



ASK BRISTOL

Sugar glider is uncommon; feather-plucking bad habit; big-dog bloat can be serious

What is a Sugar Glider? Is it a good pet for young children?

The Sugar Glider is a very small animal, about the size of a small squirrel. It is native to the eucalypti forests of Australia and New Guinea.

It is called a sugar glider because of its fondness for the sweet sap from the bark of certain trees. The glider is a marsupial (carries its babies in a pouch). It has a long fluffy tail and lateral gliding membranes that stretch from its wrists to its ankles. The fur is a soft gray that covers its body with a black raccoon stripe running from its eyes to its tail. The glider has tiny hands with four fingers and a thumb.

I don't know anyone who has had a sugar glider for a pet. From what I've read about them, the glider enjoys riding on a head or shoulder. When it gets tired, the glider will ride in your pocket and take a nap.

As with any pet you buy for a child, you need to be on hand to teach you the proper handling with love and care. Before considering any new pet read as much information as you can find. This is so important in order to be sure it's the pet for your family.

My husband and I have a single parakeet. He has the habit of pulling out its feathers until it bleeds. What can we do to stop this from continuing?

Feather plucking is a bad habit that can have long-term serious consequences. Some birds keep plucking at their feathers and pull out a great many of them. Some birds have been known to pluck themselves bare, even though it's painful. Some possible causes are boredom, loneliness and fright. Other reasons could be nutritional deficiencies. Occasionally if the bird is overweight, the skin is stretched tight and will pluck its feathers.

Check your bird for parasites and skin disorders. If you are unsure for the reasons for your bird plucking its feathers, take it to your vet.

We have two parakeets. They enjoy each others company. It's enjoyable to watch them play, fly and preen each other. Animals, like humans, need companionship.

We have a 4 year old Irish Setter. We've heard that large dogs are prone to bloat. What is bloat and what can we do to prevent this from happening

to our family pet?

Bloat occurs when air becomes trapped in the stomach, causing distention and discomfort. It occurs most commonly in very large dogs. It can lead to gastric torsion where the stomach twists on itself. If not treated quickly, gastric torsion can be fatal.

Early signs of bloat are distress, the dog will be restless and won't sit down; a painful back when you pet them; a rapid and weak pulse and regurgitation. The dog may regurgitate some fluid and air.

If you see any of these signs, gently walk your dog while someone calls your veterinarian. Watch your dog carefully since the stomach can twist even when he is walking.

The best way to try to prevent this is to wait two hours after exercising before feeding your dog a meal. If you wish to exercise after a meal, wait two hours.

Bev Cornell is a retired veterinary aid and a wildlife rehabilitator licensed by the state Department of Natural Resources. She and Bristol, her dog, will answer your animal questions. Write in care of: The Farmington Observer, 33411 Grand River, Farmington MI 48335.

Chat room from page B1

I couldn't leave well enough alone. This time I chose "warm auburn" and ended up with "stoplight orange." Foolish, I had embarked on this mission at 10:30 on a Sunday night. I dutifully washed the dye out after 25 minutes but then got distracted reading for an hour. When my husband, Mitch, who typically stays completely out of this arena, commented on the red cast to my hair, I knew I was in trouble. I looked into the mirror and had a panic attack.

"Where can I go now, it's past midnight," I yelped in desperation.

"Go to the 24 hour drugstore on the corner," Mitch suggested. I fought the urge to wear a hat this time, thinking it would only encourage speculation. I zoomed up to the corner store to find it was closed. Having an appointment for my son in the morning, I was committed to finding a cure. I went to the 24 hour mega store and picked up a bottle of

mousy brown. I soon found I was able to relax because the only people in the store after midnight on Sunday were those buying liquor, and incredibly, teens with altered states of hair color like purple and green. I fit right in and, without realizing it, got caught up in shopping. I returned home about 2:30 a.m. and was so tired it was too late to do anything. I actually walked around with that abominable shade for two full days before wrecking it further with the brown.

I made a silent vow to myself that next time gray appears, I'll just consider them highlights. In the meantime, I'm updating my resume to apply for that job at the hair color companies. Now, if only I can avoid that aiale in the store.

Kathie O'Donohue is a red-headed mother of five children who lives in Farmington Hills.

Cancer center asks for drivers to help patients

Sometimes people needing life-saving cancer treatments are unable to find transportation to medical facilities. A few hours per week or month, your car, and your caring heart are all that are needed to help give a cancer patient a better chance to

live. No one should have to face cancer alone, so if you have some free time to transport cancer patients in your area, contact Ivory Underwood at Karmanos Cancer Institute: 248-443-5800, ext. 6768 or fax 248-443-5833.

Mai Thai RESTAURANT. Featuring Authentic Thai Dishes. LUNCH SPECIALS FROM 11-4 PM. CARRY OUT & CATERING AVAILABLE. Cocktails Now Available. Reservations (810) 626-6313. 6635 Orchard Lk. Rd. at Maple • Old Orchard Shopping Ctr. HOURS: Mon.-Thur. 11 AM-10 PM, Fri. & Sat. 11 AM-11 PM, Sun. 12-9 PM

\$25 off Sylvan Skills Assessment™. Call today to learn how Sylvan® can improve your child's grades. 5829 West Maple West Bloomfield, MI 248-737-2880. SYLVAN LEARNING CENTER® Better grades are just the beginning. Reading • Writing • Math • SAT/ACT • Study Skills • Algebra

"Your Gift Department Store with Hallmark Cards" When You Think..... Think..... Bon Ton Shoppe Your Hallmark Gold Crown Store. EARMINGTON (SOUTHVIEW) FARMINGTON Grand River at Farmington Road. BRIGHTON (BRIGHTON HALL) Grand River at 190. LIVONIA (NEWSPRING) FARMINGTON 54 Mile at Farmington. MILFORD (PINECREST HILLS) (Kroger Shopping Center) 54 Mile at Farmington Near Summit St.

Vet News Steven Zinderman, D.V.M. Choosing A New Kitten Or Puppy. Different breeds of cats and dogs have different traits. It is important to consider these traits and how they will fit into your environment and lifestyle. Remember that with good breeding and upbringing, there aren't any breeds that can not be good family pets. Two of the most important things to look for are the temperament of the parents and the health of the new pet. If obtaining your pet from an animal shelter of pet shop, the parents will not be available. The puppy or kitten should be alert, curious and friendly as well as in excellent health. A visit to your veterinarian is essential to ensure that your new family member is in good health. During this visit, the veterinarian will give your pet a thorough exam and discuss proper nutrition and care. Many pet shops will offer a free veterinary exam with the purchase of a pet. Remember that the veterinarian offering this exam often works for the pet shop. A second opinion may be a good idea. At Small Animal Hospital, our primary concern is your pet's health. We offer boarding, house calls, and a 24 hour emergency service. For questions concerning your pet or to schedule an appointment, call our office. Look for our next article in two weeks. "Serving the community for over forty-one years." SMALL ANIMAL HOSPITAL, P.C. 32635 Northwestern Hwy. Farmington Hills, MI (248) 626-1854 "We See Big Dogs Too"

You may think The Detroit Medical Center is only downtown, but our front door is right down the street. You don't have to go far to get world-class health care. Hundreds of Detroit Medical Center physicians practice all around the Detroit metro area. So there's no reason to settle for anything less than world-class health care for yourself and your family. No matter what your health care needs may be, you can find the right DMC physician for you near your home or workplace. One with convenient office hours. Who accepts your medical insurance. Our neighborhood DMC doctor is backed by one of the country's most respected health care systems. The combined resources of southeast Michigan's largest health care provider are available to you through a DMC doctor. Our physicians have access to the latest diagnostic methods and innovative treatments developed by The Detroit Medical Center, in partnership with the Wayne State University School of Medicine. Get a free 'good health' gift for making your first office visit. Call the DMC Physician Referral Service today. They'll help you choose the right DMC doctor, make an appointment for you, and send a confirmation. You'll also receive a special gift certificate for an informative free book, A Year of Health Hints: 365 Practical Ways to Feel Better and Live Longer. Just bring the certificate with you to the doctor's office. Call the DMC Physician Referral Service. 1-800-666-3466