

Start Your Own Canine Massage Business

If you like dogs and live near an area where people don't mind spending money on their pets, you might want to check out the canine massage program at Equissage, Round Hill, Virginia.

"A muscle is a muscle regardless of whether it's a human, horse or dog," says Dee Schreiber, who started the business, Equissage, in 1989 with his wife, Mary, a certified massage therapist. They started out working with horses. About four years ago they added a program for dogs. Mary created a home study program with books, video and audiotapes. Clients take tests after each of the six lessons and a 100-question final exam. For certification they submit a video of themselves giving a dog a complete massage. Clients can submit as many tapes as necessary to pass.

Clients take an average of eight weeks from the time they start the course until they submit the final video, Schreiber says. The course teaches basic physiology and location of major muscles and muscle groups in dogs. It also teaches how to handle different breeds.

The course has been popular with people who have working dogs, such as sled dogs or racing dogs, Schreiber says, as well as people who want to set up a business. Some people just learn the massage to care for their own pets.

"Massage helps to build up muscles surrounding arthritic joints," Schreiber says, adding that it also increases circulation, re-



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duces muscle spasms, relieves tension, enhances muscle tone, promotes healing and increases range of motion in all breeds of dogs.

Introduce yourself to your local veterinarian, he suggests, if you're interested in starting a business. The vet may refer you to his clients.

Depending on where you live, fees for canine massage range from \$40 to \$70 per session, Schreiber says. Complete massages average 45 minutes.

Cost of the Equissage Canine Massage Therapy course is \$495 for materials and certification.

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Ancient Oilseed Crop Making A Comeback

An ancient oilseed crop that was used during the Iron and Bronze Ages in Europe, is now showing promise in the U.S., Europe and Canada for multiple uses.

"Camelina" can be utilized as bird seed, edible or industrial oil, or as feed for fish, livestock or poultry.

Its high Omega 3 content and natural antioxidants also make it attractive to the health food industry. Camelina oil is very resistant to oxidation and rancidity, making it well suited for use as a cooking oil, although not a frying oil. It has an almond-like flavor and aroma.

On the farm, it fits well with reduced tillage systems and cover crops, plus a low seeding rate and competitiveness with weeds means that it may also have the lowest input cost of any oilseed.

Camelina grower Carter Fritz farms in Flathead County, near Kalispell, Montana, and has raised Camelina for two years.

"In my opinion, it's not something that's going to go away. Camelina is a crop for the future," he says. "It's a nice rotation crop that doesn't take a lot of fertilizer. Yields in eastern Montana have been averaging about 1,000 to 1,500 pounds to the acre. Here in western Montana, the average has been closer to 1,800 or 2,000 pounds to the acre because of better moisture."

The bushy mustard family plant has light yellow blossoms, grows about 2.5 to 3 ft. tall, and has seed pods, each containing 10 to 12 small seeds.

Fritz seeds his camelina at approximately 3 lbs. to the acre. The tiny seeds germinate in less than 24 hours.

Because the seeds are so small, harvesting the crop takes some extra attention.

"Especially, if you're running an older

combine, and there's any place for the seed to go out, it will," he says. "In augers or at the bottom of the tank, it will literally run right out and onto the ground, so you need to use duct tape to seal the cracks."

By using small screens on the top sieve of the combine, growers have found the seed comes clean and is not difficult to manage.

There are three different varieties currently being grown by U.S. farmers - one is German, one Austrian, and the other French. Montana State University's Northwestern Ag Research Center in Creston is developing two more varieties: "Blaine Creek," and "Suneson," according to Research center superintendent Duane Johnson.

Nearly 20,000 acres of Camelina were seeded across Montana in 2006 and there may be more than 100,000 acres in 2007.

"It's harvested in July and works great in rotation with wheat because you can control grasses and weeds while it's growing to get a head start when it's time for wheat," Johnson says.

Fritz purchased his seed from the research station and grew 30 acres in 2006. He cleaned the seed using a 3/64 screen and planted it with a Brillion drill. He points out that some others have broadcast theirs with fertilizer and rolled it into the ground.

"You need to get it in the ground in the spring as soon as you can get on the land. It'll germinate at 18 degrees," Fritz says.

"There's also a possibility that it can come through the winter - a friend of mine had Camelina and then seeded winter wheat into it, and the next year, he ended up with a dual crop. In Montana, there's also the possibility using it to grow a double crop. If you plant in March, it could be harvested in late-June, and then you could plant another barley crop or peas, to take off for silage the same year."



New firewood bundler is easy to use. Wood is loaded into a hopper, then plastic is wrapped around it five or so times with a hand crank.

Hand-Cranked Firewood Bundler

Manufacturing a firewood bundler was a natural extension for Hud-Son Forest Equipment, of Barneveld, New York. The family-owned business has been selling products for firewood producers for more than 40 years. The company introduced the new bundler in April.

The \$795 unit stands at a comfortable 36 in. tall and bundles firewood in lengths of 14 to 24 in. long in 12 or 14-in. diameters. The wood is loaded into a hopper, then plastic is wrapped around it five or so times with a hand crank. It's easy enough for a child to do it, company rep Nicole Hudon says, and it uses

plastic that's conveniently available at office supply stores. Operators can slip in a piece of paper with business and price information during the wrapping process to eliminate the step of adding a sticker at the end.

For handlers interested in more speed, an electric motor version is available for additional cost.

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"Camelina" is an increasingly popular oilseed crop that can be used as bird seed, edible or industrial oil, or as feed for fish, livestock or poultry.

So far, Fritz has sold all of his crop as seed to people in Montana, North Dakota, Arizona, Washington and Colorado. He's hoping a crushing plant will soon be established in his area to create an economical oil market for him.

The proper name for this crop is "camelina

sativa," but it's also known as gold-of-pleasure, false flax, wild flax, linseed dodder, German sesame, and Siberian oilseed.

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