

# Outside Pets

Through my years of rescue it is hard to understand the rationale of one looking for a pet to live outside. Growing up with Irish Setters, my parents always kept our pets inside. Whether laying across the air vent or sprawled out in front of the fireplace, they were family and stayed inside - with the rest of their family - safe and sound. As I type this and look out across my room, I see very happy labs - two on the bed snoring their night away, two on their Orvis dognests and two more at either side of my feet. It is hard to understand how one can think that any dog would prefer a life of backyard solitary when compared to a night of family fun in front of the tv. Sadly, there are the few who disagree and feel that a life outside is far better than the fate of someone in the shelter. We have also been told that because we require our labs to be indoor pets that we are hurting them more than helping them. That if we would adopt to a family that has a fenced in yard and doghouse we have saved another and be able to make room for one more. Lucky for the labs that enter our program - we do not follow that belief and will always put quality in front of quantity. With that said, we'd like to share an article that was provided by the Michigan Humane Society - we couldn't have said it better!



## Outside Dogs

*- Michigan Humane Society*

Many potential adopters ask "Is this an 'Outside' dog?" Our answer is, "Not anymore." We attempt to place dogs with people who understand the need of a dog to be a part of the family. Even thousands of years ago when man and all animals lived "outside", there was a cave or den for shelter, and man and dogs lived in small groups or "packs". The truth is, times have changed but we and the dogs haven't. Both humans and dogs are "pack" animals, we do not tend to be solitary. Domesticated, companion dogs no longer have packs of other dogs to live with, so dogs now need to be members of human families or packs. Furthermore, both people and dogs are "den" animals. This is the reason that dogs can be housebroken. Dogs want shelter in a safe, secure den - your home - and they want their den to be clean.

Obviously dogs can be forced to live outside, alone and away from their families. But to force this kind of life on a dog is one of the worst things you can do to him. Such a life goes against a dog's two most basic instincts: the pack and the den. If you have any doubts about these ideas, think of all the whining, barking, clawing dogs you have seen tied up alone outside. Dogs trying desperately to get their human families' attention, and then just giving up to become hyperactive, listless,

fearful, or vicious when the stress of enforced solitude becomes too much to cope with.

The rationale given by people who permanently keep their dogs outside is that they will spend time with the pet outside. Even the most well-meaning pet owner does not spend significant time outside, particularly when it is raining or cold. Consequently, under the best of circumstances for the outside dog, a bowl of food and water hastily shoved before him, a quick pat given, and his owner, his WORLD is gone, leaving the animal to spend another 22 or 23 hours alone.

A dog brings you the gifts of steadfast devotion, abiding love, and joyful companionship. Unless you can responsibly accept a dog's offer of these great gifts, please do not get a dog. If you already have a dog, perhaps this article will help you to see things from his point of view, and possibly motivate you to change your relationship with him. A sad, lonely, bewildered dog, kept outside, wondering why he cannot be with his family, brings only sadness and unhappiness to the world.