

## Checking for ticks:

*The following are some tips from one of the best walkers we've ever had, Chris Gatterdam.*

- First look (no need to touch yet) the dog over at places where ticks tend to latch on: this includes on top of earflaps, around the collar and neck, and also back around shoulder.
- When trying to identify a tick you may notice a rise in the fur (such as something protruding from the skin) or perhaps a little bit patch of worn hair (meaning where the dog has been itching his/her so much it starts to pull hair out around it)
- There are many kinds of tick species that can cause anything from a rash up to paralysis so ticks shouldn't be taken lightly. Some things to notice could be is the dog itching themselves in a particular location more often than other spots? Is it trying to get to an area to bite?
- Next, it's very helpful to have a "hands-on" approach with your dogs. Hands-on means exactly what it says-hands are on the dogs fur. By doing this you find it easier to identify ticks and the dog becomes a lot more trusting and compliant to your hands.
- "Combing" the dog-this isn't physically using a comb-this is with your hands: I think its helpful to start at the head of the dog and work yourself dorsally, to the back, of the dog, this way you don't lose track of where you have already located thus saving time!
- You want to think of this as "kneading", like kneading dough. You want to be meticulous and accurate with your hands and not miss any spots-starting from the head use your hand and place with palm down and just begin a sweeping motion towards the back (as if you were just petting the dog.) This helps to locate any hard bumps in the skin- a quick sign to locating a tick. After doing this about 2 times begin the kneading technique- I like to think of this as a "dog massage" working your hands from the front and then to the back.
- If you don't feel anything hard or jutting out from the skin (keep in mind you may find skin growths which are not ticks!) then well done! No ticks for you!
- If you do feel a hard shell, usually pretty small in circumference, you will also notice little legs with the head digging into the skin-its best to first remember the spot that you found it so you can locate it again-find yourself a pair of tweezers and use these to pull the tick out-if you can grab it by the head do that but you may only be able to grab by the body; *do not* pull hard cause you want the entire tick to come out especially the head which will be clasped onto the skin.

