

BACKYARD BLITZ

Spoodle

Crossbreed: Spoodle (Cocker Spaniel x Poodle)

Temperament: intelligent, active

Cost: \$360+

Lifespan: 10-12 years

Recommended for: active families



Dishevelled blonde locks, big dark eyes and puppy-like enthusiasm - who could resist a spoodle? Could this be the dog of the millennium? The spoodle is one of the new types of designer dogs. These are

crosses between purebred dogs aimed at producing better pets. Purebred dogs are bred for show competition and increasingly they have developed body and temperament problems due to emphasis on breeding show attributes at the expense of basic pet qualities. Designer dogs represent a vast improvement for the pet owner. They are cheaper to own and much more fun for the family. They are also safer with the kids.

Appearance

Can vary considerably depending on which parent the pup takes after, but generally spoodles are medium-sized, semi-longhaired dogs and most breeders leave the tail undocked. The coats usually have some curl, and the ears are soft and often long. As to be expected, there is considerable variation between spoodles as the aim is to breed for good temperament rather than a particular look or type.

The best spoodle puppies get the intelligence of the poodle and the devoted, outgoing nature of the cocker - although it's not guaranteed! Pet owners report their spoodles are friendly, outgoing, and loving. One breeder of spoodles says he chooses cocker spaniels which are friendly but docile to cross with bright, intelligent poodles. Some owners say the dogs can be excitable.



Health

Only first-cross spoodles reap the full benefit of hybrid vigour. Owners report their spoodles to be quite healthy without any particular problems so far. Both poodles and cocker spaniels can have problems with their eyes, and spoodles may develop weepy eyes which this should be watched as it may indicate an infection.

Breeding

As a rule, purebred poodles are mated with purebred cocker spaniels to produce a spoodle. There

appear to be few breeding problems.

Space, exercise and training

These are usually medium-sized dogs which adapt well to an average backyard, however, they seem to have enormous energy and a regular walk or play in the park is highly recommended to burn off that excess spirit! Their boundless enthusiasm and outgoing nature could make spoodles harder to train, although persistence, as usual, should succeed.

Ideal owner

A spoodle is not a pet for a poser. And it isn't a pet for people who want to leave their dog in the backyard and ignore it. Spoodles have parent-breeds who love humans and attention, and they have a double dose! This dog needs to be included with family activities and have regular exercise. Training is important and may be challenging for individual dogs.

Grooming

Depending on the look of the spoodle, grooming can take between 5 minutes a week to 15 minutes daily. The coats on many spoodles are thick and wavy and many owners use a 'slicker' brush (rectangular with pin-type tines) which should take out loose hair and matts. Those that more-closely resemble a Poodle may need clipping. The eyes should also be watched for weeping

Further information

ACA Kennels

Breed a variety of designer crosses

Victoria phone: (03) 9723 9811

WA phone: (08) 9446 9144

Web: www.acabreederskennels.com.au

Heavy Petting

Balmain NSW

Contact : Sonia Walsh

Phone : (02) 9810 4439

Web: www.heavypetting.net.au

Valley View

Gippsland Vic

Phone : (03) 5664 8322

Web: www.valleyviewdogs.com

Billabong Creek Farm

Willung South, East Gippsland Vic

Phone: (03) 51942374

Web: www.billabongcreekfarm.com.au

People in other states should try local pet shops in their area.

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