

Puppy Palooza Organizers Expect Large Crowds

Two-day event will feature dog contests, prize giveaways, and discounted microchipping and vaccinations.

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What began as a koi and wine festival has developed into a two-day dog event centered on ponds. The first Puppy Palooza, to take place at Lilypons Water Gardens in Adamstown, Md., features dog contests, prize giveaways, and discounted microchipping and rabies vaccinations.

The event organizers, Chesapeake DockDogs, chose the water garden business as the location because of the ample pond, said Margaret Koogle, owner of Lilypons Water Gardens. She says the pond is several acres and ideal for Puppy Palooza's main event: Big Air, a competition that showcases a dog's jumping abilities.

During the contest, a dog jumps off a dock after a toy that's tossed into the pond, Koogle said. In Big Air, judges use a tape measure to determine the longest jump. In Extreme Vertical, another similar contest, dogs compete to determine who jumps the highest.

The contests take place all day and all dogs are welcome. The winning dogs move on to the final round on Sunday.

An animal hospital will provide discounted rabies vaccines and microchipping. Food and merchandise booths are also part of the event.

Previous festivals at the 250-acre site have attracted crowds of 2,000 people, Koogle said, and she expects a big turnout for Puppy Palooza.

"I'm sure that it will bring people who are interested in the dog event and may consider a water garden," she said. "We have staff trained to help customers who want to plan a water garden from start to finish."

Koogle says she would like to see the event turn into an annual tradition for people with or without dogs. "It's a great opportunity for people to get out and enjoy the outdoors with the whole family, and pets included," she said. "Even if people don't have a dog people just enjoy watching."

Puppy Palooza takes place Saturday and Sunday, May 17 and 18. For more information, visit www.chesapeakedockdogs.com