



Belgian Sheepdogs

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The Belgian Sheep Dog

Introduction

Belgian Sheepdogs, also known as Belgian Groenendael, Belgian Shepherd and Chien de Berger Belge, are muscular black dogs that are solid but not heavy, very agile and have a proud carriage. This particular breed is very smart and obedient, serious and watchful with territorial instincts; these dogs make excellent police and guard dogs. This type of work is currently their main occupation, however, they also make excellent pets. They thrive on companionship and will do well with children if socialized with them. These are just a few of the reasons that this particular breed makes a wonderful companion for both you and your family. As with any decision that will have a long-term impact on your life, it is important that you make an informed decision when choosing a pet. The purpose of this informational eBook is to introduce you to the Belgian Sheepdog and the characteristics unique to this breed. We will touch on adoption versus engaging a breeder and trace a few key points that are important to note in each stage of your dog's life, from bringing home your new pup to making him or her comfortable in their elder years. Our hope is that you will come away from this book with a number of helpful tips and pieces of advice. This complimentary book is packed full of information to fulfill your dog parenting needs. Take a few moments to enjoy this information and you will spend many years enjoying a loving relationship with your Belgian Sheepdog.

General Belgian Sheepdog Characteristics

The elegant Belgian Sheepdog has a squarely proportioned body. The triangular ears stand erect and the muzzle is long and tapering. The coat is very full, moderately long, with a ruff around the neck and extra feathering on the underside, legs and tail. Their beautiful brown eyes are almond in shape and their noses black. This breed varies in height from 22 to 24 inches and in weight from 60 to 75 pounds, depending on whether you chose a male or female companion; the average life expectancy is 13 to 14 years.

The Belgian Sheepdog can be very shy or sensitive and needs extensive socialization from an early age. Firm, but not harsh, training from an experienced master is necessary; if you are harsh or overbearing they will become uncooperative. This breed is instinctively protective so it should be trained and socialized very well from an early age. They are ever watchful, alert and loyal, and they thrive on loving companionship. Belgian Sheepdogs are good with children if socialized well with them. This breed needs to be part of the family and not locked up in a kennel. It does best given ample time, attention, training and companionship. If this breed is ignored, it will find ways to entertain itself, often at the owner's expense. Belgian Sheepdogs tend to bond strongly with one or two people and generally this Sheepdog gets along well with children, but they can be rather dominant toward other dogs. Provided they are correctly socialized with cats and other pets, they should not present any problems; however, you still must take care when introducing this dog with small non-canine pets. The Belgian Sheepdog may instinctively display herding behavior such as chasing and circling, moving effortlessly for hours and nipping at people's heels.



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It needs an experienced owner for it can easily be difficult to control unless the owner knows how to handle him. There can be wide differences in temperament and aggressiveness, so talk to someone experienced with the breed before you buy your dog. Although these dogs are often impressive you shouldn't base your purchase solely on achievement records and appearances.

This breed will do okay with an apartment lifestyle as long as it is sufficiently exercised. It is moderately active indoors and will do best with at least an average sized-yard. Because the Belgian Sheepdog is a working dog that is accustomed to an active outdoor life, he can be left outside to sleep, but much prefers the company of his family.

Selecting Your Belgian Sheepdog Puppy – Adoption or a Breeder?

It is usually a matter of personal preference when it comes to adopting a dog or choosing to seek out a breeder that is familiar with your breed.

A Few Words About Adoption :

Look for a pet adoption shelter or rescue center in your community. Use your community resources, such as your library, newspaper, and any online information to understand the reputation of the shelter before you go there. Take time when selecting the shelter or rescue group you will adopt from and ask questions of other people who may have used their services before. Pay visits to each of the shelters and rescue groups you are considering and speak with the staff and volunteers about their organization and the pet or pets that you are interested in. Also inquire as to whether or not the rescue has a foster parent program that will let you bring the pet into your home for several weeks to see how it will fit with your current living situation. In any case, before making a final decision, find out as much as you can about the history of the pets you are considering. Go in to adoption knowing that some pets are up for adoption because they have been left behind due to divorce or families having to relocate; not all pets in shelters or rescue centers come from abused or neglectful situations. Pet adoption or rescue is less expensive than purchasing from a dog breeder and for families who face economical challenges this option is worth considering; you have the satisfaction of providing a home for a deserving pet.

A Few Words About Breeders :

Perhaps you prefer a Belgian Sheepdog that comes from a reputable breeder in order to raise your pet as a show dog or breed your pet to further the advancement of new Belgian Sheepdogs in your community. Breeders are very knowledgeable about the breed's overall health and characteristics. You can find dog breeders by looking in the newspaper, searching on the internet, or checking with the local vet. Make sure the breeder is associated with the AKC. Dog breeders can be very particular about the person wanting to purchase the dog.



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EXPERT TIP

Selecting a Crate

A dog should be able to stand and turn around inside a closed crate. If you have a Belgian Sheep Dog puppy, consider the average height and weight of an adult Terrier and choose a crate based on those specifications. The average size of an adult Belgian Sheep Dog is 15 lbs and 16 inches tall. Choose a sturdy steel or plastic crate for medium sized breeds such as the Belgian Sheep Dog.

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They may want to know what other animals are in the home, if you have a yard for the dog to play in, or if there are any children living in the home. Make sure the breeders facilities are clean and always ask to see the mother and father of the puppy you want to buy. The breeder should be able to provide a written health guarantee and all shot records.

Either option is viable based on your own knowledge, expectations, and personal conviction. The most important thing to remember when selecting your pet is to select the pet that is right for you. Pet ownership is a big responsibility; select a pet that fits your lifestyle.

How to Choose Your New Belgian Sheepdog Pup

Choosing a dog can be a difficult decision because there are many different personalities and aesthetic qualities you may want to look for. Do you prefer to have the runt of the litter or the huskiest brute? Or, would you prefer a kiss of white sugar on the tips of your pup paws, or are you keener on a specific color combination? Sometimes you can make a decision based on the adorable facial expressions a pup makes. Can you resist those sweet puppy dog eyes that pierce right through to clench hold of your heart? Pet adoptions or rescues are viable options for selecting your Belgian Sheepdog. Of course, finding a good breeder is always a good option, too. Make sure you look for the following signs of a healthy dog:

- Bright and clear eyes
- Clean ears that are free of parasites
- Healthy coat and skin conditions
- History and lineage are necessary as the genetics of animals are much like that of humans
- Make sure paw pads are soft and well taken care of
- Plump bellies are common in healthy puppies, but be sure they're not too plump

Tails and facial expressions can give strong clues about the pup's personality and disposition

Before You Bring Your Belgian Sheepdog Home

It is important to puppy proof your home and be as prepared as possible to provide a safe and secure environment for your new friend. In an effort to prepare for the care of your new best friend you should create a checklist and learn about the special needs of your pet. Make sure that your floors are free of clutter. This includes shoes and electric cords, as puppies like to chew. Use the rule "out of sight, out of mind" when introducing your puppy to his new environment.

Create a list of items that you need for your new pet. You will need the essentials to care for your pet such as, a good puppy food, a brush for grooming, toys for playtime, and crates or kennels for containment. Puppy pads and treats or other training products will come in handy as well. You will also want to have a selection of toys and training items. The reward system is great for teaching your pet important lessons. Some toys double as treat holders so that when playing games with your pet they have a fun way to get to their reward.

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Your pup will soon discover what you want from him if you use a loving manner to convey your messages. Belgian Sheepdogs are eager to please and quick studies; they respond well to positive reinforcement.

It is really important to start your pup with a good health regimen. Keep accurate health and immunization records throughout the life of your pet. This will make it much easier for you to maintain proper health standards for your animal. Be sure to introduce him early to his vet and his grooming process. These are good practices for new owners as well as the pups. Of equal importance is a healthy diet for your pet. It is a good idea to follow your breeder or vet's guidelines for all of your pet's nutrition needs. Puppy food has different nutrients than adult or senior foods. Allergy sensitive animals require special dietary ingredients, as well. Being prepared is the most important aspect of introducing your new family member to his or her new environment. Purchase books about your breed, ask questions of the breeder and your vet, read about your pet online or at your community library. Pay attention to the details for true success and your new family member will make a quick and happy adjustment to his new home.

Your Belgian Sheepdog through the Years

Your Belgian Sheepdog Puppy

Each stage of your pet's life will be characterized by special needs. Puppies' lives are full of learning experiences. Enjoy the time you spend with your puppy. Use chew toys, or balls to keep your puppy active and know that you can use these toys not only to play but also to train your pet. Puppies learn quickly and can develop bad habits if they are not properly stimulated. Conversely, they can learn good habits if trained lovingly and early on.

Healthy habits are established at this stage of life as well. Vaccinations, dietary standards, and proper grooming regimens are very important for puppies. Your Belgian Sheepdog should have its own clean bowls for food and water. Sometimes it is helpful to place the bowls on a non-slip surface. There are many decorative bowls and placemats available to make your pets feeding time special for him. Take extra time to get your pup used to regular grooming. Use shampoos; nail clippers, brushes, and toothbrushes to keep your pup shiny and squeaky clean. When you introduce a new grooming device to your puppy it is important to remember to let the pup become acquainted with the item before using it. Remember to put the item away when you are no longer using it or the pup might mistake it for a toy.

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Your Belgian Sheepdog Adult

As your dog begins to age, his needs begin to change. Keep surprises to a minimum by, yep you guessed it, being prepared. Keep your dog active and healthy. Change out his toys often to keep his interest. Sometimes adult dogs develop allergies. If you notice changes in the skin, or fur you may need to change their diet. If your pet develops allergies you will see changes in his coat, skin, eyes or ears. If you suspect your dog has allergies, the best thing to do is take your dog to the vet. There are excellent remedies that will become an important part of your dog's routine.

As your dog ages his nails, paw pads, coat, skin, eyes and ears need special attention. Make grooming a happy time for your dog. You should keep the coat clean and free of dander, fleas, and tangled or matted hair. Also keep nails trimmed, check the pads on their paws frequently for spurs, and keep tooth tartar under control. Keep up with all of your adult pet's needs by frequently checking supplies and making sure that you have the most efficient tools handy to keep your dog in good health.

Your Belgian Sheepdog Senior

When your pet climbs the hill into his senior years his needs will change again. Dietary changes are the most prevalent at this life stage. As your dog ages, so does his digestive system. Make sure your Senior Belgian Sheepdog maintains a proper diet and receives proper nutrients by starting him on a daily vitamin. Keep abreast of the latest trends in dental products. There are many tartar control products on the market today. There are bones, toys, and toothbrushes essential to older dogs' health and happiness. Although Belgian Sheepdogs are free from most breed-specific health problems, some minor concerns that have been noted are epilepsy, skin allergies, eye problems, excessive shyness, excessive aggressiveness and occasionally seen hip and elbow dysplasia, which is not uncommon. As with any breed, be aware of any changes in the gait of your senior. If your dog moves slower than usual or begins limping it could be a sign of a joint problem. You may want to provide a more appropriate sleeping and lounging area for your pet, or an orthopedic dog bed. Maintaining a regular exercise routine and proper diet may help ward off aching hips and elbows. Just remember that dog's age in some of the same ways that humans do. You can help them manage aches and pains with the proper pet healthcare aids, knowledge, and care.

Senior pets have many changes in disposition and could easily be stressed by active young children. They may show signs of irritability when eating or when encouraged to do something they would rather not do. Belgian Sheepdogs are genuinely lovable animals, but grumpy seniors have a way of making sure that you are aware when they are unhappy.



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It is important to know that senior animals tend to do things their own way and in their own time. Care for your senior in a loving, gentle manner mixed with a little patience and understanding.

Most importantly, remember to cherish the special moments with your pet and keep them close to your heart. Display pictures of your dog around your home or office. Develop family traditions that include your pet; some families even hold birthday parties, specifically for their Belgian Sheepdogs.

Belgian Sheep dog Medical Considerations

Belgian Sheepdogs are generally free of health problems, however, some minor concerns are listed. As with any breed, if you notice any inconsistencies in your pet's behavior or eating habits, a call to the vet may be merited.

- Epilepsy – this term refers to symptoms of repeated seizures over time; this condition can be hereditary.
- Skin allergies
- PRA (Progressive Retinal Atrophy) – a slow, progressive deterioration of the retina which can lead to blindness; believed to be hereditary in nature.
- Excessive shyness/aggressiveness
- Hip & Elbow Dysplasia – a progressive deterioration in the joints of the hips and elbows whereas it can not longer move efficiently.



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