

OUTSIDE DOGS



Dogs are social animals who crave human companionship. That's why they thrive and behave better when living indoors with their pack -- their human family members. This is substantiated by the experience of rescue volunteers and shelter workers as well as canine behaviorists, trainers, veterinarians and animal welfare associations nationwide.

Dogs are also "den" animals, meaning they like to have a safe, quiet, and secure place to sleep, rest, and hang out, such as your house. Your dog has a wonderful ability to learn and therefore to be house trained. A dog who resides more in your house than in the yard is a much happier, content animal, because of the security of a den and your companionship.

Obviously dogs can be forced to live outside, continually alone and away from their families, but to force this kind of life on a dog is one of the worst and most inhumane things you can do to a dog. Such a life goes against the dog's two most basic instincts, the "pack" and the "den".

If you have any doubts about these ideas, think about all the whining, barking, clawing dogs you have seen desperately trying to get to their human families, and then just giving up to become overactive, or listless, or fearful, or vicious when the stress of enforced solitude becomes too much to cope with.

Unless you can accept a dog as a member of your family, joining in your activities and sitting in your living room, **DO NOT GET A DOG!** Both you and the dog you **DO NOT GET** will be much happier. The dog you keep continually outside will be miserable, and you will have the annoyance of dealing with a miserable animal on your property.

Large dogs are just as much in need of attentive human companionship as small dogs. In fact, Shepherds, Setters, and Labs and Golden Retrievers are among the most dependent breeds.

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, cold or hot. 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, unconditional 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.

Adapted from Michigan Humane Society