

DOGS LEARN TO DETECT SCENTS



Cati Foss holds a treat on top of the scent box to teach 'Gus,' a 22-month-old Leonberger, to associate the smell of anise with the reward of food.

By HAILEY HOFFMAN
The Astorian

Scent discrimination, or nose work, is an activity that trains dogs to search for a specific smell. "Your dog's nose is isolating one scent out of millions," Cati Foss, owner of Arnicadia Dog Training. In training, owners pair the idea of a specific scent with a reward — food or praise — through games and tests. This activity can be used to train more advanced dogs to locate drugs and other substances.

BELOW: Marge Johnson praises her 4-month-old German shepherd, 'Ruby,' as a reward. Some dogs, like Ruby and her brother 'Mick,' are not motivated by food and simply want attention. BELOW LEFT: Trainer Cati Foss opens her scent kit of cotton swabs that smell like anise, birch and clove. The swabs are placed in smaller, individual containers to help teach dogs to locate the source of a smell.



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ABOVE: Put off by the strong smell of anise, Mick, an 18-week-old German shepherd, avoids the scent box held by trainer Cati Foss. BELOW LEFT: Owner Christina Merten feeds Gus a treat for locating the scent box in her hand. Merten has trained her other Leonbergers in scent detection through the course. 'This gives us a chance to work on his focus and for us to work as a team,' Merten said. BELOW RIGHT: 'Sonsei,' a German shepherd, tries to open owner Ken Emo's hand to eat the treat inside. In this exercise, owners wouldn't give the dogs the treat until they put their nose on the scent box, which was held in their other hand.

