PET-FRIENDLY GARDENING

The layout of your garden determines how much manuring and pest control it requires and what gardening tools you will need. If pets will also be spending time in your garden, the following tips are well worth heeding.

**Manuring**

The most animal-friendly manuring method, albeit also the most laborious, is to use naturally occurring substances like horse dung. This is particularly well-suited to kitchen gardens, though many flowers also react well to it.

When using standard commercial fertilisers, it is essential to follow the instructions. If they contain substances that are dangerous to humans, you should assume that these are harmful to animals too.

If you have dissolved a fertiliser in water, it is vital to dispose of the water that remains. And because pets like to drink from watering cans, these should be carefully cleaned or placed somewhere out of their reach.

**Pest control**

Please do not spray your garden with toxic substances to combat pests like greenfly or plant diseases like mildew. Not only do these harm pets, they also harm other animals living in the garden. There are all kinds of natural ways of keeping plants pest-free. A thorough prune will often help.

You can read up on such remedies in any number of specialist books or ask about them in your local organic garden centre.

Rats are a special case. Some cats and dogs are capable of killing rats but they should not be allowed to eat them as rats carry diseases. In cities like Hamburg, rats have to be reported to the proper authority, which will then put down rat poison and mark the area accordingly. In the past, however, people have often failed to spot warnings that rat poison is present. If you have seen rats, you should check whether any poison has been put down. If it has, make sure your pets do not run around freely in the area.
Gardening tools
All electrical or petrol-powered gardening tools are dangerous for pets. They can accidentally slip out of your hand and injure an animal if it is nearby. Cats and dogs should therefore be kept in the house when you are mowing the lawn, tidying up borders with a grass trimmer, cutting hedges, tilling and sawing.

Please do not leave mechanical knives, hoes, saws and other sharp gardening tools of any size lying around in the garden. Your dog is extremely likely to treat them as toys to be picked up using its mouth. To avoid injuries, you should put all your tools away in a safe place the moment you’re done using them.

Above: If you are an avid gardener it is important to avoid using fertilizers which contain chemicals that are harmful to pets. Instead, opt for brands using only naturally occurring substances.
Centre: The diseases carried by rats are numerous and can be harmful to your pet if eaten, so if you see your pet chasing one in the garden it is best to make a speedy intervention!
Below: Exercise caution when using garden tools so as to prevent inadvertently causing injury to your pet, and do not leave sharp tools out after use.