



HILLSIDE VETERINARY HOSPITAL
Dr J. Chan, Dr G. Newman, Dr S. Abrioux & Associates
www.hillsidevethospital.com

Spear Grass

What You Should Know

Spear grass is a plant found in many places in and around Victoria, including a number of areas often frequented by dogs such as Dallas Road and the UVic dog field. Early in the spring it does not pose much threat, but as the summer approaches and the grass dries out, it can become a hazard to your pet.

Spear grass awns carry the seeds. They have a sharp point with fine, hair-like stems that spread back from the point. The awns can burrow between the toes of dogs, especially those with furry paws, and can migrate through the tissues of the leg. Because of the shape of the grass, it cannot back out the way it came and so can only move forward. Often, owners will notice their pet licking at their paw, and possibly will see signs of infection as well. Frequently, sedation is required to search for a draining tract and hopefully locate the grass and remove it from the pet's body.

Spear grass awns are also often found in pet's ears. If it moves down the ear canal, it can become stuck leading to severe irritation of the canal. It also often requires sedation to pull out the grass without damaging the ear drum.

Anytime your dog has been in long, dry grassy areas, please check between the toes and in the ears for any plant material and remove it immediately before it has a chance to become a problem. Prevention is easy and will keep your furry friend more comfortable in the coming summer months!

