



Welcome to GeoScenting

Adventure Through Scent

GeoScenting combines canine scent detection and outdoor exploration. Its like a treasure hunting adventure that your dog also enjoys! Rather than simply walking directly to a hidden container, your dog uses a trained target odor, Anise, to locate a hidden GeoScenting cache.

GeoScenting provides dogs with meaningful mental and physical enrichment while helping handlers improve their scent-work, tracking, observation, line-handling, and teamwork skills.

This is a reactive-dog-friendly activity, and safety is one of our highest priorities. Searches are completed independently rather than as a group, and every cache is rated so you can choose locations that are appropriate for your dog.

1. How GeoScenting Works

New cache information will normally be released on Friday mornings through Patreon.

Each cache announcement may include:

- GPS coordinates
- A photograph of the general area
- One or more hints
- A suggested starting area
- Cache size
- Search difficulty level
- Environmental distraction level
- Terrain or accessibility information
- Special instructions or safety warnings

Use the coordinates to travel to the general search area. Once you arrive, safely unload your dog, organize your equipment, and begin near the suggested starting point.

Give your dog its normal search cue unless your dog has already detected the odor and begun working independently. Allow your dog to follow the scent and lead you toward the cache.

Your job is to:

- Safely manage the leash or long line.
- Observe changes in your dog's behavior.
- Give your dog room to investigate.
- Avoid pulling your dog directly toward the coordinates.
- Recognize and reward your dog's final alert.

The coordinates, hints, and photograph will help bring you into the correct area, but your dog should make the final discovery through scent.

Once your dog finds the cache:

1. Reward your dog away from the container.
2. Open the cache carefully.
3. Sign the GeoScenting log.
4. Complete your trinket exchange.
5. Close the cache completely.
6. Return it exactly as you found it.
7. Report any damage, contamination, or other concerns.

2. Before Participating

To participate successfully, your dog should:

- Be conditioned to recognize Anise as its target odor.
- Understand a consistent search cue.
- Be able to locate Anise in more than one environment.
- Have a recognizable alert or indication when the odor is found.
- Be safely manageable on a leash or long line.

Before attempting to find a GeoScenting cache, we recommend that your dog can locate and alert to Anise:

1. Inside your home
2. In your yard or another familiar outdoor space
3. In an easy outdoor area away from home

Your dog does not need to be highly advanced, but it should understand that finding Anise is the goal of the game.

Begin with the easiest GeoScenting searches and gradually level up as you and your dog gain confidence and experience.

3. Understanding the Cache Ratings

Each cache will receive separate ratings for:

Search Difficulty

This describes how technically difficult the odor problem may be for the dog.

Environmental Distraction

This describes how busy, stimulating, or unpredictable the surrounding environment may be.

Cache Size

This describes the physical size of the container and what size trinkets will fit inside.

For example, a cache announcement might say:

Search Difficulty: Level 2

Distraction Level: Level 1

Cache Size: Standard

This would indicate a slightly more challenging scent problem in a relatively quiet environment, using a standard-sized cache.

Cache size does not really determine search difficulty. A tiny cache may be used for an easy search, while a large cache may be part of an advanced search. As long as your dog can find the source, size won't matter a whole lot.

4. Search Difficulty Levels

Level 1 — Foundation Search

Level 1 searches are designed for new teams, beginning scent dogs, and dogs that are still gaining confidence away from home.

These searches will generally include:

- A short distance from the parking area
- Simple terrain
- A relatively direct odor problem
- Limited elevation changes or obstacles
- Minimal searching before the dog encounters odor
- An accessible cache location
- A search area close enough to the vehicle for a quick retreat

A Level 1 search paired with a Level 1 distraction rating is intended to be suitable for many reactive dogs.

Every reactive dog is different. Owners must still observe the area and decide whether current conditions are safe and appropriate for their individual dog.

Level 2 — Beginner Adventure

Level 2 searches are designed for dogs that understand the game and have successfully searched in several locations.

These searches may include:

- A slightly longer route
- Mild changes in terrain
- Light vegetation
- More room for odor to travel
- A cache that is farther from the parking area
- Simple handler decisions about where to begin
- A larger general search area

Level 3 — Intermediate Search

Level 3 searches are designed for teams with a stronger understanding of odor movement, canine search behavior, and long-line handling.

These searches may include:

- Longer search distances
- Mixed terrain
- Moderate vegetation
- Elevation changes
- More complicated airflow
- Multiple possible search paths
- Areas where the dog may lose and reacquire odor
- A more concealed cache location
- Fewer or less-specific hints

Level 4 — Advanced Search

Level 4 searches are intended for experienced GeoScenting teams.

These searches may include:

- Long or physically demanding routes
- Complex terrain
- Significant vegetation or natural obstacles
- Difficult airflow or odor pooling
- Complicated starting areas

- Large search zones
- Minimal hints
- Aged odor
- Changing weather conditions
- Multiple environmental factors affecting the scent
- Possible floating water caches

Advanced teams may increase the challenge by waiting longer after a cache is released, searching after rainfall, or working during breezy conditions.

5. Environmental Distraction Levels

Level 1 — Quiet and Reactive-Dog Friendly

Level 1 locations are selected with reactive dogs, environmentally sensitive dogs, and beginning teams in mind.

These areas will generally feature:

- Low pedestrian traffic
- Low dog traffic
- Minimal vehicle activity
- Open sightlines when possible
- Space to move away from unexpected triggers
- A search area relatively close to the owner's vehicle
- A location away from busy gathering areas
- The ability to leave quickly if another person or dog appears

Level 1 does not guarantee that the area will remain completely empty. Public environments can change unexpectedly, so handlers must remain aware of their surroundings.

Level 2 — Light Distractions

Level 2 locations may include:

- Occasional pedestrians
- Occasional dogs at a distance
- Light traffic
- Mild wildlife activity
- Distant noises
- Slightly reduced visibility
- Fewer options for creating distance

Level 3 — Moderate Distractions

Level 3 locations may include:

- Regular pedestrian activity
- A greater likelihood of encountering dogs
- Nearby roads or parking areas
- Bicycles, joggers, children, livestock, or wildlife
- More environmental noise
- Narrower routes
- Reduced ability to move away quickly

Level 4 — High Distractions

Level 4 locations are intended for environmentally stable and experienced dogs.

These areas may include:

- Busy public locations
- Frequent dog or pedestrian traffic
- Significant vehicle activity
- Close environmental distractions
- Limited space to move away
- Unpredictable activity
- Multiple competing odors

Owners of reactive dogs should carefully consider whether higher distraction levels are appropriate for their dogs.

6. Cache Size Levels

Every GeoScenting cache will contain:

- A GeoScenting log for owners to sign
- Trinkets for exchanging
- Identification information
- A protected scent system

The size rating helps participants select trinkets that will fit comfortably inside the container.

Tiny Cache

Tiny caches will be the smallest containers used in GeoScenting.

Because space will be limited, only very small or flat trinkets should be exchanged.

Suitable tiny-cache trinkets may include:

- Small stickers
- Mini decals
- Tiny charms

- Decorative beads
- Small tokens
- Small polished stones
- Miniature plastic animals
- Decorative buttons
- Tiny collectible items
- Small folded notes or artwork

Items should generally be approximately coin-sized or smaller unless the cache announcement says otherwise.

Small Cache

Small caches will hold several compact trinkets but may not accommodate thick or bulky items.

Suitable small-cache trinkets may include:

- Stickers
- Small keychains
- Charms
- Pins with protected backs
- Small patches
- Friendship bracelets
- Decorative tokens
- Polished stones
- Miniature figures
- Small magnets
- Sealed trading cards
- Small dog-themed collectibles

Standard Cache

The standard GeoScenting cache will measure approximately:

7 inches long × 4.5 inches wide × 1.5 inches thick

It can hold several small or flat trinkets, but the 1.5-inch height means bulky items may prevent the container from closing correctly.

Suitable standard-cache trinkets may include:

- Sticker sheets
- Vinyl decals
- Keychains
- Dog-themed charms
- Embroidered patches
- Pins with protected backs

- Friendship bracelets
- Dog-tag-style tokens
- Small polished stones or crystals
- Miniature animal figures
- Flat fidget toys
- Sealed trading cards
- Bookmarks
- Mini notebooks
- Small magnets
- Compact craft items
- Lightweight collectibles
- Small handmade items

As a general guide, standard-cache trinkets should be no larger than the palm of your hand and should preferably be less than approximately 1.5 inches thick.

Never force an item into the container. The lid must close completely without bending, bulging, or placing pressure on the log, scent equipment, or other contents.

Large Cache

Large caches may be introduced for special missions, themed searches, or challenge events.

Suitable large-cache trinkets may include:

- Small unscented dog toys
- Bandanas
- Larger sticker packs
- Small notebooks
- Compact crafts
- Small outdoor accessories
- Packaged dog-themed merchandise
- Puzzle items
- Collectible figures
- Larger patches
- Larger keychains
- Themed challenge prizes

The cache announcement will provide approximate dimensions and any special exchange instructions for a large cache.

7. Signing the GeoScenting Log

Every cache will include a physical log for participants to sign.

After your dog finds the cache, please add your visit to the log.

You may include:

- The date
- Your first name
- Your dog's name
- Your team name, if you have one
- A short note about the search
- The difficulty your team experienced
- A fun message for future participants

A sample entry might look like:

June 27 — Amber and Mogni — Found after circling downwind.

Please keep entries brief enough to leave room for other teams.

Log Rules

- Use the writing tool provided when one is available.
- Consider carrying a pencil or weather-resistant pen as a backup.
- Do not remove the log from the cache.
- Do not remove pages.
- Do not write inappropriate messages.
- Do not write over another participant's entry.
- Return the log to its protective bag or compartment.
- Report a wet, damaged, missing, or full log.

Signing the log documents your team's successful find and becomes part of the history of each GeoScenting cache.

You may also record your find through Patreon when requested, but the physical log should still be signed whenever possible.

8. Trinket Exchange Rules

Every GeoScenting cache contains trinkets for participants to exchange.

The trinket exchange adds an extra element of discovery for the handler, while locating the target odor remains the dog's primary part of the adventure.

The basic rule is:

Take One, Leave One

When you take a trinket, leave another suitable trinket in its place.

You may leave a trinket without taking one. Please do not take an item without replacing it.

Choosing an Appropriate Trinket

Trinkets should be:

- Clean
- Unscented as possible
- Safe to handle
- Weather-resistant
- Appropriate for a general audience
- Small enough for the listed cache size
- In good condition
- Of approximately equal or greater value than the item taken

Trinkets do not need to be expensive. Thoughtful, fun, handmade, collectible, or dog-themed items are encouraged.

Suitable examples include:

- Stickers and decals
- Keychains
- Charms
- Tokens
- Patches
- Pins with protected backs
- Friendship bracelets
- Miniature animals
- Polished stones
- Magnets
- Bookmarks
- Sealed trading cards
- Small handmade items
- Dog-themed collectibles
- Encouraging notes
- Small pieces of artwork

Items That Are Not Allowed

Do not leave:

- Dog treats
- Human food
- Chews
- Scented toys
- Perfume or strongly scented items
- Anise-scented objects
- Essential oils
- Liquids
- Medication

- Tobacco or alcohol products
- Adult-themed items
- Sharp or hazardous objects
- Unprotected pins or exposed hooks
- Leaking, dirty, or damaged items
- Items that may attract wildlife
- Anything that may contaminate the target odor
- Anything that prevents the cache from closing completely

Food and scented objects can contaminate the cache, distract searching dogs, attract wildlife, and create risks for dogs with allergies or dietary restrictions.

Protecting the Cache Contents

Place your trinket inside the designated exchange area without disturbing the scent equipment as best as possible.

Before leaving:

- Make sure all trinkets are completely inside the container.
- Confirm that nothing is pressing against the scent tube.
- Return the log to its protective area.
- Close and secure the lid completely.
- Return the cache to its original position.
- Make sure the cache remains appropriately concealed.
- Take any packaging or trash with you.

Do not overfill the container. When a cache is already full, choose the smallest suitable exchange item or report that the cache needs attention.

Leave something you would be pleased to discover yourself.

9. Recommended Equipment

We recommend bringing:

- A secure, properly fitted harness
- A long line appropriate for the environment
- A standard leash for entering and leaving the area
- High-value rewards
- Water for both dog and handler
- Waste bags
- Weather-appropriate clothing
- A charged phone with GPS access
- A pencil or weather-resistant pen
- A backup light when searching near dusk
- An appropriate trinket for exchanging

A harness allows the dog to move and investigate more naturally while reducing pressure on the neck during long-line searches and helps when building “work” associations.

Inspect your harness, leash, clips, and long line before every outing.

10. Leash and Long-Line Rules

Dogs must remain on a leash or long line throughout the activity.

Off-leash searching is not permitted around GeoScenting caches, even when a dog has reliable recall.

This rule helps:

- Create predictable safety expectations around every cache
- Protect reactive dogs and their handlers
- Prevent dogs from rushing unfamiliar teams
- Protect wildlife and the environment
- Keep dogs away from roads and other hazards
- Prevent accidental damage to caches
- Reduce conflict when two search routes overlap

You never know when your route may overlap with another team’s route. Keeping every dog attached to its handler helps everyone participate more safely.

You may search at anytime you'd like as long as the public location allows. We place and manage the caches, teams find them according to their own availability/time. Not all public locations will allow visitors after dusk, please check the locations hours before attempting a night search.

Retractable leashes are not recommended for GeoScenting searches because they provide less predictable line control and can create entanglement risks.

11. Reactive-Dog Safety and Search Etiquette

GeoScenting welcomes reactive dogs, but every participant must help protect the safety and working space of other teams.

When you see someone actively searching with a dog:

- Give the team ample space.
- Do not approach unless invited.
- Do not allow your dog to greet their dog.
- Do not follow closely behind them.
- Do not call out to or distract the working dog.
- Move away or wait until the team has finished.

- Return to your vehicle if that is the safest option.
- Never crowd another team at the cache location.

A dog wearing a muzzle, creating distance, or working from a quiet area is not an invitation to approach.

When possible, complete your search at a quieter time of day if your dog needs additional space.

Always have an exit plan and be prepared to pause or abandon a search if conditions become unsafe.

Leaving an unsuitable environment is responsible handling, NOT a failed search.

12. The Muggle Rule

In traditional Geocaching, a “Muggle” is someone who is not participating in the activity and may not understand why a container has been hidden.

We want to keep GeoScenting caches discreet so they are not removed, damaged, relocated, or mistaken for litter.

Please:

- Avoid opening or handling the cache while other people are watching.
- Wait for nonparticipants to leave before accessing it.
- Do not loudly announce the cache location.
- Do not post photographs that reveal the exact hiding place.
- Return the cache exactly as you found it.
- Make sure the cache is fully closed and concealed.
- Do not lead strangers directly to the cache.
- Never move a cache to make it easier or harder.

Protecting the location preserves the experience for the next team and reduces the likelihood that the cache will be disturbed.

13. Protecting the Search

Do not deliberately guide your dog directly to the container once you believe you know where it is, if you can help it.

Allow your dog to solve the odor problem.

Handlers should avoid:

- Pointing directly at the cache
- Pulling the dog toward the coordinates
- Placing treats on or beside the cache
- Allowing dogs to paw, bite, dig at, or carry the container

- Opening the protected scent compartment
- Touching or removing the scent tube
- Adding anise or another odor to the cache
- Moving or repositioning the cache
- Rehiding the cache differently
- Allowing excessive urine marking on or beside the cache

Reward your dog away from the container whenever possible. This helps prevent food odor, saliva, and dropped treats from contaminating the search area.

14. Environmental Responsibility

Our scent tubes and cache systems are specially designed for leave-no-impact placement and to avoid harming or disturbing the surrounding flora and fauna when used as intended.

Participants must also help protect every location.

Please:

- Remain on established trails when instructed.
- Do not damage plants.
- Do not remove natural materials.
- Do not dig.
- Do not disturb nests, dens, livestock, or wildlife.
- Pick up all dog waste.
- Remove all trash.
- Follow posted land-use rules.
- Respect seasonal closures.
- Respect private property.
- Leave the area as clean as - or cleaner than - you found it.

Never enter restricted areas or private property unless the cache instructions clearly state that permission has been obtained.

15. Aged Searches and Weather Challenges

Caches will normally be released on Friday mornings, but you do not have to search immediately.

Newer teams may benefit from searching soon after release, while more experienced teams may choose to wait and attempt an aged search.

You can create additional challenges by searching:

- Later in the weekend

- After the odor has aged
- After light rainfall
- During breezy or windy conditions
- In cooler or warmer temperatures
- At a different time of day

Rain, humidity, wind, heat, terrain, and vegetation can all affect how odor moves.

Wind does not simply blow the scent away. It can carry, spread, trap, pool, or redirect odor and create an entirely different search problem.

Always choose conditions that are safe for your dog.

Do not search during:

- Dangerous heat
- Severe weather
- Poor visibility
- Unsafe road conditions
- Hazardous air quality
- Wildfire smoke
- Flooding
- Lightning or high winds
- Conditions beyond your team's physical ability

16. Reporting Cache Problems

Please report problems as soon as possible.

This includes:

- A missing cache
- A damaged container
- An open or unsecured lid
- A loose or damaged scent tube
- Water inside the cache
- A wet, damaged, missing, or full log
- A missing writing tool
- A cache that has been moved
- Unsafe debris near the location
- Wildlife interference
- New access restrictions
- Unexpected environmental hazards
- Coordinates that appear incorrect
- A location that has become too busy or unsafe
- Food, urine, perfume, or other odor contamination
- Inappropriate or unsafe trinkets
- A cache that is too full to close

When reporting a problem, include:

- The cache name or number
- The date
- A brief description
- A photograph when it is safe and appropriate to take one

Do not attempt significant repairs or relocate the cache unless you are instructed to do so. Email is the best way to reach someone. Thecompletek9yakima@gmail.com

17. Participant Responsibility

Participation in GeoScenting is voluntary.

Owners and handlers are responsible for:

- Evaluating whether a location is appropriate for their dog
- Maintaining control of their dog
- Choosing and using safe equipment
- Following leash laws
- Following land-use rules
- Preventing unwanted contact with people, dogs, livestock, and wildlife
- Protecting their dog from weather, terrain, traffic, and environmental hazards
- Leaving an area when conditions become unsafe
- Preventing their dog from damaging the cache or surrounding property
- Any injury, damage, or incident caused by their dog

By participating, owners assume responsibility for their dog's behavior and for any injury, loss, or property damage caused by their dog.

GeoScenting ratings, photographs, descriptions, coordinates, and hints are provided as guidance. Conditions in public spaces can change without warning.

18. Growing as a GeoScenting Team

GeoScenting is more than finding hidden containers. It is an opportunity to become a better observer, trainer, and scent-work handler.

We strongly encourage participants to independently study:

- Canine scent detection
- Air scenting
- Tracking and trailing
- Odor movement
- Wind and airflow
- Search patterns
- Long-line handling
- Final alerts

- Reinforcement placement
- Environmental pressure
- Canine body language
- Search stamina
- Physical conditioning
- Safe outdoor navigation

As you gain experience, you will become better at recognizing when your dog:

- First encounters odor
- Moves in and out of the scent cone
- Loses odor
- Reacquires odor
- Becomes distracted
- Needs more room to work
- Is following residual or pooling odor
- Is close to the source
- Gives its final alert

Future GeoScenting activities may include:

- Themed searches
- Monthly challenges
- Aged-cache challenges
- Weather challenges
- Multi-cache missions
- Skill-building exercises
- Handler education
- Special achievement opportunities

The goal is not to rush through the levels. Build a reliable foundation, protect your dog's confidence, and allow your skills to progress naturally.

19. First-Search Checklist

Before Leaving Home

- Confirm that your dog recognizes anise.
- Review the cache announcement.
- Check the search difficulty level.
- Check the distraction level.
- Check the cache size.
- Select an appropriately sized trinket.
- Check the weather.
- Charge your phone.
- Inspect your harness, leash, clips, and long line.
- Pack water, rewards, and waste bags.

- Pack a pencil or weather-resistant pen.
- Decide what conditions would cause you to leave.

At the Location

- Observe the area before unloading your dog.
- Look for people, dogs, vehicles, wildlife, and other hazards.
- Give any working teams ample space.
- Keep your dog attached to you.
- Begin near the suggested starting area.
- Give your normal search cue.
- Follow your dog rather than pulling it toward the coordinates.
- Allow your dog to complete its final alert.
- Reward away from the cache.
- Sign the physical log.
- Take one trinket and leave one suitable trinket.
- Return the log to its protective area or bag
- Close the container completely.
- Return the cache exactly as you found it.
- Leave no trace.
- Report any problems.

Most importantly, allow your dog to enjoy the search.

GeoScenting is about teamwork, enrichment, exploration, and giving dogs a meaningful opportunity to use their strongest natural sense.

