



The following article is compiled by Doug Barnhart, our neighbor, dog lover, and local franchise owner of DoodyCalls.



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The Real Scoop on Pet Waste
By Karen Mayne with Doug Barnhart

If you have a pet, then you have pet waste. As unpleasant and time consuming as pooper scooper duty may be, keeping doggie deposits off the ground is an important responsibility held by every pet owner. Here's why:

Pet waste is an environmental pollutant.

In 1991, the EPA labeled pet waste as an environmental pollutant, along with things such as pesticides, toxic chemicals, and oil and grease. Runoff containing pet waste can end up in our waterways, closing areas to swimming and shell fishing.

Pet waste can harm your health. Dog waste often carries parasites and bacteria that can be transmitted directly to humans (by touching) and make them sick. Children at play don't often wash their hands and most do not realize the potential hazards of contact with waste left on the ground.

Contaminated waste can make dogs sick, too. When pets become sick, contagions are typically passed through their deposits and into the yard. The longer infected dog waste stays on the ground, the greater the contamination becomes. When not picked up, pets may catch infections over and over again.

It doesn't just disappear. Bacteria, worms and other parasites thrive in unattended dog waste, eventually breaking down into the soil and washing into the water supply. Roundworm, for example, is one of the most common parasites found in dog doo and it can remain infectious in contaminated soil and water for years. Running doggie deposits over with a lawn mower may seem like the perfect doo doo disappearing act, but just because you can't see the waste anymore doesn't mean it's not there.

Rodents love pet waste. Dog poop is a common food source for rats and other

rodents. An unwanted neighbor in any community, the presence of rodents can decrease the property values of all nearby homes and presents a host of additional health concerns.

Dog waste is far from fertilizer. Unlike herbivores, a dog's diet is made up of mostly animal products, making their waste unsuitable for soil enrichment. Leaving it on the ground, particularly concentrated in one area, can affect soil quality.

Here are some tips for tackling pet waste:

The right tools for the job – The best scoopers have at least three tools in hand for the job: a rake, a lobby dust pan, and a trash bag. Many hardware retailers carry small rakes and dustpans with long adjustable handles perfect for scooping poop. Put the waste into the trash bag and toss it out with the garbage; double bagging will help protect trash collectors.

Follow a grid pattern – Following a grid pattern makes it easier to find all of the pet waste in a yard and speeds up the scooping process. When you find a pile, scoop it, then before stepping away, do a quick 360-degree scan. Dogs are creatures of habit; chances are there is more poop in that immediate area.

Keep on scoopin' – Pet owners should clear their lawns of pet waste on a weekly or bi-weekly basis, depending on the size of their yard and the number of dogs using the area. The longer pet waste stays on the ground, the greater the health risk.

A little pet training goes a long way – Setting aside an area of the yard for your dog for his or her 'business' will make scooping a faster and more manageable chore in the long run.

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