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June/July 2020

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Fighting foxtail

As a dangerous weed invades our parks,
dog walkers urged to help stem the
spread

A “grass-like weed” has started showing up in DOGPAW’s off-leash parks, posing serious threats to our dogs and leading the organization to call for visitors’ help in eradicating it.

Foxtail plants look a little like short stalks of wheat, with brushy seed heads that give the plant its name. They’re pretty, in a way--but their effects on dogs are anything but.

“Foxtail plants can be risky for your dog,” WebMD.com warns. “The barbed seed heads of the foxtail plant can work their way into any part of your dog or cat, from the nose to between the toes and inside the ears, eyes, and mouth. They can even simply dig themselves directly into a patch of skin.”

And all of that is just for starters, the website adds.

“The danger of foxtails goes beyond simple irritation. Because these tough seeds don’t break down inside the body, an embedded foxtail can lead to serious infection for your dog. It can even lead to death if left untreated.

“Foxtails travel. Moving relentlessly forward, never back, they can migrate from inside your dog’s nose to its brain. They can dig through skin or be inhaled into--and then perforate--a lung.”

So yes, a foxtail outbreak is pretty alarming. But there's a straightforward way to respond: Help us get rid of the foxtails. DOGPAW is calling on park users to pull the plants whenever they come across them on their walks.

"DOGPAW asks everyone visiting our parks to be on the lookout for patches and pull plants up from the base," the organization said in a recent post to its Facebook page. "Pulling after rain brings up most of the root. Throw away the pulled plant in the nearest trash can.

"If everyone pulled two plants on each visit, we can get this dangerous weed under control."

Getting cleanups back on schedule

DOGPAW park beautification days will resume at Ike Dog Park on July 11, a week later than normal because of the July Fourth holiday.

The volunteer cleanup gatherings, normally held from 10 a.m. until noon on the first Saturday of the month, were suspended under the statewide stay-at-home order declared during the coronavirus outbreak.

Clark County is now under Phase Two of the state's reopening protocol, and is expected to enter Phase Three by early July. In view of this, the DOGPAW board agreed at its June meeting--its first meeting since February--to restart the popular cleanups.

The virus remains a threat, though, so beautification day participants are urged to follow face-mask and social-distance recommendations.

The events routinely bring out dozens of park users to help fill holes, pick up stray dog piles, trim brush and tree limbs, rake and level trails, and tackle other projects as needed.

"Pull on your work gloves and come and join us," said Alicia Stevens, the board's volunteer director.

"We've got some yard tools at the parks, but it doesn't hurt to bring some of your own, too. And it's not just work--we always have a good time getting together to get things done."

Beautification days will continue on Aug. 1 at Lucky, Sept. 5 at Dakota, and Oct. 3 at Kane.

Help wanted

Three key director posts still vacant on board

DOGPAW board positions focusing on fund-raising, animal welfare, and coordinating the organization's business sponsor program offer members a chance to apply their skills in a good cause: strengthening the group that keeps their off-leash dog parks running smoothly.

"We've got a good group of people who are fun to work with," said Eileen Cervantes, board president.

"But we've also got some critical jobs on the board to fill. If you're interested in working with us to maintain a valuable community resource, we'd love to hear from you."

Descriptions for the three director positions, along with application forms and contact information, are available on the Volunteer page of the organization's website: dogpawoffleashparks.org.

We could use a graphic artist's help, too!

The big welcome-and-information billboards at all four DOGPAW parks have become both weathered and obsolete. So we're getting ready to thoroughly revamp them.

But we need professional help. We'd like them to be eye-catching and informative, and for that we could use the volunteer services of a graphic artist.

It's a great chance to spread your wings and show off your skill. These signs currently measure 12 feet wide by four feet tall, although we're considering resetting the posts that support them and could change the dimensions if you've got a better idea.

Interested? E-mail Cervantes at president@dogpawoffleashparks.org for more information.

DOGPAW OFF-LEASH DOG PARK LOCATIONS:

Dakota: 1515 N.E. 164th Ave. Vancouver, WA

Ike (Ross): 5167 N.E. 15th Ave. Vancouver, WA

Kane: 10910 N.E. 172nd Ave. Vancouver, WA

Lucky: 10100 N.E. 149th St. Brush Prairie, WA

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