

Guilt-Free Dog Product Guide

Selected green products for owners who want to reduce their pet's carbon footprint.

By Tom Barthel

Snuggly Recycled Polar Fleece Bed

Used milk jugs and plastic containers that once littered landfills have shown up in the most unlikely places. With new recycling technologies, even popular polar fleece items for dogs turn trash into treasure. Green accessories, made from these comfy fibers, are the result of molten plastics stretched thin into tiny threads, which can be woven or pressed into snuggly materials. To get your dog into the green groove, look for a bed made of this post-consumer fleece, like the ones made by Harry Barker, rectangular bed from \$110. 800-444-2779; www.harrybarker.com

Back-to-Basic Boots

Green products for dogs don't have to be made of twigs and berries. Earth-friendly products can also come from companies that strive for minimal packaging, energy-efficient manufacturing processes, and tough, finished products that last for years. Products like RuffWear's Bark'n Boots can help reduce your pet's carbon footprint while protecting his paws from the elements. Conservative and tough, from \$49.95, these hikers conserve. 888-783-3932; www.ruffwear.com

Whip Up Something Organic

Organic ingredients help nourish a green and happy dog. Try cooking up a batch of all-natural treats with a new cookbook as your guide. Choose the best ingredients in the right proportions, and you'll have your pooch wagging with joy, while doing what's right for the environment at the same time. Check out "The Organic Dog Biscuit Cookbook," by Jessica Disbrow Talley and Eric Talley (Cider Mill Press, 2008), for \$14.95. 207-967-8232; www.cidermillpress.com

Recycled Tug Toys

Plastic soda and water bottles take up an increasing amount of space in our oceans and landfills. If only they could be repurposed into tough tug toys for your dog. Now they can. Common trash rescued for your dog's enjoyment offers a great (and green) option. Melted and stretched, soda bottles create tiny threads that can be woven into fabric and braided in to great strong toys, like the Twist from West Paw Design, from \$9.50. 800-443-5567; www.westpawdesign.com

Sustainable Hemp Gear

Hemp, like bamboo, grows fast, without heavy fertilizer requirements. It takes few nutrients from the Earth and requires minimal irrigation. Its fibers can be harvested and made into a variety of sustainable products from clothing to pet supplies. Collars and leashes made of hemp help your dog get in on the go-green craze. Check out a few styles from The Good Dog Company, starting at \$17.99. 866-433-6426; www.thegooddogcompany.com

Veggie Rawhides

Guilt-free and green can also apply when describing treats. Dried sweet potato alternatives to rawhide chews conserve the Earth's agricultural resources while providing a satisfying treat packed with essential vitamins, minerals, and potent antioxidants. For a sure-to-please, holistic treat check out Sam's Yams Veggie Rawhides, from Front Porch Pets, starting at \$4.99. 800-922-2968; www.samsyams.com

Tom Barthel is a Michigan-based master gardener and freelance writer specializing in pet and gardening topics. His latest book is "Canines Gone Green" (BowTie Press, 2009).

What Earth-friendly dog-owner habits do you have? Share your ideas on our forums!

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for ways to be a green dog owner.