

Life in LAMORINDA

FOXTAILS

By Mona Miller, DVM



Foxtails can be found throughout Lamorinda Photo Andy Schreck

Foxtails present a significant health hazard to animals throughout California, from late spring through fall. It is impossible to miss this wild annual grass if one goes out into any un-landscaped area. The name refers to the bushy spike arrangement at the top of the grass that resembles the tail of a fox – it is a cluster of spikelets attached to a main stem. Each cluster comes off the plant easily, and tiny barbs clasp onto material (socks, fur, etc). Then, the sharp point at the base of the cluster allows it to move forward into the material. This is the plant's adaptation for dispersing its seeds throughout an area. For most wild animals that live in the same native environments that foxtails are found, their fur is short enough that the foxtail does not migrate into the skin, but is transported and dropped off, allowing for successful seed dispersal. However, for our domestic pets we often find that the foxtail point will migrate into tissue and thereby cause problems.

I have seen foxtails in every part of an animal's body. Symptoms are related to the body part affected. Some areas are easier than others to find and remove the foxtails – such as in-between toes, the undersides of paws, ear canals and conjunctival lining of the eyes. Even in these areas, though, there may be significant pain associated with the foxtail (and its resultant inflammation and infection) that the dog may need sedation or

sil area.

Foxtails in cats are much less common, possibly because cats are meticulous cleaners, but I have seen foxtails in cats' eyes and ear canals.

When a foxtail gets embedded into tissue, it is only a matter of time before it will start to penetrate inside. Foxtails can form abscesses in the fat tissue under the skin, and also inside the lungs and abdomen. Obviously, it is best to address a foxtail problem before it has advanced inside the body and requires subsequent surgical diagnosis and removal.

Additional information can be found at www.veterinarypartner.com and www.cvma.net.

Dr. Mona S. Miller lives in Lafayette with her 3 year old son and her yellow Labrador Retriever. She has worked at Four Seasons Animal Hospital in Lafayette since moving here in 2001. She attended Cal as an undergrad, and received her DVM from U.C. Davis. She can be reached at Four Seasons, 938-7700, or by email to MonaSDVM@aol.com.



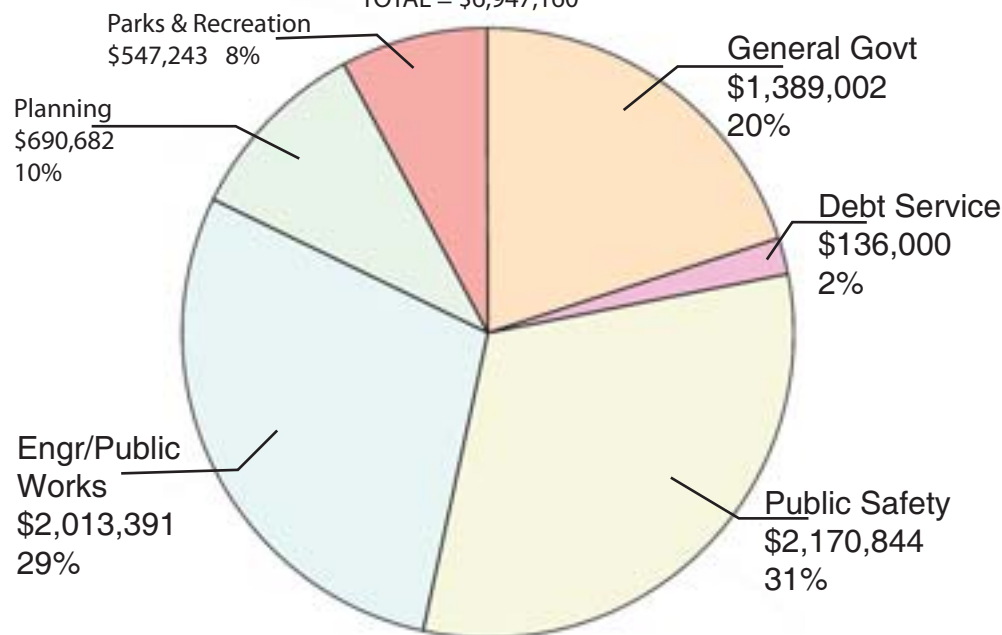
Keep your dog on leash while walking trails

The Reality of Moraga's Financial Situation

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FY2008-09 PROPOSED EXPENDITURES BY GOVERNMENT FUNCTION

TOTAL = \$6,947,160



Streit believes that Moraga's financial state is not catastrophic. She explained that many towns in the Bay Area are suffering far greater circumstances than Moraga; the Town has little debt, its bond rating is essentially AAA and all bargaining units are covered in the budget.

The worrisome part of the equation is the growth of expenses while resources languish. "The cost of labor, supplies and materials keeps growing," states Streit, "while our revenue stream is more or less stagnant." The projected deficit for 2009/2010 is about \$130,000; it jumps to \$210,000 in 2010/2011, \$460,000 in 2011/2012 and \$550,000 in 2012/2013. That is, before Streit makes her recommendations and before hiring additional police officers.

"One of the problems of our revenue stream is that we do not have a diversified revenue base and are very vulnerable to State take-away," Streit

goes on to explain that 40% of the Town's revenue comes from property taxes. The Town gets 5 cents from every dollar paid in property tax, but the tax is unpredictable and fluctuates beyond Moraga's control. The problem is the same with Moraga's second most important revenue stream, sales tax, where only one penny on the dollar stays local. "We need to look at sources of revenue that will allow us to control our income stream," believes Streit.

At this time, working on savings and trying to find money for additional police officers, Streit is pessimistic: "If no other income sources are found in the short term, the reality is that we will have to do lay-offs." This would necessarily mean a lower level of service for residents, such as longer periods of wait time for permits, less maintenance of public grounds and fewer recreation options.

The Council favors a dy-

namic approach. A Council Member Ken Chew put it, "I support looking at ways to cut expenses and the possibility of a 'Revenue Enhancement Task Force' to explore ways to increase revenue."

The City of Orinda recently launched such a task force. Mayor Lynda Deschambault proposed that a similar body be formed in Moraga. "Rather than focusing on cutting programs and opportunities, it makes more sense to focus our energy on identifying ways to increase our revenue generation." She would like to see a brainstorming process where different options would be studied, including returning permitting and processing to the Town, adding a business license fee, additional revenue from events and recreation, grants or selling of property. Tashiro recently met with Orinda to discuss the project, which can only happen if the Town Council makes it so.

Management Changes Tune for 24-Hour Members

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"I have previously expressed my frustration with the conditions to the staff who are working there, and have been assured by them that the problems would be remedied by the opening of the new facility, and that all current 24-Hour Fitness members would be able to use the new facility under their existing memberships. ...nowhere in any materials provided by the Club, or in any discussion with any employee of the Moraga Club, has it ever been stated that there would be an additional charge to existing members to use the new facility; in fact, quite the opposite has been represented."

She continued, "I am very upset that you have decided that existing 24-Hour Fitness members will have to pay an additional monthly charge to use the new Moraga facility, notwithstanding the fact that it does not have a pool or any additional sports courts. The new facility, while I certainly hope that it will have decent air conditioning, better equipment, and more space than the current standard Moraga facility, should not be designated as a 'super sport' club, nor do I believe that any existing 24-Hour Fitness member should be required to pay more to use that facility."

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