

# Greening Your Pet's Paw Print



In a society where green living is becoming more and more common, it's about time we gave our furry companions the chance to do their part. Below are some tips to help your pets lead greener (& healthier) lives.

## Pet Population & Adoption

According to The Humane Society of the United States, between 6 and 8 million dogs and cats enter U.S. shelters every year, and roughly half of them are put down due to lack of homes. You can help by spaying or neutering your pet or by adopting your next pet from a local shelter. Keep your pets safe by keeping them on a leash or within a fenced area when outside and make sure to keep ID tags and vaccines current. This goes for both dogs and cats. Cats should not be permitted to roam freely outside. Feral and free-ranging cats prey on millions of birds and small animals annually and have a negative impact on the population of these species.

## Food & Treats

When it comes to selecting a food for your dog or cat, choose a brand with a large amount of organic, local, and natural ingredients. Organic food is produced without the use of conventional pesticides or synthetic fertilizers and organic farms are committed to soil and water conservation and environmental sustainability. Although slightly more expensive, these brands contain better quality ingredients...better for the environment and healthier for your pet! Check with your local pet store or veterinarian for advice on switching your pet's food or try making homemade treats and food! Many recipes are available and you can control the type and quality of ingredients! You might also consider growing organic catnip for your favorite feline!

## Play Time & Toys

Look for cat and dog toys that are made from natural materials like hemp or recycled materials like plastic or rubber. Purchase durable toys so they last longer and reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills. Never underestimate the value of a twist tie, scrap piece of ribbon or yarn, balled up piece of scrap paper, or a cardboard box. Many pets find these pieces of "trash" to be fun toys! When dressing to impress or for a nice long walk, look for collars and leashes made from natural materials and clothing made from recycled fibers or organic cotton.

## Potty Time

**Scoopin' Poop:** Make sure to cleanup after your dog during walks, at the park, and even in your backyard. Dog poop can wash down storm drains during rainfalls and pollute local waterways. Consider using biodegradable bags instead of plastic, since plastic bags take a long time to decompose. You could also install a "doggy toilet" in your backyard, which uses enzymes to breakdown the waste.

**Kitty Litter:** When selecting a kitty litter, consider alternatives to clay. The USGS estimates that 85% of the 2.5 million tons of clay mined annually in the U.S. is used for animal waste. The clay used to manufacture kitty litter is strip mined from the earth, wiping out acres of land and devastating local ecosystems. After used, this litter is thrown in the garbage to last forever in local landfills. Natural alternatives include recycled newspaper pellets, pine, and corn based litters.

## Bed & Bath

Only bathe your pet when necessary. This will conserve water and keep your pet's skin from becoming too dry. Because shampoos, pest repellants and other products are absorbed into your pet's skin, licked off, or rinsed down the drain, only use products that are non-toxic, fragrance free, organic, biodegradable, and free of preservatives. Tuck your furry friend in for a good night's sleep (or catnap) in a bed made from recycled fibers or natural materials, which are just as soft as others and better for the earth.

