



Garden birds



During the long winter months, food can be in short supply for garden wildlife.

Offering a selection of foods to the birds will help them survive until

Spring and ensure you have lots of interesting visitors to watch!

Dawn and dusk are when most birds feed, so make sure your bird tables are full at these times.

In addition to traditional bird tables, hanging feeders suspended from trees or free standing poles are a popular way of feeding birds.



Seed feeders are tubular transparent containers with holes, through which the

birds are able to access a high calorie seed mix, whilst nut feeders are made of steel mesh and are ideal for *unsalted* peanuts.

When choosing seed, try to buy a mix of sunflower seeds, broken peanuts, maize and millets.

Fat balls are excellent and packed with energy and calories to help birds survive the freezing temperatures. Many come in mesh bags, but remove these because birds can easily get tangled up in them.

Feeders and bird tables should always be cleaned once weekly to reduce the risk of food contamination and disease spread.

If you have a water bath, pour boiling water on any frozen water and place fresh cool water twice daily. If you don't have a water bath use a shallow dish or bowl, allowing the birds to drink and have a bath.

Further information on caring for garden birds can be found online at www.rspb.org.uk



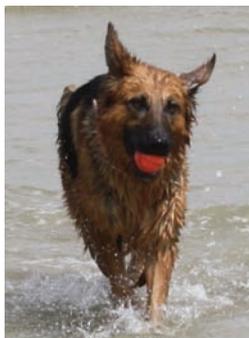
Meet the Vet Team

Introducing the Moy Vets clinical line up from left to right (who have you met already?)

Michelle Lingard, Sue White, Audrey Gallacher, Adrian Leontescu, Kellie Courtney & Rob Cogswell

This is the Vet Team who look after all your beautiful pets 24/7/365

Yes, at Moy Vets we do all our own out of hours emergency cover. So, if your pet becomes ill at the weekend or in the early hours of the night you can ring the regular contact number and be seen by one of the Practices' own Vets. Our Vets will have full access to your pets' medical history no matter which site you usually visit.



Cold weather aches and pains

Cold winters can make your pet's joints feel stiff and painful. This can manifest as a reluctance to go on long walks, a stiffening when getting up after lying down or a specific lameness.

The joints most susceptible to arthritis are those permitting limb movements – called synovial joints. The ends of the bones which meet at these joints are covered by smooth articular cartilage. In pets with arthritis, this protective cartilage is damaged, resulting in exposure of the underlying bone, causing pain and inflammation. Secondary new bone is commonly deposited around the joint and may be seen on x-ray (see lower right image).



In many cases, arthritis causes a low grade, constant discomfort. Whilst some pets will develop an obvious limp, many pets, especially cats, will simply slow down, be stiffer getting up and generally rest more; all of which is easy to put down to 'old age'.

Although arthritis cannot usually be cured, the good news is that we now have an expanding range of treatments to help your pet.

Weight reduction is absolutely vital and even a small loss will make a massive difference to mobility. Our Weight Clinics are a great help to many pets. See also our article on page two.

Exercise: Many arthritic pets struggle on long walks, so little and often is the key. Vary where you go so they always have somewhere new to explore; mental stimulation is as important as physical, especially for older animals. Try swimming as well, pools for dogs are now very common and it is a great way to strengthen muscles and burn calories while not stressing out sore joints. Simple changes at home can make such a difference: putting mats on slippy floors, providing a super supportive bed and using ramps will all really help.

Many pets also benefit from anti-inflammatory **pain relief** and also increased dietary intake of **glucosamine and chondroitin sulphate (Synoquin)** If you are worried that your pet may have arthritis, please come and see us for a check-up!

X-rays and arthritis

Radiography is commonly used to investigate joint problems.



X-ray of a normal elbow joint



Arthritic elbow joint in a dog with lots of "fluffy" new bone (yellow arrows) around the joint, indicative of marked arthritis.

Q: Where do fleas go in the winter?

A: Your home!



Did you know that the worst time for flea infestations is actually the Autumn and Winter months? Fleas thrive in warm conditions and thanks to central heating, they don't need to hop south for the winter, they just need to move into your living room.

Fleas can make their way into our homes in all sorts of ways; on our pets, on us, or just hopping in by themselves. Did you know that fleas can jump 20cm into the air – so your front step is no barrier to them! They lay their eggs in protected places like under furniture or in the cracks of laminate floors and those eggs can survive for months, waiting to be activated by warm conditions (remember that central heating?!) and the presence of pets spending more time inside. This is why flea infestations can appear to come out of nowhere!

So, it is vital to protect against fleas all year round! Spread the cost by budgeting monthly when joining the Platinum Paws Plan (see below).

Winter weight worries!



Shorter days, inhospitable weather, and the lure of a cosy sofa all conspire against us and our pets in the winter months, leaving both pets and owners prone to putting on a few unwanted pounds. This is a problem because while it is all too easy to gain weight, it isn't nearly as easy to lose it!

Long term, this can have health risks since carrying excess weight can cause or worsen a range of conditions including skin, heart, respiratory and joint disease. Your pet may also be more prone to develop problems such as raised blood pressure, diabetes and pancreatitis.

So – now is the perfect time to assess your pet's weight! Dogs should have a visible 'waist line', with ribs that can be felt on palpation. By contrast, if you can pinch an inch or more, and if your pet's tummy sags down, then a diet is probably in order. We are here to help and can weigh your pet and can advise you on their ideal weight. Additionally, by visiting the surgery every few months we can use the scales to keep an eye on your pet's weight.

Special diets and feeders, advice on exercise, treats, and calorie management all have their part to play and will give you the best chance to get your pet's weight back under control. The good news is that as your pet loses weight, the benefits of increased healthiness and vitality are usually seen quite quickly. Why not take advantage of our Nurse Clinic/Weight Check. At these clinics valuable advice and a monthly weigh in should see you improve your pets' health.

Update on lungworm in dogs



Lungworm or *Angiostrongylus Vasorum*, is a parasite that can affect dogs and also local foxes. It can cause significant disease and in some cases, be fatal. Unfortunately, cases are becoming more common throughout the UK and Ireland and it is

therefore very important to be aware of lungworm and how you can help protect your pet from this parasite.

Dogs can be infected with lungworm larvae carried by **slugs and snails** (which act as intermediate hosts). Slugs and snails can be inadvertently eaten in grass, soil or whilst playing with toys in the garden. Lungworm larvae can even be found in the trail that snails leave behind in your garden. The disease is commonest in young dogs that eat or play with slugs and snails, and in dogs that eat or drink outside and may have had slugs or snails in their bowls.



Electron micrograph of an adult lungworm

Lungworm are swallowed as tiny larvae, which migrate into the circulation of the liver and travel to the right side of the heart. Here they develop into adult worms (see photo left) which can build up in the heart. Here the adults mate and produce eggs. The eggs hatch into larvae and then migrate into the

lung tissue. These larvae are coughed up and are passed out into your dog's faeces to re-infect molluscs. When in the body the larvae cause significant lung tissue damage, often causing a cough, breathing troubles and lethargy. This can result in bronchitis, heart failure and spontaneous bleeding.

Affected dogs often become weak and lethargic, go off their food, and may cough, vomit, or pass blood. The disease can be so severe as to be fatal but, if diagnosed early, can be treated successfully. Blood or faecal testing can give rapid diagnostic results.

Lungworm is best prevented by using an appropriate spot-on wormer at monthly intervals. Fortunately it can't be transmitted to humans but it is very important to make sure your pet is adequately protected. Please contact us at the practice if you are concerned your pet is not covered.

Lungworm photo: courtesy Bayer.

We can tailor the flea, worm and tick control for your pet and budget monthly by joining our Health Care Plan

TO SIGN UP TO THE PLATINUM PAWS PLAN PLEASE SPEAK TO ANY MEMBER OF THE MOY VETS TEAM OR SEE MORE DETAILS ON OUR WEBPAGE

www.moyvets.co.uk/platinum-paws-plan/

