

BE GREAT.

LOOKIN' GOOD Bid Farewell to Fleas, Naturally

Indulge in these
pest-fighting and fur
loving ingredients.

by Melissa L. Kauffman

During the summer, what stands in the way of our pups and kitties feeling their most beautiful, healthy, and luxurious selves? Fleas!

"Fleas love dogs and cats because they are simply easy targets," said integrative veterinarian Carol Osborne, D.V.M., of the Chagrin Falls Pet Clinic in Ohio. "Fleas are not species specific and will get a blood meal anywhere they can find one. Fleas only jump on dogs, cats, and people long enough to get a meal, then drop down to the ground and lay more eggs."

We do have an arsenal of products at

our disposal to fight them, including those with chemicals that pet lovers find hard to understand or even pronounce. This is why some pet lovers prefer more natural solutions.

Even with natural solutions, research the ingredients so you have a clear understanding of their effectiveness. Some repel fleas, some kill fleas, and others kill the eggs.

"Fleas enjoy long life cycles," Dr.

Homemade DOG REMEDIES

by Dr. Carol Osborne, D.V.M.

Here's a holistic, herbal flea remedy you can make at home:

- 2 cups of fresh rosemary or fresh peppermint
- Mix with 5 quarts of warm water
- Steep solution for 30 minutes
- Let cool then begin dipping

And if your dog still itches ...

A holistic, herbal remedy for itching. (These herbs can be taken internally or used externally on dogs.)

- 5 drops of licorice root
- 5 drops of dandelion root
- 5 drops of cat's claw
- Mix all three together
- Give 5 drops of the final solution by mouth once a day for 14 days in a row.

Check out Dr. Carol Osborne online at chagrinfallsclinic.com, or follow her on Facebook.



Mint

Osborne said. "One female flea can live up to a year and a half; she will lay 20 eggs at once that can reproduce up to thousands of babies. Fleas can jump four to five feet and have hard outer shells, so it makes killing them difficult."

Today, many companies make natural ingredient shampoos and sprays formulated for dogs or specifically for cats. If you are willing to do some extra work, you can also find homemade spray and shampoo recipes online. (Check with your vet to make sure the ingredients are safe to use and if they need to be diluted. Also watch your dog for allergic reaction.)

"Shampoos made out of chrysanthemum flowers are most effective against fleas and are safe for dogs and cats," Dr. Osborne said. "Neem is an herb that is also effective to repel fleas — available commercially as a shampoo or spray."

Ingredients you'll see in natural flea solutions (store bought or homemade) are lemongrass, citronella grass, eucalyptus, lavender, neem expelled oil, diatomaceous earth, lemon oil, apple cider vinegar, and nutritional yeast.

Some natural solutions, such as essential oils, are safe to use on your dogs as long as you properly dilute them — but some are never safe for use on cats. Do your homework. Just because it's natural, doesn't mean it's always safe.

To work on natural prevention in your backyard, try nematodes. Live beneficial nematodes are microscopic insects that attack and kill fleas, but they won't hurt other beneficial insects like earthworms and ladybugs.

Melissa L. Kauffman is the Sr. Group editor of Lucky Puppy, Dogster, and Catster magazines. She lives in North Carolina with her husband and rescued furry and feathered family.