

Bath Cats & Dogs Home Launches New Sensory & Enrichment Garden

*****Innovative garden comes up smelling like roses in aid of stressed animals*****

This week Bath Cats & Dogs Home is launching a brand new Sensory & Enrichment Garden. This innovative project is spearheaded by Steve Hill, the home's Head of Behaviour & Welfare.

Steve Hill explains: *"We get a wide range of dogs in desperate need of help, some of which find it hard to cope in kennels. The sensory garden is designed to offer something to every dog, to encourage them to become more confident in their surroundings and to reduce stress.*

This garden is all about enriching the lives of our animals and stimulating all of their senses. The garden contains 27 different textured surfaces which are based on Tellington Touch principles and is designed to help the dogs to become more confident and encourage them to interact with their surroundings.

It also incorporates carefully chosen medicinal plants for self-selection. The use of self-selection is fast becoming popular across UK rescue centres as an alternative way to treating stress and behavioural issues such as aggression and phobias.

This 360° approach to animal behaviour and welfare is revolutionary; encouraging natural behaviours and allowing our dogs to self-select and de-stress will effectively show them in a much more favourable and relaxed light and will also ensure a speedier rehoming process."

Support from local businesses, individuals, volunteers and gifts in kind have also helped build this innovative garden.

The garden features an unusual willow igloo, bamboo forest, interactive highline, doggy mound and cave, pond area, sandpit, raised platform, green clay wallowing area and a selection of medicinal plants and herbs for dogs to self-select (pls see 'notes to editor').

Zoopharmacognosy specialist, Caroline Ingraham and medical herbalist, Jane Walwork-Gush, also took time out of their busy schedules to help the charity with this innovative project, as well as many of our regular volunteers.

For further press information visit www.bathcatsanddogshome.org.uk or to arrange an interview call Caroline Hook, Bath Cats & Dogs Home Press Officer, on **(01225) 750 192**.

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Notes to editor

Plants featured for self-selection

1. **Green Clay** (good for its anti-parasitic and anti-bacterial properties)
2. **Birch** (known to help with muscular and inflammatory pain)
3. **Catnip** (good for its relaxing properties and stimulates playfulness in dogs)
4. **Chamomile** (often selected by anxious dogs and those with skin and stomach upsets)
5. **Chickweed** (known to help with stomach and skin problems)
6. **Clary Sage** (often selected by highly-strung animals esp those with hormonal imbalance)
7. **Hops** (good for calming the mind and often selected by hyperactive and stressed dogs)
8. **Lavender** (known to encourage scar tissue regeneration)
9. **Marigolds** (often selected by animals experiencing grief or emotional distress)
10. **Marshmallow** (known to help animals with delicate stomachs)
11. **Meadowsweet** (often selected by animals with digestive problems, arthritis and rheumatic conditions)
12. **Peppermint** (good for its cooling properties and often selected by animals with skin irritations and can also be offered as an aid for training)
13. **Plantain** (known to help with gastric irritation and inflammation)
14. **St John's Wort** (a good sedative, pain relief and often selected by animals experiencing depression)
15. **Thyme** (selected by animals with bacterial infections, skin irritations and diarrhoea)
16. **Valerian** (often selected by anxious dogs for its calming effect)
17. **Violets** (selected by nervous animals and those who have recently changed home, or may be anticipating physical pain)
18. **Wheat Grass** (animals that are nervous, anxious and exhibit hyper behaviors often select wheatgrass)
19. **Willow** (animals in pain often select willow bark)
20. **Yarrow** (selected by sensitive dogs and is offered to animals with inflammation, urinary problems and internal and external wounds)

About Bath Cats & Dogs Home

- Bath Cats & Dogs Home is one of the leading rehoming centres in the UK. The Bath-based charity provides essential shelter, veterinary care and rehoming services to more than 2,500 animals every year.
- Although a branch of the national RSPCA, the home does not receive financial support from the organisation for the £1.5m required every year just to keep the home running, and therefore relies totally on generous donations, fundraising and legacies from the local community.
- Bath Cats and Dogs Home is committed to the welfare of companion animals; to rescue, rehabilitate and rehome unwanted, neglected or mistreated pets and to promote responsible pet ownership through education.
- Registered Charity Number 205594

About Caroline Ingraham

- Caroline Ingraham trained in 1985, in essential oils and natural therapies for people, with Robert Tisserand. However, she believes her knowledge came from the animals she studied rather than her initial training in essential oils.
- Caroline explains: "The starting point really began in California with my dog Gunner, who was bitten by a rattlesnake and although we were told that he would not survive, carrot seed essential oil literally saved his life. Rattlesnake bites can cause internal bleeding and carrot seed essential oil had an immediate effect on stopping the blood dripping from his nose. This led me to research which animals selected carrot seed in the wild."
- Caroline then founded The Academy of Applied Zoopharmacognosy; this is still a new science that's currently being researched by the academic world. It works with the olfactory mechanisms, which are influenced by the physiological-psychological needs of the animal, enabling each individual to select for its own specific needs.
- For more information visit www.ingraham.co.uk

About Jane Walwork-Gush

- Jane works for The Organic Herb Trading Company, the UK's leading supplier of organic herbal ingredients, provided the home with carefully chosen medicinal plants for animals to self-select.
- The Organic Herb Trading Company has been growing, sourcing, importing and processing organic herbs and spices since 1982.
- Its philosophy is simple: "To balance organic, sustainable and ethical practices with sound commercial management." In practice this means bringing the finest organic ingredients to the market at a price that allows suppliers to meet their basic needs in a safe working environment.
- For more information visit www.organicherbtrading.com

Local businesses involved in the project

- The Flying Pig Renovation Company
- CITB
- Bathwick Tyres
- Direct Line