



Helpful hints from:

Are you a pet owner who is concerned about the potential effects of your dog's urine and poop on your grass? If so, you're not alone. Many pet owners have noticed that their furry friends' waste is impacting the appearance of their lawns. From discolored or dead grass to "burn spots," why do dog urine and poop damage grass, and how can it be prevented or remedied after the fact?

Does Dog Urine Kill Grass?

Yes, dog urine can kill grass over time. Because certain nutrients can't be absorbed by your dog's body, they are being released in their urine. One of those nutrients is nitrogen. When your pet pees in the yard, the water in the urine evaporates over time, leaving behind a high concentration of nitrogen. While you might recognize nitrogen as an ingredient in fertilizer, too much of a good thing can do more damage than good to your lawn. Concentrated nitrogen can burn the grass if it accumulates in one area. If your pet is peeing in the same areas often, you may be more likely to notice affected spots in your grass.

Male vs Female Dog Urine - Which is worse for grass?

Contrary to some beliefs, female dog urine isn't any worse for your grass than their male counterparts. It is actually the way that dogs urinate that has more of an impact on damage to your lawn. Male dogs often lift a leg and pee on upright objects around your yard, a tree, a bush, or a fence post, causing only some of the pee to land on the lawn. When female dogs go, they squat, and the pee is concentrated in one spot.

Is Dog Poop Bad for Grass?

Just like your dog's urine, their poop can also be bad for grass because of its high concentration of nitrogen. Another way that dog poop can damage your lawn is that it can cause lawn fungus to grow. Excess nitrogen in the soil from pet waste can cause fungi to spread throughout your lawn. Not only can dog poop be damaging to grass, if left un-scooped, it can also contribute to the spread of certain diseases or parasites.

There is a reason other animals' waste is used for fertilizer while a dog's waste should not. Dog waste does not provide the same benefits and can even be harmful to your yard. Animals like cows are vegetarians, so their waste does not contain certain elements that a meat-eating animal does. Because dogs are omnivores, their waste contains protein, causing a more acidic output that is harmful to plants and grass.

How to Stop Dog Waste from Killing Your Grass

Don't worry, it is possible to be both a dog owner and the proud keeper of a green and lush backyard. The severity of the negative effects of pet waste on your lawn depends on how often a pet visits an area, meaning more frequent visits will have greater consequences than occasional peeing or pooping. To properly take care of your lawn while still allowing Fido his or her outdoor restroom privileges, make sure you provide adequate space for him or her to go and try to clean up waste on a regular basis.

To help protect your yard from pet waste, designate a specific zone for your dog to relieve themselves. Fence off a smaller area containing mulch or stone gravel so that no grass is affected by dog urine and poop. Just make sure what you lay down is comfortable for your pet's paws! Planting tall ornamental grasses or bushes around this area can help conceal it from the rest of the yard. Rinsing down areas where your pet has peed can also help prevent the start of brown or burn spots on your lawn.

If fertilizing your lawn, keep in mind that you are introducing additional nitrogen to your grass. That, combined with the amount in pet urine, can be a cause for discolored spots and patches of grass. Try switching to a pet-friendly fertilizer that contains a lower amount of nitrogen if you are noticing discoloration in areas of your lawn that are fertilized and visited by your pet for potty time.