Dog owners with large gardens can use high fences or walls to establish a “dog garden” and separate it from the kitchen garden and flower garden. Hedges are not suitable for this purpose. On the one hand, animals may be able to get through; on the other hand, many hedges are poisonous or have thorns capable of harming your pet. Fences should always be built on a solid foundation to prevent a dog digging its way through underneath. If this is too much trouble, try burying your dog’s faeces along the fence – this will prevent your pet from digging.

Ideally, a dog garden should consist of a large area including a hard-wearing lawn, a few trees and carefully chosen bushes. It should provide your dog with the opportunity to frolic, run and dig around trees and bushes and hide bones and chew sticks. In the summer, dogs enjoy digging holes where they can lie to cool down.

**Six more things to think about**

- Dogs always want to be with their pack – so it’s important to situate the dog garden in the part of the main garden most commonly frequented by the human pack members.

- Dogs whose need for social contact is paramount must never be locked up away from the human pack. They only ever feel truly at ease when they’re with the other pack members. A lonely dog will attempt to call the rest of its pack by howling loudly. Not surprisingly, this will disturb the neighbours.

- In summertime, dogs need a shady place, e.g. under an awning or a homemade wooden shelter, where they can stay in visual contact with humans. As a roof, a frame made of thick laths planed to minimise the danger of splinters is fine. This should be high enough to give the dog plenty of space to dig a hole where it can cool down. The width and length will depend on the size of the dog itself, though the shelter should not be smaller than 0.8 x 0.8 metres. Planks should be screwed carefully on to the frame to provide cover. Caution: do not glaze the wood as the wood glaze may damage your dog’s health!

- The trees and bushes in the dog garden should be non-toxic and free of thorns (see below).

- If the dog garden has been safely designed, your dog will be able to spend several hours a day alone there, provided it has been carefully accustomed to this.
It must, however, have the opportunity of going indoors in the event of rain, strong winds or cold.

- A well-insulated kennel will also be sufficient, provided it is mounted on short legs to protect your dog against damp and cold from the ground. The roof should also be detachable for easy cleaning. However, dogs should only be left alone in exceptional cases.

- No dog garden, no matter how large, can replace excursions and expeditions with the pack! Dogs enjoy exploring and discovering new scents.

- As a pack animal, your dog also needs to spend a decent amount of time with other dogs – to cement its ability to interact and communicate with others of its kind. If isolated from them too much, it will lose this ability. This can lead to problems with other dogs since aggression is more likely to spring from insecurity than from dominance.

**Combining your dog garden with the main garden**

Many dog owners don’t have enough room for a separate dog garden, so plants and dogs have to coexist in the main garden. The following points will be helpful.

- A dog can be trained to not go into flower beds – but if so, it should also have its own spot for digging (this should be sheltered from the sun).

- To avoid your dog urinating on your vegetables to mark out its turf, herbs and vegetables should be planted in a raised bed.

- A garden pond is always a hazard for a dog. It might – for reasons obscure to us as humans – panic and drown.

- Avoid poisonous plants.

**Above:** It is ok to leave a dog unattended for short periods in a well-secured garden.  
**Centre:** It is advisable to fence-in vegetable gardens and flowers, so that they remain protected from wandering paws.  
**Below:** Herb pots and gardens are best kept in an elevated position so as to avoid any unwanted attention from canine companions.