

Digging can be a difficult behavior to stop because it usually happens when you're not outside. Don't punish the dog after the fact for digging, even if they "show him the evidence". Here are some tips to help eliminate inappropriate digging:



- **Management!** Do not leave your dog outside unattended if he likes to dig. If nothing else, at least keep an eye on him through the window so he can be interrupted immediately if he begins to dig.
- **Exercise!** Many dogs dig out of boredom, especially those left in the backyard all day. A dog that is provided physical and mental stimulation will be less likely to get bored and dig.
- Most digging is related to boredom, so keeping toys outside is essential. The toys should be fun for the dog to play with alone (not a ball to fetch) and they should be rotated daily to keep him interested.
- Determine why he's digging (if it's not boredom). Looking at where he digs can often give you a hint. If he is digging at this fence line, he may be trying to escape the yard for one reason or another. If he is digging in a flowerbed or after a rain, it's probably because it feels good to dig in the loose dirt. If he is digging a hole and lying in it under the bushes or near the house, he may be looking for a cool spot to lie. If he is digging at the base of trees or in lines in the yard, he may smell insects or rodents.
- If you have an idea why he's digging, try to meet that need for him (if possible) without him digging. For example, if he likes digging in loose dirt, get him a sandbox and bury toys/treats there. When he starts to dig somewhere inappropriate, interrupt him and re-direct him to the sandbox. If he is digging to go play with the dog next door, see if you can set up play dates or take him to the dog park.
- If he is just digging in a particular spot, place something there to make it unappealing. There are commercial products for this purpose and many effective home remedies. Of course, digging at the fence line should be considered an priority to address, as he may escape. The fence should be secured and/or the dog should not be left outside unattended. Many cities have ordinances forbidding the use of tie-outs, even in a fenced yard, unless a person is present with the dog.

Known Diggers

- **Border Collies**
- **Yorkshire Terriers**
- **Basenjis**
- **Daschunds**
- **Retrievers**