

# Advice on dogs, life and love



**ask dog lady**

Dear Dog Lady,

My neighbor is worried that my male dog, a blue heeler/black Lab mix, is going to hurt or kill her new back yard bushes by peeing on them. Obviously we need to keep him off her yard, but is this possible? Are there bushes that will die from dog pee? Just wondering. He's peed on our pachysandra every day for four years and those plants are fine, except for the mint that is taking over. —Andrea

*Andrea, if bushes died from dog pee, the world would be a barren landscape. Indeed there is evidence that some of the enzymatic properties of dog urine actually fertilize propagation—to wit, the improbable crop of mint growing in your pachysandra.*

*Let's not be blithe about it, however. Dog pee can wreak havoc with neighborly relations. It's rude to allow your animal to soil other peoples' shrubbery or property in general. When your neighbor says it will harm the bushes, she means she wants your dog to keep out of her yard. Respect her wishes with no question.*

Dear Dog Lady,

I have a four-month-old female Weimaraner, Sadie Mae. I have done oodles and oodles of research and have discovered somewhat inconsistent information. Could you give me some basic input? Grid or rack for accidents when crated during the day or does this impede any training progress? Equal am/pm feeds or light am/heavier pm? Keep outside until she goes or intermittent brief trips? —Elizabeth

*Elizabeth, you might be a little over-researched, but Dog Lady believes it's far better to go overboard than not to get on board. OK, for every question you ask, there will be people who will go either way, as you have discovered.*

*Ideally, Sadie Mae should not go at all in her crate. A comfy blanket should be the primary accoutrement in this den. To absorb accidents, there's no difference between a grid and a rack. Equal feedings in the morning and night are fine. Finally, Dog Lady*

*trained her darling by making frequent trips outside, keeping him out until he performed and then praising him beyond measure while stuffing his mouth with dried liver bits. He learned quickly that doing business outdoors was a very, very good thing.*

Dear Dog Lady,

How can I retrain my dog, Abilene, a nine-year-old beagle mix, to go potty inside after years of her going outside? I have heard there is a dog litter box with a fake grass container for indoor elimination.

—Michael

*Michael, sigh, yes, there are litter boxes for dogs, but Dog Lady is not a believer. It just seems that once you allow your sweet pea to pee inside the house, the dog loses its potty compass and figures everything is fair game for a spray of eau d'toilet.*

*Dog Lady recently received a letter from an unhappy woman who had trained her dog to use an indoor litter box. However, since she had moved to a new apartment with carpet instead of wood floors, the dog was peeing everywhere on the rug. What should she do? Quite frankly, there's not much she can do, because few dogs master the fineries of indoor plumbing.*

*Meanwhile, it's a cinch to train your dog to go inside: Don't take her outside. After a few hours—12 or 16 should be ideal to reach the bursting point—Abilene will be forced to purge indoors because she has no other option. If she doesn't quite make it to the Astro-turf litter box, make sure you have a hazmat suit, rolls of paper towels, and quarts of Nature's Miracle to clean up afterward.*

Dear Dog Lady,

I just split with my boyfriend after two years. We had two dogs together. He took the older dog with him and I have the 10-month-old puppy, Winston. Will the puppy be OK? I'm not really concerned about Winston missing my boyfriend, but I really worry about him missing the other dog.

—Marie

*Marie, there's a good girl. You ask the right question. The loss of your boyfriend probably won't affect your dog at all. You can provide all the human tending that Winston needs, but you can only go so far. Your dog is used to being part of a pack. He will miss the other dog a lot. You can remedy this situation by making sure Winston has social interaction with his own kind. Keep Winston surrounded by members of his species. If relations between you and your former boyfriend remain cordial, you might ask if the two dogs can get together from time to time. Dogs, you see, never break up.*

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