-loving dog, take him regularly to places where he can dig to his heart's content, such as beaches or forests. Help him by burying toys and dog biscuits for him to dig up to let him satisfy his cravings.

Prevent digging at home

When you're away from home, keep your dog indoors. When you're at home, try your best to accompany your dog outdoors to supervise and teach garden rules.

If you provide your dog with regular walks, play-time and training, your dog will be tired, mentally and physically, and the chances are you will not have a digging problem. But until your dog has been taught that digging up your garden is unacceptable, he shouldn't have free access to these areas when you are not there to supervise him.

Some dogs dig to escape because they can't cope with the boredom and anxiety of being left alone in your garden. Escaping is exceedingly dangerous for your dog's health. If you have to leave your dog in the garden, make it more interesting and be sure to make your fences dog-proof. Make sure your dog has a cool resting place in the summer and warmth in the winter.

Teach recreational diggers to become recreational chewers. If your dog is busying himself with a chewtoy, he has little time to dig. Tie a number of stuffed chewtoys to ground stakes or hang them from tree branches in dog zones to encourage your dog to want to spend time in those areas.

Provide a digging outlet and protect your garden

If you have a committed digger, you could build them a digging box (much like a child's sandpit) in a suitable corner of the garden. Fill it with a mix of soil and sand. Bury exciting things (such as biscuits, or stuffed chewtoys) in it and encourage him to dig for them. After finding something really rewarding, your dog will find that his digging pit is a virtual treasure trove where he can find wonderful things.

Protect other parts of the garden by laying down chicken wire or chain-link fencing over the lawn and flower beds, add plenty of topsoil, and reseed.

Use fences to partition your garden into doggy and non-doggy zones. Always accompany your dog when he goes outside, especially during puppyhood, or during the first few months an older dog is at home.

It's not fair to keep garden rules a secret from your dog and then get angry with the dog for breaking rules he didn't even know existed. Encourage and praise your dog for walking on paths and for lying down in their doggy areas.