

Set aside part of your garden for your pets

By J. ROBERT NUSS
AP NEWSFEATURES

STATE COLLEGE, Pa. (AP) — From time to time, I am asked about pets either eating or chewing on plants around the home and garden. If you're a pet-owning gardener, chances are good that you have spent time chasing your dog or cat that has chewed on your favorite garden flower or house plant. Instead of struggling to keep your pets away, why not consider keeping plants or a part of the garden just for your pets. There is still plenty of growing time left to establish several containers of plants that can be taken indoors for the winter months. Most pets require a certain amount of greens in their diet, so you'll be providing them with some nutrition as well as keeping them from your garden or house plants. Your pet garden could either be a small plot or containers inside or both. You can experiment to find your pet's personal preference,

or you may already know from experience. In many cases, dogs like to chew on oats, but I have heard of instances where they also go for strawberries. If, on the other hand, your dog often chews on grass, consider a patch of fescue. A dog garden should also include a patch of bare soil, since canines enjoy digging. During hot weather, dogs that spent their days outdoors will dust themselves with the dry soil. If you do incorporate a "dog hole" in your garden, it should be hidden with other plants. If you have a cat, one plant sure to draw attention from your regular garden and house plants is catnip. For years, our cat enjoyed rolling and chewing on a handful of tender catnip shoots tossed on the carpet. About the only indoor plant he liked to sample occasionally was a small palm sitting in the corner of the dining room. Cats also enjoy oats, and you can plant both catnip and oats inside as well as in the garden. If you plant catnip in the garden, start with a

few plants in an isolated area, as it tends to take over. A few plants will make even a stuffy old cat act like a kitten again. Cats prefer the young, tender leaves of oats, so plant for successive sowings to maintain a good supply of tender foliage. Rabbits are much less fussy about anything in your regular garden. A rabbit garden should contain a good mix of leafy greens and legumes (beans and peas). Small rodents such as guinea pigs, gerbils, and hamsters have similar tastes. Since these animals are typically cage-bound, you should put a very fine mesh fence or solid wall fence around their garden patch. It is also important to sink the fence three to four inches into the soil and check all surfaces for holes before placing the animal in its garden. If your pet is a jumper, cover the top of the enclosure with screening and keep an eye on it. Also be on the alert for predators; some rodents are easy prey. Birds also

have a taste for many garden plants. If your bird flies free inside your home and has picked at your house plants, try a container of fescue-type grass. If it's cage-bound, you can grow things such as sunflowers and millet in the garden for enjoyment indoors. I have also seen kits of "cat grass" available through some catalogs and in larger garden centers. These make unique gifts for cat-owning friends or relatives. Some catalogs also offer containers that will sprout bird seed in the cage for your flying friends. While browsing through your seed catalogs this fall and winter, keep in mind some special treats for your pets. With the recent concerns about ticks and associated problems, make sure you carefully check pets that have been allowed to spend time outdoors in the garden.

J. Robert Nuss is a horticulturist at Penn State University.

Dodge necklace featured at Ritz jewelry auction

A 35-stone catsaye necklace from the estate of Matilda Dodge Wilson of Meadowbrook Hall is one of the pieces featured in the Fine and Estate Jewelry Auction noon Sunday, Oct. 15, at the Ritz Carlton in Dearborn.

Other items at the auction include a 30-carat pear-shape diamond, a nearly

100-carat emerald set in a necklace and a fine signed jewel from the collection of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

Longtime Detroit auctioneer and graduate gemologist Joseph DuMouchelle is behind the gavel. A preview will take place 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Thursday-Friday, Oct. 12-13, and 6-9

p.m. Friday, Oct. 13. For catalogs and more information, call DuMouchelle at (313) 455-4555, or fax (313) 455-2403.

The Chrysoberyl Chatoyant catsaye necklace is like no other in the world. This rare stone is thought to be nearly impossible to match but the necklace contains 35 of these precious stones

surrounded by diamonds. The necklace hasn't been seen in almost 30 years. Several pieces from the estate will be auctioned for the first time at this event.

More than 200 of the 500 lots total are being sold from the private collection of the DIA.



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