



**Why Green  
Nutrition?**  
**Exploring the  
Nutritional  
Benefits of  
Wheat Grass  
for Pets**

*By Marty Walls and  
Catherine Hoffmann*



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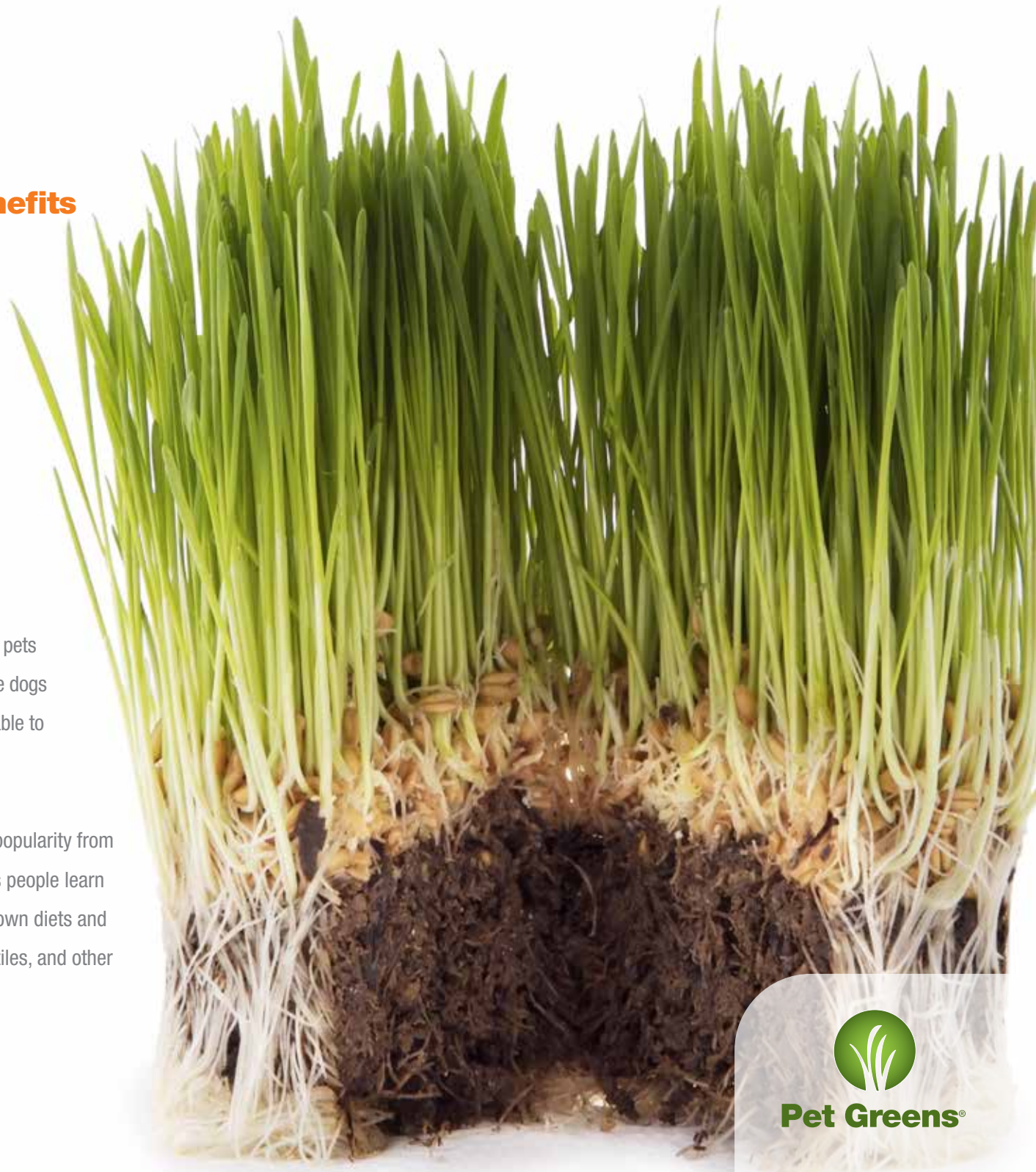
## Why Green Nutrition? Exploring the Nutritional Benefits of Wheat Grass for Pets

Have you ever wondered why your cat can't resist nibbling on your favorite houseplants? Or why your dog tugs at the leash to chomp on a mouthful of lawn grass? While this quirky behavior may surprise some pet owners, experts on nutrition and pet care say your furry companions may be making attempts to say:

*"We want our greens!"*

OK, so your dog or cat may not be able explain these seemingly odd indulgences, but one theory suggests that pets are instinctively attracted to chlorophyll-rich plants. While dogs are considered omnivores and cats carnivores, both are able to digest plants and utilize their nutrients.<sup>1</sup>

Over the past two decades, wheat grass has surged in popularity from juice bars and home garden shops to local pet stores as people learn about the powerful nutrients of this leafy green in their own diets and in those of their pets – from dogs and cats to birds, reptiles, and other small animals.



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## Survey: U.S. Consumers Value Green Nutrition for Themselves and Their Pets

Green nutrition is now the latest way for pet owners to “go green,” according to a national survey commissioned by Bell Rock Growers – the pet industry’s pioneer supplier of green nutrition products. The survey of 640 dog and cat owners across the U.S. shows consumers are eager to provide their animal companions with more green nutrition options. In doing so, they just might inspire themselves to eat more of what they know is good for them. Here are a few highlights of what the green nutrition survey revealed about this emerging trend:

### Green Nutrition – A Smart Move

#### :: Green Beliefs.

Out of 640 American dog and cat owners surveyed, a whopping 90 percent believe in the importance of green nutrition for their own diets.

#### :: Good for Me, Good for My Pet.

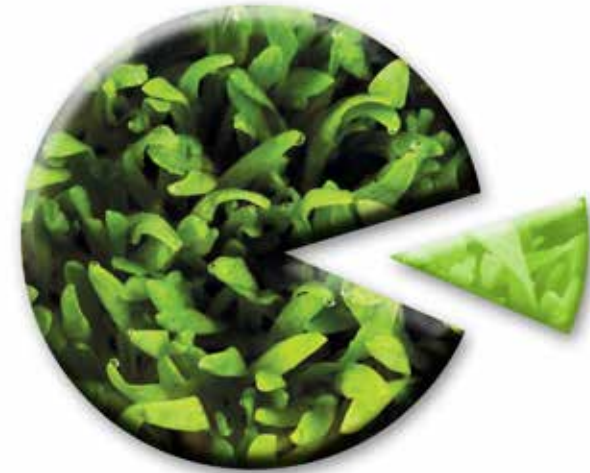
An overwhelming majority (79 percent) of dog and cat owners surveyed say they would like to include green nutrition more often in their pets’ diets.

#### :: Youthful Enthusiasm.

Younger survey participants were especially enthusiastic about getting their pets in on the green nutrition craze. Eighty-four percent of them between the ages of 18 and 44 would like to provide more green nutrition for their pets vs. 73 percent of their older counterparts.

### Would You Like To Include Green Nutrition More Often In Your Dog’s Or Cat’s Diet?

YES  
79%



NO  
21%

#### :: To Green or Not to Green.

Survey responses suggest pet owners ages 18-34 are more likely than those 35 or older to opt for green nutrition in treats for their dogs or cats, even at a higher cost (37 percent vs. 19 percent).

#### :: More Greens for Greens.

Sixty-five percent of those surveyed say they’d choose a green treat over a non-green treat for their pets, depending on the price. Twenty-five percent would be willing to pay more for them!



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## Walking the Talk

### :: It Ain't Easy Eating Green.

Only 37 percent of those surveyed that recognize the importance of green nutrition actually include it in their own diets. Thirty-four percent say they would like to incorporate more green nutrition, and 19 percent say that greens rarely make an appearance on their plates. Ten percent don't include it at all.

### :: Women Aware of Green Deficits.

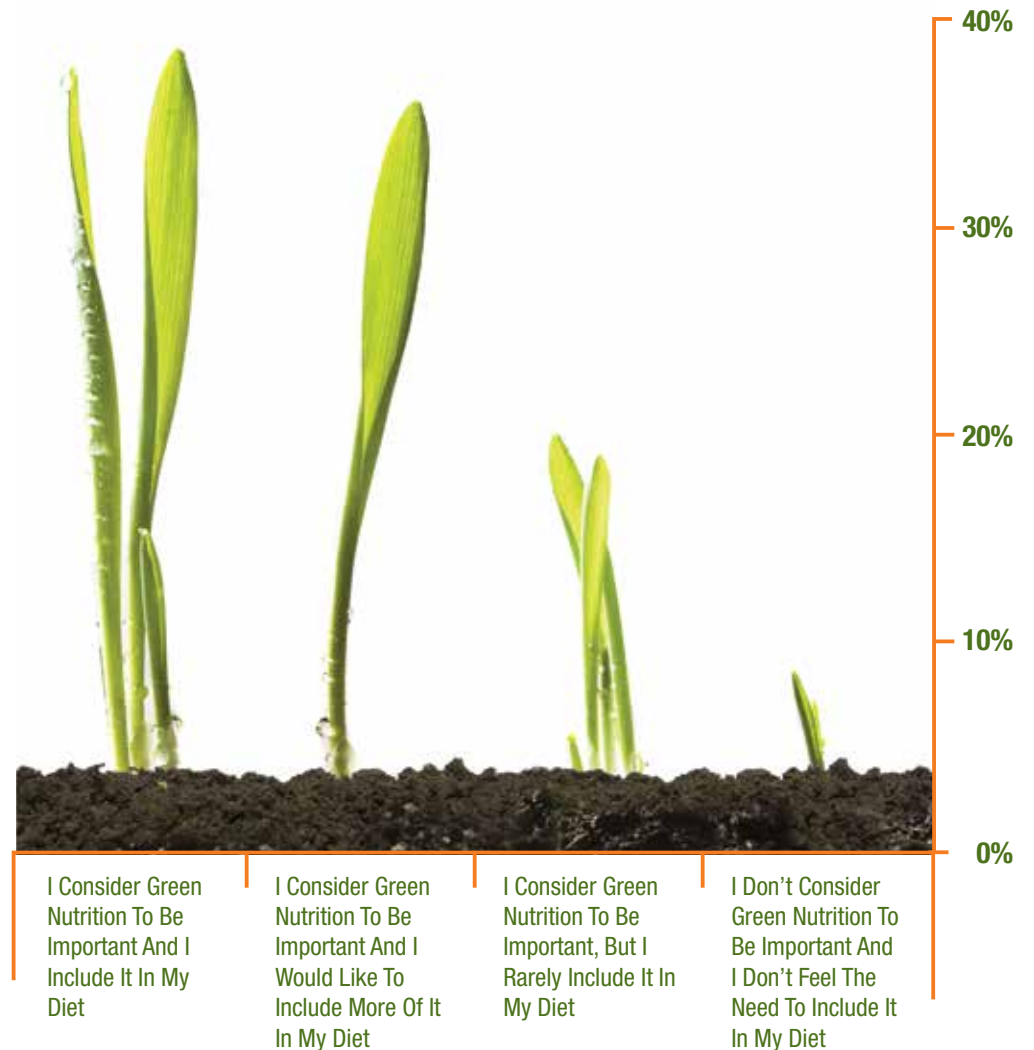
Among pet owners surveyed who find green nutrition important, more women than men would like to include more of it in their diets (43 percent vs. 32 percent).

### :: Older and Wiser.

Of this same group, many more of those 45 and older actually include green nutrition in their diets, compared to their 18-44 year old counterparts (50 percent vs. 34 percent).

*While a growing number of health conscious consumers are enthusiastic about including wheat grass and other greens in their own diets, many lack an understanding of the specific applications and benefits when it comes to the overall health of our animal friends.*

## Which Of The Following Best Describes The Role Green Nutrition Plays In Your Life?



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## Wheat Grass for People: Properties, Delivery and Benefits

Wheat grass is a young, green cereal grass originating from a wheat plant that is harvested before it develops gluten-forming grain kernels. Because of this early harvest, wheat grass **contains no wheat gluten**.<sup>7</sup> Wheat grass is commonly juiced and served either alone or in a mixture with other juices. Other more convenient and portable forms of delivery include powders and tablets made by dehydrating the wheat grass juice at low temperatures.

Wheat grass is a **nutritional powerhouse**, rich in chlorophyll, antioxidant vitamins, **minerals** and other nutrients that support optimal health.<sup>8</sup> **Chlorophyll** is often called the green blood of the plants because its molecular structure is closely mirrors the structure of heme molecules – the molecules that deliver oxygen to all parts of the body.

Antioxidant vitamins found in wheat grass, such as **vitamins A (as Beta Carotene), C, and E**, help to reduce oxidation and the damage it may cause.<sup>6</sup>

Wheat grass contains as much **magnesium** as broccoli, brussels sprouts, beets, carrots or celery. Magnesium is important for good muscle function and bowel health.<sup>11</sup>

Another nutritional property of wheat grass is its **high concentration of biotin**, which is a crystalline form of the vitamin B-complex, essential for the activity of many enzyme systems. According to the book Prescription for Nutritional Healing by James and Phyllis Balch, biotin is necessary for cell growth, the production of fatty acids, and the metabolism of fats and amino acids. Biotin also supports healthy hair, skin, sweat glands, nerve tissue, and bone marrow.<sup>4</sup>

*Affectionately nicknamed “liquid sunlight,” wheat grass contains high concentrations of chlorophyll – the green pigment that acts as the blood or life force of plants, produced through exposure to the sun.*



*Wheat grass contains no wheat gluten. This young, leafy green is harvested before it develops a gluten-forming kernel.*



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## One Pound of Wheat Grass = 23 Pounds of Garden Veggies

Cereal grasses – whether they originate from wheat, barley, oats or rye – belong to the same family (Triticum) and have similar properties. However, research from agricultural scientist Charles Schnabel, regarded as one of the world's foremost experts on cereal grasses, claims that 15 pounds of wheat grass is equal in protein and overall nutritional value to nearly 350 pounds of garden vegetables - a 1 to 23 ratio.<sup>4,11</sup>

That's a lot of veggie power!

Of course, the variety and potency of these nutrients can vary depending upon environmental conditions, quality of seed and the growing medium used in cultivating the wheat grass.



*Compared to other cereal grasses such as barley grass and oat grass, wheat grass has the highest concentration of chlorophyll, the green pigment in plants that harnesses the sun's energy from photosynthesis.<sup>12</sup>*



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## **Go Green!** **Nutritional Benefits** **for Animals**

Greens are rarely found in a domestic pet's commercially produced food. However, many experts believe that before animals were domesticated, greens were part of their daily diets.

Living in the wild, a dog or cat would have hunted birds, rodents or reptiles, consuming them whole and receiving green nutrients through the contents of the prey's digestive tract. As an alternative for domesticated animals, cereal grasses, such as wheat grass, may be added in moderate amounts to satisfy their attraction to greens.<sup>5</sup>



*Wheat grass contains valuable vegetable-based fiber, which helps to support healthy digestion.<sup>7</sup>*



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# Why Green Nutrition?

:: **Vitamin A** is essential for an animal's night vision, the maintenance of soft mucus tissues, and normal growth.<sup>6,8</sup>

:: **B-complex vitamins** are vital to the health of the nervous system.<sup>6</sup>

:: **Vitamin C** is important in supporting a healthy immune system. It acts as an antioxidant nutrient in synergy with Vitamin E. Vitamin C also aids assimilation of essential minerals.<sup>6</sup>

:: **Vitamin K** helps regulate blood clotting and other clotting factors, and is essential for kidney function and bone metabolism.<sup>6</sup>

Wheat grass contains chlorophyll, antioxidant nutrients, vitamins A (as Beta Carotene), B-complex, C, E and K, minerals and a complete set of amino acids.<sup>7</sup> This leafy green's powerful nutrients are known to provide the following benefits:

:: **Antioxidant vitamins and minerals** found in wheat grass help to protect fatty acids from oxidation.<sup>6</sup>

:: **Chlorophyll**, or "liquid sunlight," is the green pigment that acts as the blood or life force of plants, produced through exposure to the sun.<sup>11</sup>

:: **Vitamin E** is the most wide spread fat soluble antioxidant in the body. It is important in helping to maintain the function of oxidation susceptible fatty acids in all cell membranes. The more polyunsaturated fatty acids, like omega-3 fatty acids, in the diet, the more important it is to have adequate levels of Vitamin E.<sup>1</sup>



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## Protecting Pets from Harmful Household Plants and Outside Grasses

Many pet owners use wheat grass to help discourage their pets' appetites for potentially harmful household plants and chemically-treated outside grasses.<sup>5</sup> While providing alternatives is an effective way to reduce the chances of your pet ingesting a toxic substance, pet care experts also advocate pet-proofing your house by removing poisonous plants or placing them in areas out of reach.



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More than 700 plants have been identified as producing physiologically active or toxic substances that can cause harmful effects in animals. An extensive listing of potentially harmful plants can be found on **The Humane Society** ([www.hsus.org](http://www.hsus.org)) or **The American Animal Hospital Association** ([www.healthypet.com](http://www.healthypet.com)) web sites.



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## 10 Easy Steps to Grow Your Own Wheat Grass

If your dog or cat is an indoor/outdoor pet, limiting exposure to potentially harmful greenery may be a challenge, but you can help divert their attention by providing their own supply of greens. Growing high quality wheat grass isn't as difficult as you might imagine. With just 10 easy steps in less than two weeks, you can create a nutrient-rich indoor garden for you and your pet.

- 1.** Soak 2 cups of wheat grass seed in pure water for 9-12 hours.
- 2.** Drain the water and germinate the seeds for two days in a sprouting bag or jar, rinsing at least twice a day.
- 3.** Fill a standard 11" x 12" seedling tray with 1"-2" of soil.
- 4.** Spread the seeds evenly on top of the soil and water with a sprinkler head.
- 5.** Cover the seeds with a second tray upside down to keep moisture in and light out during this incubation stage.
- 6.** Set the tray in a shady spot away from extreme heat or cold – around 70 degrees Fahrenheit is ideal.
- 7.** Check seedlings daily and moisten if necessary.
- 8.** Remove cover when seedlings reach 2"-3" tall.
- 9.** Let the sunshine in! After about three days, your grass will be ready to soak up the sunlight.
- 10.** Harvest when your wheat grass reaches 7"-10" tall (usually between 10 and 14 days). Cut about one inch above the soil using a serrated knife or scissors.

Wheat grass can be juiced or finely chopped into food. Once your pets have been introduced to the taste of wheat grass, they may prefer to nibble straight from the tray. For more growing tips, check out Steve Meyerowitz's book, *Wheatgrass: Nature's Finest Medicine*.<sup>7</sup>



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## Other Ways to Include Wheat Grass in Your Pet's Diet

If you don't have time to grow your own wheat grass from scratch, here are a few suggestions to consider when choosing options that best suit your lifestyle:

Bell Rock Growers ([www.bellrockgrowers.com](http://www.bellrockgrowers.com)), the pet industry's pioneer supplier of green nutrition products, stocks local pet store shelves with live, ready-to-use containers of fresh certified organic wheat grass. As an alternative, the company offers self-grow kits that make it easy to grow high-quality certified organic greens right out of the bag.

*Pet Greens® Garden makes it easy to grow certified organic greens right out of the bag. Ready-to-use containers of Pet Greens® Live Pet Grass® and Live Catnip are also available in pet stores nationwide.*



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## Other Ways to Include Wheat Grass in Your Pet's Diet

Bell Rock Growers also supplies dogs and cats with a line of convenient, healthy treats, called Pet Greens® Treats, made with certified organic wheat grass. To learn more about Pet Greens® and locate a store in your area that carries Bell Rock Growers products, visit [www.bellrockgrowers.com](http://www.bellrockgrowers.com).

Powdered supplements can be an excellent alternative source for green nutrients. Look for products that are grown organically and dried at low temperatures.



***What are you waiting for?  
Get your greens on!***

*Whatever method you choose, including certified organic wheat grass in your pet's diet can support optimal health and longevity. With a variety of gardening resources and products on the market today, it's never been easier to tap into the power of green nutrition.*



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why do cats and dogs eat grass?

While dogs are considered omnivores and cats carnivores, both are able to digest plants and utilize their nutrients.<sup>1</sup>

One theory suggests that dogs and cats used to get greens in the wild when hunting smaller grass-eating prey, but lack this green nutrition in domesticated diets. To satisfy their attraction to greens, cats and dogs may be tempted to eat harmful houseplants or chemically-treated outside grasses. A safer, healthier solution is a container of fresh, nutritious, 100 percent certified organic Pet Greens® Live Pet Grass®. You may choose to grow your own with Pet Greens® Garden self-grow wheat grass kits, or purchase conveniently packaged Pet Greens® Treats made with organic wheat grass.



### Why is wheat grass good for pets?

Wheat grass is packed with chlorophyll, carotene, antioxidant vitamins and minerals and other nutrients known to support development of healthy blood and muscle tissue.

Wheat grass provides a safe alternative to potentially harmful household plants and chemically-treated outside grasses. According to a report by the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), eating small amounts of plants or grass is normal for cats, and as many as one in three housecats regularly munches on veggies.<sup>2</sup>

This powerful leafy green adds valuable fiber to help support healthy digestion. Wheat grass is commonly used as a healthy dietary addition for cats, dogs, birds, reptiles and other small animals.



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### **Does wheat grass contain wheat gluten?**

No. Wheat grass is a leafy green vegetable harvested before it develops the gluten-forming grain.

### **Do I need to monitor how much wheat grass my pet consumes?**

Pets love wheat grass and may devour it quickly, but they should only ingest a small amount of this nutrient-rich treat at a time. Rabbits, guinea pigs, or other smaller animals should be served wheat grass in moderation. Give small clippings per serving or remove the wheat grass after a few nibbles. Consult a veterinarian for advice on proper feeding amounts for each of your pets.

### **How can I introduce live wheat grass to my pets?**

Many pets eat wheat grass straight from the container. However, some cats and dogs may not know how tasty these greens can be at first glance. If your cat or dog doesn't take to wheat grass right away, try misting it with water. Your cat or dog will lick the water and realize the greens are a tasty treat. If water doesn't work, try adding clippings to your pet's food. Pet Greens® Treats can also serve as a great way to introduce pets to the delicious green nutrients found in wheat grass. Your veterinarian may have other helpful suggestions for introducing wheat grass to your pets.

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## About Bell Rock Growers

Based in San Marcos, Calif., Bell Rock Growers is a certified organic grower of live wheat grass and the pioneer supplier of green nutrition products for pets. In 1996, the company's founders, Catherine Hoffmann and Marty Walls, launched the pet product industry's first nationally distributed live wheat grass and live catnip with major retailers and independent stores. The innovative duo created another industry first when they incorporated organic wheat grass into dog and cat treats. Bell Rock Growers' complete line of products Powered with Green Nutrition™ include: Pet Greens® Live Pet Grass® and Live Catnip; five varieties of Pet Greens® Treats for cats and dogs; Pet Greens® Garden self-grow wheat grass kits; and an earth-friendly grooming line made with wheat grass. For more information, visit

[www.bellrockgrowers.com](http://www.bellrockgrowers.com).

## Resources

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