

Wilmette Pet Center

"The place for people who love pets"

The seasons have changed, and with the mercury dropping we have to make some changes – longer shirts, pants, light jackets. We thought it was time to go over some tips for our pets, from the common sense to a few things you may never thought of (and not just for dogs, too).



Dogs: No pet should stay outside indefinitely. For dogs that spend time outside, provide plenty of water and a shelter where they can get out of the wind.

As we prepare our cars for the cooler weather, be very careful to not leave any antifreeze accessible to the dog. It is both very tasty and very toxic to dogs and cats.

It's getting darker earlier, so don't forget to wear something reflective when taking Ramses for a walk.



Since autumn is the time when many people make home repairs and preparations for winter, it's a good time to go over your dog's equipment. Check their leashes, collars, and harnesses for wear and tear, replacing anything worn or broken. Check all fences and runs for loose spots or holes, before Wrigley gets out in really bad weather.

Fleas and ticks can be very active in the fall months, as they look for hosts to get them through the winter. Be sure to keep up your spot treatment, check for ticks after long walks, and wash bedding and vacuum pet areas frequently to stop them from wintering inside your house. See our complete series [Understanding Pest Insects](#) and [Treating and Preventing Pests](#) for more information.

One of the biggest changes for your dog, and a big challenge for you, is their new winter coat, as this is a time for them to shed their summer coat and grow a thicker one. There are a few things to do to help keep it under control and stop all the hair all over your house. Frequent brushing, especially with a de-grooming brush such as the FURminator, helps remove the loose hair before it falls out. Add fiber to their food, and digestive enzymes – the enzymes break them down any hair they swallow and the fiber helps push it out. For more info, check out our [Preventing hairball care sheet here](#). Many of our customers will schedule a visit to their favorite groomer to have their dog's coat blown out and cleaned up in preparation for the season.



The new season can be harsh on their skin and coats; Salmon oil, like Grizzly Salmon Oil is your best friend, as it helps sooth dry, irritated skin, and those Omega-3 fatty acids make their new coat beautiful.

Dogs are not the only animal friend sharing our lives. Here are some tips for the rest of our friends:

Cats: Outdoor cats will often climb into the motors of cars to stay warm. If cats tend to roam your neighborhood, bang on the hood or honk the horn before starting your car.

Don't forget they're shedding their summer coats, too, so add some fiber and digestive enzymes to their diet, and give the frequent brushing to help them shed their hair easily and to help prevent hairballs. They can also benefit from some salmon oil in their food. For more info, check out our [Preventing hairball care sheet here](#).

Cats also face the same problems, especially with fleas. Be sure to use the appropriate treatment for you cat, as dog medications can be quite toxic to our feline friends. See our complete series [Understanding Pest Insects](#) and [Treating and Preventing Pests](#) for more information.

Bettas: While your little betta buddy has been doing great all summer, you may start to notice him slowing down and getting lazy. Adding a small, shatter proof heater to his bowl will help keep him warm and active – they are tropical fish and are healthier with the heat.

Small animals: If you keep your rabbit in a hutch outside, be ready to bring them into a sheltered space, like a garage, when the weather turns bitterly cold. Provide plenty of hay and bedding for them to burrow into to stay warm. If you have a rabbit or guinea pig, be eco friendly by using their soiled bedding as mulch and compost. Wood bedding such as shredded aspen can be used as mulch, protecting plant's roots. Paper bedding can be used as mulch or composted; rototilling it into the ground next year gives you great soil. You can soak soiled bedding in water overnight, strain, and then use to give plants their fall feeding of fertilizer, as it is loaded with nitrates and ammonia. It's great for indoor plants, too.

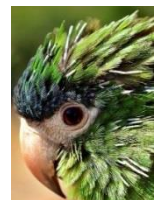
Hedgehogs originated from the deserts and steppes of Africa, and tend to want to slow down during winter months. Unless they are properly fattened and prepared for hibernation, it can be dangerous for them to try to hibernate. Counter this by adding a reptile heat lamp to their cage.



Reptiles: This time of year many reptiles may slow down, eat very little, and sleep all the time. Reptiles can respond to the decrease in the amount and intensity of light by brumating, a form of hibernation. Like hedgehogs, unless they are prepared for it and fattened up, brumating can be dangerous, as they're expending energy even as they are dormant, so unless you're an experienced hobbyist, prevent them from doing this by increasing the wattage of all their heat bulbs. Make sure that they have been eating well and defecating normally.



Birds and parrots: For most birds fall is the second big molt of year, where new feathers grow and push out old ones. This is the time of year we hear how surprised Polly's parents were when she flew right off their shoulders! Bring them in for a wing (and nail) trim before you get a surprise, too. Help reduce the irritation the pin feathers cause by misting your bird. It's especially important to be sure their cage is out of any cold drafts.



The decrease in sunlight at this time of the year can be a downer for us, but imagine what it's like for your tropical bird! Adding on a UV bulb in a dome can help regulate your bird's mood and feeding schedule. It can help alleviate depression and regulate their mood, so if Nacho is not playing with her toys, consider bringing the sun inside. Placing the light on a simple timer is an easy way to make sure your bird gets plenty of those needed rays.

With a few special considerations, you and all your pets can safely enjoy what some feel is the best time of the year.