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Keep Fido in check with a dog-proof fence

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Before technology devised a simpler way to confine dogs in backyards, pet owners had to build costly hard fences. But with the advent of in-ground fencing systems that give your dog the freedom to roam in the safety of a yard, that's all history. For the homeowner, an in-ground fence eliminates the chore and cost of maintaining a hard fence that requires paint or stain.

An in-ground fence system includes antenna wire, a transmitter and a battery-powered receiver and collar. When the pet approaches the buried wire, the receiver delivers a warning sound and mild correction or shock if the pet crosses the boundary. It doesn't hurt, and it usually happens only during the training period.

An electronic fence for a 1/4-acre lot (approximately 500 linear feet) with a second electronic boundary within the yard that's off limits (like a garden bed), costs about \$790. You can buy a kit for about \$95 and save 88 percent by doing it yourself. The job involves digging holes, laying wire, mounting a transformer, installing the receiver and connecting it all together. You can rent a power lawn edger to eliminate digging. Many systems include a training video for your dog, the final piece of the project.

You'll find do-it-yourself kits and installation information at Web sites like www.petsafe.net.

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