Burdock stomatitis is a relatively common, but rarely reported, condition of the mouth of dogs and, less frequently, cats. The burs of the lesser burdock (Arctium minus) become trapped in the haircoat where they cause local irritation and mat formation. Other plants (Xanthium spp.) may injure the oral mucosa. Some common grasses such as foxtail barley, brome grass and sandbur have seeds with sharp awns that can become embedded in the tongue and gums of animals eating them 3.

The barbs of the burdock prevent easy removal and the burs inwardly migrate. Dogs especially, chew at them to try and remove them. In doing so, induce focal skin lesions but also trigger the immune system to respond. The skin lesions can become infected and become infected with opportunistic pathogens.

The only effective treatment is the removal of the material. Scraping with a scalpel blade over the affected area under general anesthesia has been used. The patient may be left with varying degrees of scar tissue, especially when the lesions involve the tongue. Aftercare consists of systemic antibiotic therapy. Semi-liquid food should be offered until the lesions heal. Regular grooming assists in removing the burs and prevents the formation of lesions.

REFERENCES:

CASE OF INTEREST
A Case of Burdock Stomatitis in a Cocker Spaniel

By: Richard Fox, Veterinary Pathologist.

A 8.5 year-old, spayed female Cocker Spaniel presented to a local practitioner for difficulty eating soft food. On examination there were multifocal painful swellings of the tongue and lips. Biopsies were taken from the underside of the tongue and for histopathologic examination.

Histologically in one section a small, refractile piece of plant material surrounded by moderate numbers of eosinophils, macrophages, neutrophils with less lymphocytes and plasma cells was present in the mid to deep submucosa. The histologic diagnosis were moderate, multifocal, nodular, eosinophil-dominated stomatitis with intralesional plant material (suspected burdocks spines).

Biopsies were taken from the underside of the tongue. and submitted for histopathologic examination.

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References: