

# Oodles of Doodles and Poodles

I recently began researching crossbred dogs due to a sudden rise of Westchester residents bringing these interesting puppies in for training. Three or four years ago I was introduced to my first Labradoodle, a cross between a Labrador Retriever and a Standard Poodle. I found the individual dog to be wonderful and learned that this cross breed was developed in Australia in the 1970's. The introduction of the Labradoodle reminded me of the old days when back in the 60's and 70's there seemed to be cocker-poos and schnoodles all over the place. The cocker spaniel crossed with a miniature poodle (cocker-poo) produced a dog smaller than the cocker spaniel with a hair coat that lent itself toward a hypoallergenic pet, which the spaniel was not. The miniature schnauzer when crossed with a miniature poodle (schnoodle) once again produced a hypoallergenic coat that differed from the cocker-poodle mix in the body type as well as color. While reminiscing of those cross breeds I remembered the peke-a-poo (Pekinese and poodle cross). Peke-a-poos are often a cross between Toy Poodles and Pekinese resulting in a small, really cute and fuzzy dog with an interesting head. The Peke is a braechiocephalic breed, which means that it has a pushed in muzzle similar to that of the Pug. Almost anything can be possible, Yorkie-poo (Yorkshire terrier/Toy Poodle cross), Poochi (Chihuahua/Toy Poodle cross) Pom-poo (Pomeranian/Toy Poodle cross) and so on.

Most recently it has been the Labradoodle and the Goldendoodle to grace the soil of the United States. The Labradoodle and Goldendoodle were originally bred as hypoallergenic guide dogs in Australia. My sources tell me that to produce these breeds one should breed a purebred Labrador retriever to a purebred Poodle or in the case of the Goldendoodle, a purebred Golden Retriever to a purebred Poodle. I believe that it also considered favorable to breed a Labradoodle or Goldendoodle back to a purebred Poodle. The reason for not breeding a Labradoodle to a Labradoodle is likely to be some difficulty in producing a physical and behavioral type while keeping a healthy gene pool. The Poodle offers the low shed, low dander coat therefore it makes sound genetic sense to breed back to the Poodle. The bottom line is that when a well bred Labrador or Golden is bred to a well-bred Poodle, things should work out well. Problems may arise when generally for the sake of income or ignorance, someone breeds the wrong dogs. When a breeder has no knowledge of current bloodlines the results are often undesirable with puppies having genetic and or behavioral problems. Goldens, Poodles and Labradors may have the genetic predisposition for hip dysplasia. Some Labradors are also genetically prone to progressive retinal atrophy, a debilitating eye problem. The full genetic picture of both breeds' specific bloodlines must be considered to establish a healthy breeding program.

Unlike Cocker poos and Peek a poos, the Labradoodle and Goldendoodle come in three sizes, standard, medium and miniature. The Standard Doodle is the size of a Standard Poodle; the Medium Doodle is Labrador size with the Miniature being cocker spaniel sized. Poodles are shown in three varieties as well, standard, miniature and toy. I have no doubt that in an effort to produce the miniature doodle that it is through artificial insemination of the poodle to the Golden or Labrador. Who knows what kinds of problems can come of that? Poodles come in a variety of colors, black, red, white,

chocolate and apricot are among the most popular. Labradors also come in a few colors, black, yellow and chocolate. Cocker Spaniels come in black, buff and chocolate. Cockers also come in ascob, which is usually a black and white marked coat. Mixing these breeds with all the color combinations can produce interesting offspring. Almost all of the Poos and Doodles I've seen have been of one color. I have seen chocolate, yellow and black Labradoodles. I have seen 2 different coat types, one similar to the Labrador and the other more Poodle like. Anyone considering obtaining a Doodle should do all their homework and locate a knowledgeable and caring breeder. Popularity takes its toll, even on the cross breeds.

While the American Kennel Club recognizes 150 breeds of dogs, these cross-bred dogs are not currently acknowledged in any of the seven groups. As I grew up in the 50's and 60's, when a family was interested in obtaining a dog of a mixed heritage, they visited the local shelter where there was an abundance of such dogs. In the 60's it was purebred dogs that cost an arm and a leg whether you bought them from quality breeders or even if you impulse bought one at Macy's in Herald Square. Dogs of mixed heritage were free or the cost of a donation to the shelter. Today, you can expect to pay a considerable amount of money for these high brow cross breeds. Boy, times have changed, but one of the things that remain the same is that you can still find that Poodle-ish, Doodle-ish dog at the shelter all too often. The shelter dog may not be an expensive young pup but more likely, a diamond in the ruff. Old, is much younger than I used to think it was as I get older, and I can't help but think of those young adult dogs already considered too old to be placed in a home. A needy dog is never too old to go to a nice home. Many a Poodle cross needs a home right now.

My contact to most of the breeds, which have that common Poodle ancestry, has been generally terrific. Okay, I have had a few housebreaking issues with Cocker poos but most Poodle crosses are really easy to train. I enjoyed every minute spent training the Labradoodles and Goldendoodles presented for obedience they were all quick studies. Poodles have a reputation for being intelligent; one can understand why between the low shed coat and ease of training, it would be crossed to so many different breeds. The various size possibilities also appeals to potential owners. One must always revisit the fact that since these dogs do not have a breed standard set by a breed club, that the offspring will have great variability. This will hold true in most of these cross breeds. What will also hold true is, great genetic strength is a result of random selection. Breeders of purebred dogs know that in order to get type, some line breeding is favorable. Line breeding is accomplished when there are common relatives to both sides of the family. Often, when a line is too close as in a father/daughter, mother/son breeding we see associated problems with temperament or conformation. Line breeding is an art form; breeders try to gain type without sacrificing temperament or genetic disease by having common relatives three to six generations apart. Line breeding cross bred dogs would be a labor of love for any dedicated breeder attempting to gain recognition in a large kennel club. Type must be achieved so that a given standard allows the dogs to be judged against that standard to earn a title of champion. Producing a new breed is no easy matter, which is why it should be left up to the educated and scientific breeder.

I am always on the lookout for new and upcoming breeds and am still waiting for the breed that loves to vacuum the house. When I find it, I'll share it with my readers. Until then, love the dog you have because your dog loves you.