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April 2019 Newsletter

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Happy April furiends! So, this month might hold the most pet-related holidays of the year, by far! For that reason this entire newsletter is going to talk about a few of our favorites. Another exciting thing about the month of April is...[Easter](#), of course!



Stick to chocolate or toys, don't
buy bunnies or chicks for
Easter!

As always [Easter](#) is a time to celebrate with the entire family, including your pets. There are a few dangers to keep in mind, however, before you get carried away with the festivities!

- Chocolate
 - Easter Basket Fillers
 - Raw Egg
 - Toxic Egg Dyes
 - Candies containing Xylitol
 - Fatty foods like lamb
-
- Onions, garlic, chives, and leeks
 - Alcohol
 - Lilies (highly toxic to cats)

Learn more about keeping your pet safe during the Spring [here](#).

THIS MONTH'S
TOP STORIES

Siamese Cats are Here to Stay -- and Play!



Despite being frequently portrayed as villains in movies and cartoons -- think of the evil pair in Disney's *Lady and the Tramp* -- Siamese cats are still one of the most popular and easily recognizable cat breeds today. There is perhaps no better way to celebrate National Siamese Cat Day on April 6 than to remind everyone why these cats are such good company.

Siamese Style

No one could forget the distinctive look of a Siamese cat. As a rule, Siamese cats have white or pale beige bodies with dark brown or dark gray "points": ears, face, tail, and paws. They typically have short hair and longer, leaner bodies, giving their faces a more "exotic" look that goes with the breed name. Some have narrow, crossed eyes, which unfortunately makes them "evil" by in the movie world. Many cat owners, however, appreciate the contrast between their blue eyes and dark fur. Strangely, Siamese kittens are completely light-colored and do not develop their points until they are several weeks old -- their color patterns are determined by enzymes.

Ancient Origins

Officially from Siam, or modern-day Thailand, Siamese cats can be traced back for centuries and have been in the US for over 100 years. The earliest Siamese cats were medium-build and cross-eyed, with dark brown points. Later, to meet the preference of cat breeders, thinner Siamese became the norm, and more color combinations became available. Unlike Munchkin cats, for example, Siamese cats are not typically subjected to as much aggressive genetic selection and associated health problems.

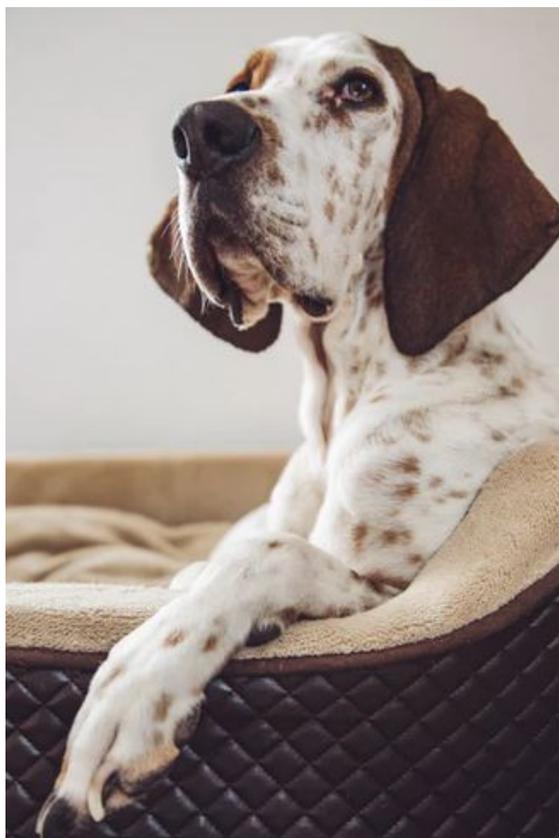


Sparkling Personality

Not just a healthy, hardy breed, Siamese cats are prized for their personality. Curious, active, and [intelligent](#), they are often described as "dog-like" -- they can easily learn to do tricks, go for walks on a harness, and interact with their owners and other pets. They are also very "vocal" and will make sure their owners never have a dull day in their lives.

For those who have enough time to spend with their feline family members, Siamese cats have long been an [ideal choice](#). Don't believe the negative media portrayals of them as scheming villains or henchmen. Whether thin or stocky, blue or brown, Siamese cats are not only beautiful, but fun and affectionate as well.

All You Need to Know about Heartworms



Since the month of April is National Heartworm Awareness Month, let's talk about it! The best thing you can do to keep your pet safe is by embracing preventative measures. But before we discuss how to keep your dog safe from heartworm disease, let's have a quick preview of what [heartworms](#) are and what they do.

What Are Heartworms?

These are parasites that cause heartworm disease in dogs. It is only in a few cases that they can affect mammals. The parasite can't be spread from one dog to another directly. Instead, it requires an intermediary such as a mosquito to transfer the parasite to a new host.

What Does It Do?

The heartworm usually enters a mosquito when it is feeding, and it then enters another host when the mosquito bites another dog. The size of a heartworm is 1/100th of an inch long. Once they enter the body, they travel through the bloodstream and settle on the left side of the heart.

Once they settle in the heart, they begin growing and mature after six months. Heartworms can live in a dog's body for up to seven years. During this period they can grow to be 1 foot long.

The Symptoms

In the early stages of heartworm disease, you won't notice any symptoms. However, when the heartworm matures after six months, the symptoms become more evident. When you have your dog tested during this stage, microfilaria bacteria will be revealed.

Symptoms include mild to persistent coughs, inability to exercise, weak pulse, weight loss, fainting, and labored breathing.

Prevention

When it comes to heartworm infections, prevention is a better alternative. This is because the treatment procedure can be quite difficult on the dog.

There are two heartworm preventative measures you can take. You can either opt to conduct heartworm infection annual tests on your dog. Or, you can administer year-round preventative compounds. These medications come in handy in not only protecting your dog from heartworms but also other parasites such as fleas and tapeworms.

*Note that there is a variety of heartworm preventative medication. Make sure that you discuss the available options with your vet on which is best for your dog.

Meet a Therapy Dog!

They are not called mans' (or womans') best friend for nothing! Dogs are a wonderful part of many families. They provide comfort whenever we need it, constant companionship, and unconditional love. So it was a natural progression to start using these amazing animals for those who are truly in need of a friend. The idea for therapy dogs started to take hold back in the 1960s. Today, Therapy dogs are an intricate part of the human healing process. They have been shown to help patients with a variety of health benefits.

Mental and Physical Health Benefits:

Children with autism are likely to bond with animals during their therapy sessions. When a

therapy dog was present, the child became more verbal and interactive.

Whether dealing with mental or physical issues, merely interacting with these animals has been proven to:

-Lower anxiety.

-Promote the release of many mood-elevating hormones including: serotonin, prolactin, and oxytocin.

-In patients with head injuries or alzheimer's, therapy dogs proved to aid in the recall of memories, along with helping to sequence temporal events.

-Lower blood pressure.

- Relaxed breathing.
- Reduced medications needed.

Meet These Heroic Dogs!

Spartacus the Akita



Spartacus is gorgeous there is no denying that! However, this boy is more than just a pretty face. On December 14, 2012, a shooting occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut. 26 children were killed along with two adults. Spartacus was one of the first of many to arrive on scene to offer assistance. Thanks to our furry hero, Connecticut passed a law that states all victims must have access to therapy dogs within 24 hours. Who's a good boy?

Hector the pit



Hector may look like the toughest guy around but underneath he is just a big teddy bear. He loves to visit hospitals and collect lots of hugs. He was rescued from Michael Vick's' dog fighting operation. His new owners saw his potential and the rest is history. Hector even has a motto: The only thing I fight is discrimination. This big guy proves he really is a lover, not a fighter.

Last but certainly not least...

Lexi the German Shepherd



This lovely girl ranks as Lieutenant Colonel, partner to 82nd Maj. Christine Rumayor. She is the only therapy dog at Fort Bragg and has helped soldiers cope with postwar stress and many other traumas. We salute you, Lexi!

Yes, animals really are wonderful. Therapy dogs go above and beyond. I believe we could learn a thing or two from them. Compassion, selflessness, courage. The world is a bit better, thanks to our four-legged friends.

In honor of National Therapy Dog Day, April 11 you can donate here:

<https://www.therapydogs.com/donate>

Photo credit: OneGreenPlanet.com

More April Pet Holidays!

National Adopt a Greyhound Month.
National Pet First Aid Awareness Month.
Prevent Lyme Disease in Dogs Month.
Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month. (ASCPA)
National Pet Month. (UK)
April 1-7, 2019: International Pooper Scooper Week.
April 6, 2019: Every Day is Tag Day. Always the first Saturday in April.
April 1-7, 2019: National Raw Feeding Week.
April 7-13, 2019: Animal Care and Control Appreciation Week. 2nd full week in April.
April 7-13, 2019: National Dog Bite Prevention Week. 2nd full week in April.
April 8, 2019: National Dog Fighting Awareness Day.
April 10, 2019: National Hug Your Dog Day.
April 11, 2019: National Pet Day.
April 11, 2019: Dog Therapy Appreciation Day.
April 14-20, 2019: Animal Cruelty/Human Violence Awareness Week. Third week in April.
April 14 – 20, 2019: National Pet ID Week. Third week in April.
April 21, 2019: Bulldogs are Beautiful Day.
April 21, 2019: Earth Day.

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