

Goats: A Perfect Pet



Even as pets, goats require a lot of attention and care. PHOTO/Mary Beth Sallee

By Mary Beth Sallee

Cats and dogs have always been pet favorites, but there's one animal making its way up the line of popularity: goats.

Goats are one of the oldest domesticated species around the world. For decades, goats have been raised on farms for milk and meat, used for aid in clearing fields, and also used in making items such as goat milk soap. Although they are traditionally thought of as just another animal on the farm, goats also make smart and lovable pets.

Bringing home goats requires a lot of planning to keep them safe and healthy. Below are tips and suggestions if you want to make a goat part of your family.

Shelter

Goats need a safe shelter from the elements and a safe place to bunk down. An already existing barn is the ideal shelter. However, a storage shed that can be purchased from a home improvement store also makes great shelter depending on

how many goats you choose to have. Many also choose to build their own shelter, providing the opportunity to design a shed that best fits your goats' needs.

Fence Security

Goats are very smart, curious animals and often use any chance they get to wander. In addition, predators such as coyotes may also try to find a way to reach your goats. Therefore, it's very important to have secure fencing that will keep your goats in while also keeping predators out.

Goat-Proofing Yard and Pasture

Goats are natural browsers and while doing so will often eat along the way. Although it is common belief that "goats can eat anything", some plants are so poisonous for goats that even a few leaves can make your goat extremely sick or even kill them. Common weeds and cultivated plants that are toxic to goats include bracken fern, poke weed, foxglove, lily of the valley, kale, potato, and azalea. Cyanide-

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