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56 – DOG WORLD, October 11, 2013

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# Living with dogs

Coat problems and a mysterious deposit

by Jane Lilley



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A HEARTFELT plea for help and/or advice comes from Sarah Jones in Wiltshire, whose now five-year-old castrated orange Pomeranian's problems with his coat started in January last year.

Ted has been suffering from a systematic hair loss on his tail and back of thighs where the skin has now discoloured to a very dark greyish black. This has now spread across his shoulders and, more recently, around the neck with the skin here going dusty grey on the way to black. The skin itself is soft and does not appear to be itchy except when hair occasionally starts growing through the bald patches.

His coat, which his owner describes as having been of a wonderfully bright colour and typical in texture up until his troubles began, is now very woolly as opposed to having his former straight harsh outer coat with soft fluffy undercoat.

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supplement, and feeding him on a BARF diet as well as raw sprats twice a week but nothing seems to be helping the situation.

Ted is extremely well and happy in himself in every other way with his head and legs covered in hair like a normal Pomeranian. Sarah comments that he had a huge moult at 18 months when he 'lost everything' and, two months later his skin went back to orange and a beautiful coat came through. However, he has never had a full moult since.

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anyone has any other suggestion to help or even to share experience with this kind of problem, do please let me know so that I can pass on the glad tidings to Sarah through the column. I know she

Her now coming up five-year-old brindle and white particolour Whippet developed an oval bald patch by her spine about an inch-and-a-half across, which neither itched nor irritated. The vet thought at first that this might be ringworm but this was disproved and he then offered steroid cream, which Mary refused. Instead she chose to use

remarkable'. Give me a call if you would like the contact number for Karen Ruggles, who makes Ruggle-It cream.

**XXXX**

to say the least, mystery at home and wonder if any clever readers might be able to throw any light on this?

Every morning for the past few weeks we have woken to find a smallish, almost black 'offering' on the front lawn or, on occasion, in our nearest neighbours' front borders; at worst whatever creature produces this has an upset tummy! First of all we thought it must be a cat but then realised on closer inspection that it hardly smelt of anything and contained a number of seeds, added to which Henry has no interest whatsoever in any of the blackish piles so the mystery deepens.

Julia, my daughter, went out and bought a rather expensive cat deterrent, which requires special batteries and gives off a high pitched beep whenever anything crosses its beam. She has more recently bought six cat repellers, which come in the form of small environmentally friendly strong citrus smell with the directions that they should be stuck in the ground at a metre apart. Added to this I carefully positioned two life-size black metal cats with bright blue glass eyes that we bought two years' earlier from some catalogue or other.

The result, so far, has been that whatever creature it is seems to actively like the lemon smell, the friendly presence of the glaring metal cats and the little beeps while it continues about its business!

It has been suggested that a hedgehog might be using our lawn as its lavatory but the dark deposits would seem to be not only too large, about the size of a Tibetan Spaniel just for instance, but I was under the impression that hedgehogs were keener on a meat and nut type of diet rather than seeds.

A fox has also come under suspicion but anything to do with fox smells horrific as many good dog owners can testify and, again, seeds are not something they would choose to eat.

Can anyone think of another creature of any kind or species that might be guilty? If so, do let me know as we have run out of ideas and are not prepared to sit up all night to discover the identity of our mystery prowler.

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*...whatever creature it is seems to actively like the lemon smell, the friendly presence of the glaring metal cats and the little beeps while it continues about its business!*