



Dreamstime/TNS

Temperatures don't have to reach triple digits for your pet to overheat, so pet parents should become more mindful of these potential dangers when temperatures are as low as 80 degrees.

Keep your pets cool on hot days

By KAILYN BROWN
Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — During the summer months when temperatures are hotter than normal, it's important to take extra precautions to keep yourself and your loved ones cool — this includes your furry friends.

"One thing that I always like to talk to my pet parents about is, 'If it's too hot for us, then it's definitely too hot for them,'" says Dr. Phillip An, small animal general practitioner and owner of Sunset Veterinary Center, which is slated to open in September in Diamond Bar, California. He notes that pets — particularly cats and dogs — don't have as many sweat glands as humans. Instead, they primarily regulate their temperature through panting.

But placing your pet in hot conditions, such as by taking them along on a lengthy hike on a warm, sunny day, can lead to life-threatening and sometimes fatal consequences given that heat exhaustion can progress to heatstroke in just a matter of moments.

"Our pets, especially dogs, can be so loyal that they won't show any discomfort until it's too late," says Dr. Jennifer Hawkins, a veterinarian who is the executive director for the Southern California Veterinary Medical Association (SCVMA), which is based in Cypress. "So whether you're throwing a ball in the middle of a hot day and you might feel OK, you may have a dog that's going to keep going after that ball until they suffer heatstroke."

She adds, "That's where I think pet owners may not realize that while we know we're starting to feel uncomfortable and we can go inside and get some water and cool off, our pets may not let you know until they're sick."

Hawkins notes that temperatures don't have to reach triple digits for your pet to overheat, so pet parents should become more mindful of these potential dangers when temperatures are as low as 80 degrees.

Among the most vulnerable pets to suffer from heat-related complications are dogs that are very young and old and short-nosed dogs such as pugs and bulldogs because they can't breathe as easily as those with longer noses. Pets with medical issues also face higher risk of heat-related illness, along with other small mammals like rabbits and guinea pigs.

"If you have a rabbit, chinchilla or guinea pig ... they are very sensitive to the heat and they can die inside the house if it gets to be 85 or 90 [degrees] and there's no movement of air," says Dr. Clyde Pitts, owner of Studio City Animal Hospital.

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It's all PEACHY

Celebrate the fruit with crostata, a free-form pastry

By GRETCHEN MCKAY
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

It's peach season. Time to pull out your rolling

pin and celebrate the juicy stone fruit with the free-form pastry known as a crostata.

Unlike a pie, which requires some fancy finger work and precision rolling, this flat, rustic summer dessert is a breeze to prepare. After a brief chill in the fridge, the pastry is simply rolled out in whatever shape you like — circle or rectangle, your choice — topped with a pile of fresh fruit, and then the edges are folded up and over some of the sugary slices to make a crust. If it's misshapen, no worries: that's part of the dessert's charm for both the eater and the baker.

It's finished when the fruit is bubbling and easily pierced with the tip of a knife, and the crust is fragrant, golden brown and slightly crispy.

I like to top the dessert with a scoop of vanilla ice cream, but a spoonful or two of fresh whipped cream also works wonders, if that's your preference.

In my opinion, a fruit crostata is best served when it's still a little warm so the ice cream softens with each bite. Then again, it's a great stand-in for a bagel or croissant when served room temperature with a cup of coffee for breakfast.

Look for peaches that are ripe but not overly squishy; there should only be a little bit of give when you (gently) squeeze it.



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Unless you're going for looks over flavor, to peel or not to peel can be a game day decision — the skin is completely edible and will fall off as it bakes.

PEACH CROSTATA

For pastry

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon coarse salt
- 8 ounces (2 sticks) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1/4-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup ice water

For filling

- 1 1/2 pounds peaches, sliced 1/2 inch thick
- 1/3 cup granulated sugar
- Dash of vanilla extract
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon coarse salt
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch or flour
- 1 large egg, beaten
- Sanding sugar, for sprinkling
- Vanilla ice cream or whipped cream, for serving

Make pastry: Pulse flour, sugar and salt in a food processor until combined. Add butter, and process until mixture resembles coarse meal, about 10 seconds. With the machine running, add ice water in a slow, steady stream until mixture just begins to hold together.

Shape dough into 2 disks. Wrap each in plastic, and refrigerate for at least 1 hour or up to 3 days (or freeze for up to 1 month; thaw in refrigerator before using).

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 375 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil, then parchment.

Stir together sliced fruit, granulated sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, lemon juice, salt and cornstarch or flour.

Roll out one of the pastry disks (reserving the other for use later) into a 12-inch round, about 1/8 inch thick, on a lightly floured surface (or whatever shape works for you — no need to sweat it out). Transfer to baking sheet.

Arrange peaches in the center, leaving a 2-inch border. Fold over border to enclose the fruit, leaving the center open. Brush crust with beaten egg and sprinkle with a little sugar.

Bake until golden brown and bubbling in center, about 70 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet for 10 minutes, then slide crostata onto parchment on a wire rack. Let cool completely.

Serve with whipped cream or a scoop of vanilla ice cream.

Serves 6-8.

— Adapted from marthastewart.com



Gretchen McKay/Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

A free-form peach crostata is easier to make than pie, but just as sweet of a taste of summer.

Frost or flood, raised-bed gardening works wonders



JENNIE HAGEN
GARDENING WITH GRANDMA

It was quite by accident that the thought of raised-bed gardening happened so many years — no, decades — ago. It was a garden I'd developed at an old ranch house, then a rental, and recipient of wonderful loamy soil that had laid untouched for thousands of years. I had decided to make the garden beds about 4 feet across so even the middle of the bed could be reached from either side. And at 4,300 feet, it was definitely high-elevation, cold climate gardening in south-central Oregon!

On a frosty April morning, the sun had just come up over the rim and was shining on the south side of the beds. Steam was

rising. It was then I realized my idea of raised beds, originally designed to conserve water, were a wonderful source of "microclimate," as the remaining areas around the garden were still thickly encased in frost even an hour later. Yet these beds were rapidly heating up just from the simple application of having the south side elevated for the sun to reach.

But my determination to conserve water was met with disappointment when the water would just run down the sides of the beds and not where all the plants were. Then there was the moment of "raised beds with dikes!" That's all it took. Dike up soil around the beds, even just 2 inches, and the water stayed right there in between the sides.

As mentioned in the previous "Gardening With Grandma," here are some tips for dealing with intense rain or flash



Jill Toyoshiba/Kansas City Star-TNS

Raised beds can protect vegetables and flowers from frost and flooding.

flooding. These suggestions are certainly not meant to apply to the type of intense thunderstorm from just a few weeks ago. Nothing can really prepare you for the catastrophic hail that so many of our neighbors incurred. But from a small-scale garden,

here are some benefits of raised beds, and the diking, that can help prevent a total washout.

While permanent raised beds, those of

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