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My dog is digging up the garden.

Has your dog been digging up your garden, flowers and lawn?
Yep! If you allow your APBT that's what they will do.

If so, it's important to remember that they don't do this in spite or to deliberately destroy the garden.

Digging is a normal, instinctive behaviour for many dogs.

Dogs may be more likely to dig in some specific circumstances or for a particular reason, such as:

- Relief from boredom and frustration
- Playing
- Instinct
- Trying to escape
- Seeking protection

- Release of pent-up energy/anxiety
- Finding buried bones

To address this problem, you first need to learn why your dog digs—and then implement some management strategies to address the underlying cause.

Dogs left alone for long periods of time without opportunities for interaction, mental stimulation or exercise may be prone to digging. If the environment is barren – with no playmates or chew toys, this can also increase the risk of digging.

Dealing with digging.

First, you need to check that all your dog's needs are being met:

- Exercise: walk your dog at least once daily. Insufficient exercise is a leading cause of problem behaviours.
- Company and interaction: spend time playing and interacting with your dog every day.

Teach your dog new commands or tricks.

Practice these every day for 5 to 10 minutes.

Play fetch or other games working together.

- Chewing needs: keep interesting special APBT chew toys in the yard to keep your dog busy when you're not around.

Rotate the toys to keep things interesting.

Offer a raw meaty bone a couple of times a week – a raw bone can keep a dog occupied for a good length of time.

- Shelter: in hot weather, dogs may dig holes to lie in the cool dirt.

They may also dig to provide themselves with shelter from cold, wind, or rain or to find water.

Provide your dog with the comfort or protection he seeks by providing your dog with a comfortable doghouse that affords protection from wind and sun.

Provide plenty of clean fresh drinking water in a bowl that can't be tipped over.

Provide an alternative 'acceptable' digging area if possible.

Choose an area of the yard where it's okay for your dog to dig.

Make the acceptable digging area attractive by burying safe items (such as chew toys) for them to discover.

If your dog digs in the 'acceptable' spot – **reward him** with lots of praise either in the form of a food treat, vocal praise (good boy!) or a scratch on the chest.

If your dog starts digging in an unacceptable area, catch its attention by encouraging him to come over to the 'acceptable' digging area.

When the dog comes to you and starts digging in the approved spot, reward them with lots of praise.

Make the unacceptable digging spots unattractive at least temporarily by placing rocks, thorns or fencing around it.

Digging to escape.

Dogs can also dig when trying to escape.

They will usually dig along the fence-line if this is the case.

Dogs may try to escape for a number of reasons such as separation anxiety, to search for mates or get away from fireworks or loud unfamiliar noises.

Try to figure out why your dog is trying to escape, and remove those incentives.

Make sure his environment is a safe, appealing place for a dog and that his needs are being met.

Things to avoid.

Regardless of the reason your dog's digging, avoid punishing your dog.

This won't address the underlying cause of the behaviour, and it will likely worsen any digging that's motivated by fear or anxiety.

You should also try to avoid using fertilizers that are likely to attract your dog and make them more likely to dig (blood and bone is especially attractive to dogs).

Digging up your newly planted potatoes is not just annoying for you, but can be dangerous for your dog if he consumes large amounts of fertilizer.

If you've tried the recommended strategies and you still can't solve your dog's digging problem, keep him indoors with you and supervise him during toilet breaks in the yard.

Also recommended that you consult a veterinary behavioural specialist.