

UPPER SNAKE RIVER VALLEY DOG TRAINING CLUB NEWSLETTER August, 2018

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**DATES TO REMEMBER****NEXT MEETING / SET UP FOR TRIAL**

Thursday, August 16, 2018

6:00 pm @ Tautphaus Park Lilac Circle

Dinner will be served after set up

—

USRVDTC Obedience and Rally Trials

August 17—19

Tautphaus Park Lilac Circle

Volunteers Needed. This is a great opportunity to learn about
the sport

—

Obedience and Agility Classes

Starting August 22

—

Tracking Test Sunday, September 23, 2018

BRAGS

Congratulations to LeeAnn Chaffin and Ben!

At the Blackfoot shows in June, **Ben** qualified for two legs in Beginner Novice Obedience placing 1st and 2nd. He also received 3 Scent Work Element Titles in Container, Interior and Exterior and two legs toward his Buried Element Title. Great work LeeAnn and Ben!!

Congratulations to Sara Hatcher and Ice!

At the recent Farmington Show, a 4 day, 5 show dog show, **Hatcher's Twice The Ice** had takes in all 5 shows! 1st Place in Shetland Sheepdog Dogs Under 2, Best Male and Best of Breed. In Group he had two 3rd Place and one 4th Place finish. Way to go Sara and Ice!!



Congratulations to Mark and Donna Witham and their Pack, E'Clair, Tonnerre and Moqui!!

They had an amazing weekend in Blackfoot!

Chaparral's Sawtooth Éclair came away with Winners Bitch all 4 days at the 2018 Blackfoot Idaho Cluster Dog Shows.



Ch Sawtooth Tonnerre de Coolmoor IT TCQ ETD TKP came away with had a good weekend at the 2018 Blackfoot Idaho Cluster Dog Shows, with Best of Opposite all 4 days! Additionally, in the scent work trial, he received Element Titles in Interior and Exterior Scent Work and earned a leg towards Buried Scent Work.

BISS GCh Starlytes Keto Golden Girl CGC TKA SWN ATD TCQ ME-E (Moqui) had a very good weekend at the 2018 Blackfoot Idaho Cluster Dog Shows, with Best of Breed all 4 days and earned her Grand Championship! Additionally, **Moqui** competed in the Scent Work Trial where she earned her Scent Work Novice (SWN) title by qualifying for Element Titles in Interior, Container, Buried, and Exterior Scent Work. She also earned a leg in Advanced Interior Scent Work and a High in Trial on Saturday!!

Great job Mark, Donna, Moqui, Tonnerre and E'clair!!



Moqui

Tonnerre

Congratulations to Mary Ann Igoe and Pari!

Pari earned her RATCH – Barn Hunt Champion Title in Pocatello on July 29, 2018 with two 3rd Place ribbons and a 1st Place High in Trial!!!

Great job Mary Ann and Pari!!!!



Foxtail Grass: Awns of Destruction for Western Dogs

Foxtail awns present the most insidious threat to the health of dogs in the Western United States. Here is how to identify foxtails, get them off your property, and protect your dog.

By [Nancy Kerns](#)

In California, where I have spent all but one year of my life (so far) with dogs, there are two types of dog owners: those have spent a small fortune having veterinarians remove foxtails from some part of their dogs' bodies, and those who haven't – yet. I'm in the first group, and I would hazard a guess that the first group is far larger than the second.

If you live in the western United States (particularly California), are planning to visit with your dog, or have adopted a dog who spent any time in that part of the country, you should know all the ways that this plant can hurt your dog (and your bank account!). It doesn't matter if the exposure was recent or months ago. If the dog has been near foxtail grass, read on!



The bristling plumes in front of Cole are immature, green, soft foxtails – the reproductive structures of a grass that is commonly referred to by the same name. When the grass dries, these plumes dry up and become nearly adhesive, thanks to microscopic barbs on each one of those thread-like awns.

For those lucky folks in eastern North America who ask, “What are foxtails?”:

There are many plants in the grass family, *Hordeum* genus, that have fox tail-shaped reproductive structures, such as *Hordeum brachyantherum* (found all over western North America) and *Hordeum jubatum* (widespread in the United States and Canada). *Hordeum murinum* and *Hordeum marinum* (which appear across most of the western U.S.), though, are the grass species that cause the most harm to dogs (and other animals). Only botanists refer to these grasses by their scientific names, however; mostly, the grass is called by the common and descriptive name of its reproductive structure: foxtails, or foxtail grass.

Foxtail grass isn't present only in California, but the state is definitely ground zero for this injurious plant. It grows as well in pastures and lawns as it does in gravel driveways and cracks in the sidewalk. The seeds germinate in winter, and when the plant starts to grow in the late winter and early spring, it's actually lovely; it's a bright green, soft, fast-growing grass that many dogs find irresistible for chewing. As it begins to mature in mid-spring, it produces the structure that resembles a fox's tail: a thick, bristly spike that starts out green and soft. As spring temperatures increase and the rains end, the grass begins to dry out and the spikes turn yellow. The drier they get,

the more brittle they become, and the plume-like “foxtail” starts to fall apart into individual segments, each tipped by a sharp seed and trailing those propulsive awns.

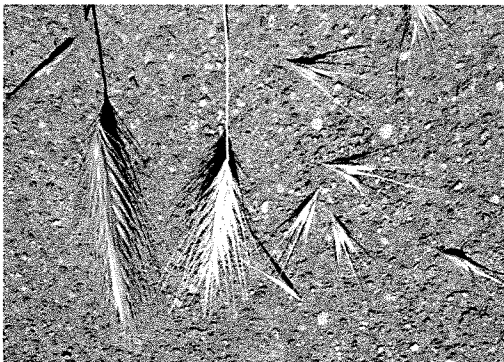
Our dogs and other animals carry the seeds far from the plants that shed them, helping spread them far and wide, but the journey of some seeds into our dogs has no purpose of propagation. The real purpose of the awns is to help the seeds work their way into the soil, where they bury themselves and wait for winter rainfall to germinate and start the cycle again.

Foxtails Are Designed to Penetrate Anything

The seeds of this nasty grass seem to have a special affinity for invading dogs’ bodies. The three most common hazards are these: They get sniffed into dog noses, work their way into dog ears, and lodge between dog toes. Each of these sites is a mere port of entry for these sturdy seeds; once inside, they start a relentless crawl forward, traveling deeper into a dog’s tissue with every passing hour. They are sometimes found in exploratory surgeries years afterward; the durable seed and awn fibers resist breaking down in the body as if they were made of plastic.

Those common jumping-off points for the foxtail’s inner-dog journey are not the only ones, however. Foxtails can penetrate any part of your dog; all they need is a place to attach. In dogs with very short hair (like American Pit Bull Terriers, Vizslas, and Weimaraners), they need a fold in the skin of some kind (armpit, vagina, prepuce). To these bristly seeds, longer, thicker, or curly coats behave a little like the “loop” side of a Velcro-type hook-and-loop fastener; a foxtail can stick to the coat, and wherever it sticks, it will start to burrow, enabling the seeds to penetrate anywhere on the furry dogs’ bodies.

How do they do that?! The seeds are very hard and tipped with a sharp point that is capable of puncturing your dog’s skin and entering his body. Attached to the seed are long, fibrous awns, which are covered with microscopic bristles that are arranged in a single direction, like the teeth on a rasp or nail file. Any contact with these tiny bristles literally pushes the seed forward, trailing its awn behind it.



If you push one of these seeds between your fingers, and then try to pull it out backward, you will begin to understand how they can pierce a dog’s skin and begin to forge, arrow-like, in the dog’s body: It’s very difficult to pull the seed backward, against the “grain” of the tiny bristles. If you pull on the seeds (and awns) when they’re fully dried and brittle (which occurs in late spring), the awn tends to break off (sort of like a captured lizard’s tail). This frees the remaining parts of the foxtail, which continues its singularly forward travel with every movement of the dog.

If a foxtail incursion is detected immediately, they can usually be removed from the dog relatively quickly and easily. Once, I was taking an after-work walk with a good friend and our (combined) four dogs when I noticed that, after urinating and then standing up, her spayed Kelpie, Chaco, had a few drops of blood dripping from her vulva. My friend and I looked at each other and simultaneously said two words that start with the letter F, one of which was “Foxtail!”

We immediately turned around and quickened our pace in an effort to get back to my car and get to the closest veterinary clinic before it closed. The vet was able to use a speculum and alligator retractor and remove the foxtail from Chaco's vagina within two minutes; she spent a few more minutes making sure that not even a tiny segment of awn was left behind. The bill was less than \$100.

I hate to think of what would have happened if we had not happened to see the couple of drops of blood that tipped us off to the foxtail invasion of poor Chaco's nether end. Had it spent another day or two working its way into Chaco's vagina, it surely would have caused infection and localized tissue damage, and could have easily traveled anywhere else in her abdomen. Radiographs, ultrasound, and exploratory surgery to find it later would have costs thousands.

The take-home point: If your dog has been anywhere near foxtails, and has any sort of abnormal sign of discomfort or irritation – shaking her head, an uncharacteristic squint, repetitively licking her paw or other part of her body, sneezing, coughing, gagging – call your vet and make an appointment as soon as possible.

Foxtail Dog Damage Horror Stories

Twice in as many years, I've seen one of the puppies that I was fostering pawing at his or her face and found and removed a foxtail that had just gotten lodged under the pup's eyelid. Each time, I thanked my stars that I was right there when it happened and that I noticed the puppy's discomfort right away.

I'm even more grateful for this now, since I asked friends and followers of WDJ's Facebook page for foxtail horror stories and was told by two different people that their dog had to have an eye surgically removed after being damaged by a foxtail. ACK!

I'm going to share more anecdotes from people who responded to my request for their "worst foxtail story" – not for the shock value, but so you can be alert to the variety of ways that these freaky seeds can invade your dog and wreak havoc:

"I know someone who lost two of her working dogs to foxtails in one year. One of them ended up with a foxtail in his lungs; the other was female and the foxtail entered through her vagina and into internal organs."

"One of our dogs started coughing up specks of blood. We had to have her 'scoped (with the dog fully anesthetized, an endoscopic camera is passed down the dog's throat and into the lungs). The vet found a foxtail lodged in the lining of our dog's lung and extracted it. That was the most expensive video we ever bought!"

"My Belgian Sheepdog, Bing, got one in his throat. His airway partially closed. It took an emergency trip to our local vet and then an emergency trip to Penn Vet and an entire team of specialists to do exploratory surgery. Four weeks of prednisone and antibiotics followed. Treatment was particularly challenging because he was a biter, so no evaluations could be done with him awake. The event was a total life-changer for him, and not in a good way."

"At one time I owned a Redbone hound who got a foxtail between her toes that quickly moved up her leg. The vet operated but could not find the foxtail. A month latter she abscessed on her side and the vet operated again, and again he couldn't find it. She had two more surgeries with no luck. I couldn't afford more operations even though she was a good hunting dog and valuable. I gave her to a man who had her operated on two more times and finally got the foxtail. The dog recovered but was covered with scars. The one foxtail cost thousands of dollars and over a year to take care of."

"My one-year-old Golden inhaled a foxtail that traveled through her lung and created an infection in the space next to her heart. She needed open heart surgery to remove the mass and part of her lung. The cost was more than \$10,000.

Although she nearly died several times that month, she recovered completely. Unfortunately, the scar tissue weakened her heart over time and eventually caused its failure at just eight years old.

“Teala was my heart and soul. She was the first dog I ever purchased insurance for, back in 2008. Because of this experience, I have sworn to always keep all of my dogs on medical insurance for their entire lives. I never want to have to make a medical or emotional decision because of finances.”

“When Bailey was just a puppy, she got a couple in her paws and one in her ear the first summer we moved to California from Texas. Foxtails don’t exist in Texas, and we had absolutely no idea whatsoever that they were a hazard – and our backyard was full of them! Now we pull em like crazy, and they are all but gone from the yard.”

Foxtail Hazard Reduction

In the stories above, you may have gleaned a few helpful hints about how to reduce the odds that your dog will be invaded by one of these evil awns – and if she is, what you should do. Here are more:

- If you walk or hike in foxtail country, consider the only effective protective gear made to prevent the awns from being swallowed, sniffed, or lodged in your dog’s ears: the [Outfox Field Guard](#). This is essentially a net that your dog wears over his whole head. He can see through it, pant, drink, and even carry toys while wearing it, but he can’t get a foxtail anywhere on his face while wearing it.

- Check your dog after every exposure to the weeds, especially between his toes. If he has the kind of coat that attracts foxtails, brush or comb him thoroughly, daily.

- Pull up the foxtail plant by the roots as soon as it begins to produce its signature plumes in the spring. Before the plumes appear, it’s hard to tell which grass is foxtail grass and which is not. Dispose of the whole plants in your yard-waste bin or bag them securely and send them to the landfill. The seeds often survive even intense composting; I wouldn’t even try it.

- Don’t use a string trimmer on them if you can help it. String trimmers actually help disperse the seeds widely.

- If you must mow the grass, use a grass-catcher and dispose of the clippings in the manner described above. But understand that as long as there is any moisture in the ground and the plant is still alive, after mowing, it will begin to produce the plumes right at ground level.

- I have heard reports that a propane-torch “weed burner” can help control the weeds. I just bought one. I will get back to you on its efficacy. I can’t wait to go burn some foxtails. I might be happy to burn them even if it doesn’t help me control their population on my property.

- I HATE to ever recommend the use of Roundup or any other type of herbicide...But we know people who could not eliminate foxtail grass from their property any other way. If you haven’t been able to prevent your dog from getting foxtails in his body every year and the grass is all over your property, we wouldn’t blame you for resorting to this.

- It bears repeating: If your dog exhibits any sign or abnormal behavior after being exposed to foxtails, go to a veterinary clinic. Of particular note: excessive blinking or pawing at the eyes, sneezing, coughing, gagging, head-shaking, paw-licking (or any targeted licking, especially if you see a raw, red bump), or pain or discomfort while or after urinating.

- Maintain a health savings account or [health insurance](#) for your dog. If you live in foxtail country, whether you have them in your yard or encounter them on your dog walks, you should be prepared to pay for an expensive vet visit or three at some point.

USRVDTCL REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

July 19, 2018

The regular monthly meeting of the Upper Snake River Valley Dog Training Club was called to order by President, Marilynne Manguba, at 7:10 p.m., on Thursday, July 19, 2018, at Tautphaus Park, in Idaho Falls ID.

Introduction of Guests/Visitors: Marilyn P'pool, Alisha & Lindy Thompson and Rebecca & Troy Johnson

Members present:

Duane Loomis	Cheryl Loomis	Pat Hester
Gene Tatum	Jane Guidinger	Maurice Guidinger
Rosha Adams	Fred Adams	Steven Olson
Lois Olson	Diana Robinson	LaDawn Moad
Mary Ann Igoe	Marilynne Manguba	Charlie Urbanski
Heidi Urbanski	David P'pool	Kelly P'pool
Frank Mason	Rochelle Mason	Lee Ann Chaffin
Brian Meyer	Melissa Meyer	Shel Williams
Don Williams	Rosemary Durfee	Steve Durfee
Aubrey Parry	Layla Johnson	Desirae Chase

Lee Ann Chaffin moved to approve the minutes as published in the newsletter. Donna Whitham seconded. Passed.

Report from the Board Meeting: No meeting held

Report of the President: None

Report of the Vice President: None

Report of the Secretary: None

Report of the Treasurer: None - Suzanne Belger absent – Treasurer's report for two months will be presented at the next meeting.

Report of Committees:

Agility Trial Chairman: LaDawn Moad reported the October 2018 Agility trial judge has been changed to MariAnn Diehl.

Obedience Trial: Marilynne Manguba reported the August 16th meeting in conjunction with the Obedience and Rally Trial set-up will be at Tautphaus Park Lilac Circle 6:00 p.m. Nachos will be served.

The Obedience and Rally trial will be held on August 17, 18 & 19 at Tautphaus Park. Volunteering is a great opportunity to learn the sport.

Tracking Test: Marilynne Manguba reported the Tracking Test is Sunday, September 23. Tracks will be plotted and set on September 22 is the test. Volunteers are needed to help with the trial and to set tracks – training will be available.

Education and Communications: Marilynne Manguba reported the Snake River Animal Shelter is holding their annual Mutt Strut on August 18th. We will be presenting a demo and some agility equipment will be available for volunteers to help people to try. If you can help contact Marilynne. This is during the obedience and rally trial.

A short demo and presentation on dog care and bite prevention will be given at the Snake River Roaring Youth Jam on August 8 and 9 at 1:00 at the Greenbelt Stage by the river (stage is located near the roundabout on Memorial). If you can help contact Marilynne.

Registration for August classes and others are online. Please sign up if you are interested in taking a class.

Scent Work Training: Lois Olson reported beginning classes will begin Oct 1 and advanced classes begin Oct 2, classes will be held for 6-week session.

Obedience Training: Marilynne Manguba reported the fall classes will be starting earlier 5:30 and 6:30 because of daylight.

Scent work trial: Mary Ann Igoe reported the Scent work trial will be held Dec 1 & 2. Working on getting a facility, we do have a judge.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business: None

Membership Applications Approved: New Members voted in Ken & Marilyn Tuck and Alisha & Lindy Thompson.

Aubrey Parry moved for adjournment. Donna Whitham seconded. Passed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Location of next club meeting: Tautphaus Park Lilac Circle 6:00 pm on August 16th. Tacos will be served after setup of the Obedience and Rally rings.