

EW PET CONTEST WINNERS



**CUTEST
GRACIE**



**UGLIEST
DOZER**



**BEST DRESSED
BAILEY**

THE SCOOP ON POOP

To compost, flush or trash? BY JEREMY OHMES

I'm a plastic man, and I hate it. Open my kitchen cupboard and an avalanche of plastic sacks will spill out. I pick up plastic bags in random places and stuff them in my pockets like some shady plastic addict. I hit up newspaper subscribers for their plastic newspaper sleeves when I'm really in a bind. At the grocery store, I shamefully answer "Plastic" when asked that dreaded question. "I have a dog," I explain with my tail between my legs, and then I grab another handful of plastic bags while the cashier's back is turned. I justify my plastic addiction by calling it "recycling," or I tell myself at least I'm picking up my dog's poop (less than half of dog owners pick up their pet's waste, according to some park management studies). But I still feel wrong using a plastic bag. So what am I supposed to do with my dog's doo-doo?

The easy and "green" alternative that is always tossed my way is the biodegradable bag. Every pet store and supermarket sells corn-based, "eco-friendly" poop scooping bags or cat pan liners, and locally Market of Choice's "plastic" bags are made of cornstarch too. But these eco-solutions still follow the plastic bag route to the landfill. To boot, once these bags end up in the landfill, they won't break down any faster because of the absence of oxygen. So, the biodegradable bag's only environmental advantage is that it's made from a plant (probably grown with chemical pesticides)

instead of oil, and that certainly doesn't assuage my eco-guilt.

Another pet waste solution that I've heard suggested is composting. According to Anne Donahue, the compost specialist for Eugene's Planning and Development Department, the city once looked into the possibility of promoting pet waste composting to address the accumulation of pet poo at city dog parks, which amounts to 20 tons of canine fecal matter every year. But after testing various compost piles and finding high levels of pathogens, such as salmonella and helminth ova, a hard-to-kill bug, Donahue and the city of Eugene do not recommend this practice. Instead, she and the city recommend burying your dog poop by digging foot-deep holes away from vegetable gardens, streams or wells, filling the holes halfway full with dog waste, and covering with six inches of soil. However, burying cat waste is not recommended because the eggs of *Toxoplasma gondii* or Toxo, a parasite found in cat poop, can last for up to a year in soil and lead to contamination. The burying solution doesn't work.

Many environmental experts and pet poop pundits assert that the best method for getting rid of pet waste is flushing it down the toilet. This way it gets the same treatment as human waste and it's just



fecal matter producing more methane. To help make that yard-to-toilet transition a little bit easier, dog owners can now buy flushable, water-soluble dog poop bags. Once again though, this applies to dog waste only, as the Toxo parasite in cat poop can survive the wastewater treatment process, contaminating waterways and possibly harming sea otters, according to studies done by the Sea Otter Alliance. For cat owners, the easiest solution for getting rid of Kitty's poo and litter (preferably made of recycled sources and biodegradable) is unfortunately to toss it in the trash.

In the end, there are no easy answers to disposing of pet poop. The whole process is either messy or not as eco-friendly as we'd like it to be, and as Donahue plainly states, "Owning animals has an environmental impact and that's just something we have to deal with." Hopefully, with some digging and flushing, I can curb my plastic habit after all.

EW

Can We Go to Wags! Now?



Come shop at Wags! Dog Emporium.
Tell the world you think the world of your dog!

Toys • Treats • Gifts • Natural Dog Food
Collars • Leashes • Apparel
Bowls • Beds • & More!

Bring your furry friends with you!
We'd love to meet 'em!



485 Coburg Road, Suite G
Eugene, Oregon 97401

Mon-Sat: 10:00am - 6:00pm
Sun: 11:00am - 4:00pm

541-338-8801

www.wagsdog.com

KNIT & CROCHET SHOW

Oregon Conv Ctr
Portland

Sept. 12-14

Fri & Sat 10-6

Sun 10-3

Admission: \$10,
\$5 each add'l day
(Parking: \$8)

Shopping, Classes, Fun!

Teach Me 2 Crochet/
Knit™ Classes Free

**www.Knitand
CrochetShow.com**

**Bring this ad
for \$2 off**

0824_EW

DIRECT FROM KONA, HAWAII

KONA CAFE
HAWAIIAN BBQ & CATERING

GOURMET FOOD • PAPER PLATES

3 LOCATIONS:

46th & Main St. Springfield 741-7136	I-5 Exit 182 Creswell 895-4140	18th & City View Eugene 868-1800	24 Hour Catering Hotline 729-0119
--	--------------------------------------	--	---

NOW IN EUGENE

OPEN 11AM-8PM DAILY • "BROKE DA MOUTH"

Wellness Centered Dentistry

Individual Care for Individual People



Rob Whicker DDS

A
Holistic Approach
— To Dental Care —

868-2008
300 Country Club Rd
Ste 290