

## Article 4

### Holiday reminders from the Canine Corner

As we make preparations for the Holiday season, there are a few things that we should keep in mind to make sure the season is healthy and stress free for our canine companions.

A number of Holiday plants are poisonous, and should be kept out of nibble range from our pets. These include mistletoe and poinsettia, as well as some other common houseplants such as aloe vera. When we have the holiday treats out, make sure that your pet does not eat foods such as chocolate and even apples (the seeds are poisonous). Just as we are trying not to overindulge over the Holidays, we should also limit the amount of treats we give our pets. New foods or just too much of a good thing can cause a stomach upset and vomiting. And make sure to supervise your pet around the Christmas tree, since he may be curious about the big, new decoration. If you use a preservative in the Christmas tree water, make sure that your pet does not have access to it, since it too is poisonous.

Many times the family decides to get a new pet for the Holiday season. Although well intentioned, this is generally not the best time for a new addition to your family. It tends to be a time of little routine, lots of people coming and going, and will make it more difficult for you to begin housebreaking and training for your new pet. It's important to establish routines for your pet, and this may be very difficult right now, especially if you have Holiday travel planned. Instead, put a stuffed dog under the tree for the children, with the promise of the "live version" after the New Year.

With all of the shopping, decorating, and entertaining, and the stress of trying to do it all, make some time to stop and relax! Grab your pet, sit down with him, close your eyes and gently pet him. Your blood pressure will lower, you'll relax and the bond you have with your pet or pets will be enhanced immensely. After all, this is why we have pets.

Have a happy and safe holiday and a health, prosperous New Year.

Editor's note: Gus Marnel is a Registered Professional Trainer and Owner of K-9 Communications

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