

# Congratulations on Your New Brussels Griffon!

*The American Brussels Griffon Association, AKC Parent Club for the breed, welcomes you to the world of the Brussels Griffon. You will find you now own a very exceptional breed.*



## About the Brussels Griffon

Many adjectives describe this delightful breed. The Brussels Griffon Standard employs: intelligent, alert, self important, sturdy, square, compact, thickset, short backed, and having an almost human expression. It is that face that makes this breed unique.

Griffon enthusiasts refer to them as “Velcro” dogs—always fixed as close to their owner as possible. Known for their complete devotion to their immediate families, they thrive on affection, but can become little tyrants if not socialized and taught manners. This breed tends to resist house training. It takes persistence, a daily schedule, and proven training methods to achieve success.

Griffons—devotees never call them “Brussels” as this is simply the city where they were first developed—excel in AKC conformation events, companion events, and as therapy dogs. However, their primary calling is to be a companion. Your Griffon requires human companionship and will not thrive without it. Be prepared to incorporate your dog into your lifestyle.

## A Little Brussels Griffon History

The origins of the Griffon are humble. In the early 1800s, coachmen customarily kept small terriers as ratters in the stables. Those in Belgium were Affenpinscher-like, known as griffons d’ecurie (wire-coated stable dogs). By the mid-1800s, crosses between the native Belgium dog and the Pug, black and tan King Charles Spaniel, and the Ruby varieties of the English Toy Spaniel combined to give us the determined, loving, enthusiastic dog we love to this day.

These crosses also account for the Griffon coat varieties rough (wire-coated) and smooth (short-haired). The smooth coat is



recessive to the rough coat. This means that two smooths can only produce smooths, but two roughs, who have a recessive gene for smooth, can produce smooth coats, as well. The crosses also produced the various coat colors—red, black, belge, black and tan—and the head characteristics that make this dog so distinctive. The original street dog was known as a “ratter,” and some Griffon owners report their dogs still perform this duty.

## Taking Care of Your Brussels Griffon Protecting Your Dog

Like their cousin the Pug, the Griffon often is not boundary trainable. They seem to have little homing instinct. This means your dog must remain in a fenced area, or be walked on lead, and not be allowed to run free. It is important to remember to protect them from themselves. Griffons require a moderate amount of exercise and do well in relatively small spaces, but they do bark.

They require protection from extreme heat and cold, so they do enjoy air conditioning in hot climates and heat when it’s cold outdoors. They should never be considered an outdoor dog.

Griffons should be given the opportunity to eliminate at least 4 times a day as an adult, and more often when young. Protect your new dog from mistakes by restricting him/her to one part of the house where mishaps can be easily cleaned until completely reliable.

As a responsible pet owner, spaying and/or neutering your Griffon is of the utmost importance. Recent and ongoing studies funded by the American Kennel Club Canine Health Foundation, have shown that it may be prudent for the long term health of the animal, to delay spay/neuter until a dog reaches maturity, as determined in conjunction with your Veterinarian and Breeder. Please keep an open dialogue with your Veterinarian and Breeder during this time. By neutering a male, its psychological need to mate will be removed, it will tend to make the dog less aggressive, and save him from testicular cancer. Spaying a female often makes for better health and longer life. She will not attract males by coming into season twice a year and will avoid pyometra which is a serious uterine infection.

Make sure your Brussels Griffon is identified with tags, tattoo, or microchip in case it is lost. AKC Reunite offers a free dog tag with recovery information and the AKC Reunite 24/7 phone number with AKC Registration. Whatever the method, be sure to register the microchip, tattoo, or tag number with AKC Reunite

for lifetime recovery protection. For more information see [www.akcreunite.org](http://www.akcreunite.org) or call 800-252-7894.

### **Grooming Your Dog**

Rough-coated Griffons are hand stripped for the show ring. A companion-only Griffon can be groomed at home or by a groomer. This is done every two months or so. Smooth-coated Griffons receive some grooming for show, but rarely require more than an occasional bath and brushing as a pet. Both coat types require regular ear cleaning, nail trimming, and will need their anal glands expressed periodically. Keep eyes, muzzle wrinkles, and beard clean. Adult dogs may need their teeth cleaned from time to time, so discuss this with your dog's healthcare provider.

### **Veterinary Care**

Your Griffon puppy needs to be fully immunized and requires booster shots as your veterinarian advises. If you live in an area where heartworm is prevalent, you should also discuss preventative care. A yearly wellness exam is a good deterrent to future health problems. With your love and conscientious care, your dog should live into his or her early to mid-teens.

### **Health Concerns**

Responsibly bred, well-socialized Griffons are usually bright, happy, and healthy. But there is always a possibility of congenital (present at birth but not necessarily heritable) or genetic (heritable) defects in any living creature and that includes Griffons. Brussels Griffons should be checked as puppies and adults for heart problems, eye defects such as cataracts, and orthopedic problems such as patella luxation (slipping knee caps) and hip dysplasia. Information on other health concerns can be found at

[abga.club/about-the-breed/](http://abga.club/about-the-breed/)

Many Parent Club members individually or collectively support health research and related studies for the breed through donations to the Brussels Griffon Fund at the AKC Canine Health Foundation (at [www.akcchf.org](http://www.akcchf.org)), a nonprofit charitable organization. The parent club's Health Foundation, a fund held within the club, also supports health study and accepts donations sent to the American Brussels Griffon Association (ABGA) Treasurer stating the gift is for the ABGA Health Foundation. Supporting canine health helps ensure a healthy future for all dogs.

### **Breeding Concerns**

Breeding a Brussels Griffon is only recommended if you have purchased an exceptionally outstanding puppy that develops into an even more outstanding adult. A top quality Griffon should be able to do well in conformation competition with other Griffons in AKC conformation events. You should consider breeding only after your dog has passed health



screening tests. If ever a puppy is born with any genetic defect, it means the parents are carriers of that hereditary disease, and the breeding should not be repeated.

You should also consider the fact that breeding Griffons requires a certain amount of skill and knowledge. Moreover, breeding requires a financial investment, as well as access to good veterinarian care for a bitch in whelp and puppies. C-sections are often required to save the life of the mother and puppies.

Also factor in the time and energy devoted to raising well socialized and healthy puppies before taking this step. Breeders should act responsibly when placing puppies to ensure a positive lifelong nurturing environment for the dog. Overpopulation is a growing problem.

*Are you a Brussels Griffon owner who would enjoy belonging to the American Brussels Griffon Association, parent club for the breed?*

- *Want information about joining ABGA, and/or breed information? Visit ABGA's website at*

[abga.club](http://abga.club)

Please contact the club Secretary for membership information. You will find the email and postal addresses of the ABGA Secretary, and all Officers and Governors posted on the website.

- *Interested in Brussels Griffon breed rescue? Visit National Brussels Griffon Rescue, Inc. at*

[www.brusselsgriffonrescue.org](http://www.brusselsgriffonrescue.org)

for information, Griffons in the rescue program, and application forms for adoption or foster parenting.

**Enjoy your Brussels Griffon!**

