

LEARNING MADE EASY



2nd Edition

Mixed Breeds

for
dummies[®]

A Wiley Brand



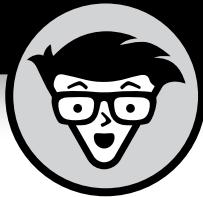
Understand your
mixed-breed dog

Discover tips and tricks for the
most effective training techniques

Share your life with your new
mixed-breed companion

Miriam Fields-Babineau

Animal trainer, psychologist, zoologist,
and prolific author



Mixed Breeds

2nd Edition

by Miriam Fields-Babineau

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Mixed Breeds For Dummies®, 2nd Edition

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2020 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

Published simultaneously in Canada

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, Making Everything Easier, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and may not be used without written permission. SAFe and Scaled Agile Framework are registered trademarks of Scaled Agile, Inc. Certified Scrum Developer, Certified Scrum Product Owner, Certified Scrum Professional, Certified Scrum Trainer, and Certified ScrumMaster are registered trademarks of Scrum Alliance. PMI Agile Certified Practitioner and PMI-ACP are registered trademarks of Project Management Institute, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, please contact our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 877-762-2974, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3993, or fax 317-572-4002. For technical support, please visit <https://hub.wiley.com/community/support/dummies>.

Wiley publishes in a variety of print and electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some material included with standard print versions of this book may not be included in e-books or in print-on-demand. If this book refers to media such as a CD or DVD that is not included in the version you purchased, you may download this material at <http://booksupport.wiley.com>. For more information about Wiley products, visit www.wiley.com.

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020944677

ISBN 978-1-119-71142-1 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-71143-8 (ebk); ISBN 978-1-119-71144-5 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part 1: Getting Started with Mixed Breeds	5
CHAPTER 1: Mixing It Up: Introducing the Mixed Breed	7
CHAPTER 2: Designer Dogs: Not Your Mother's Mutt	13
CHAPTER 3: A Little of This, a Little of That: Deciding Which Mixed Breed Is Right for You	27
CHAPTER 4: Choosing Your New Best Friend.....	41
Part 2: Living with Your Mixed-Breed Dog	55
CHAPTER 5: Getting Ready for Your Dog's Arrival	57
CHAPTER 6: Bringing Home Your Mixed Breed.....	69
CHAPTER 7: Chasing the Chuckwagon: The Basics of Feeding.....	81
CHAPTER 8: Grooming Your Mixed Breed	95
CHAPTER 9: Exercising Your Dog	111
Part 3: Training Your Dog	123
CHAPTER 10: Housetraining	125
CHAPTER 11: Hup, Two, Three, Four: Good Manners and Basic Training.....	141
CHAPTER 12: Tackling Mixed-Breed Training Challenges.....	173
Part 4: Keeping Your Dog Healthy	201
CHAPTER 13: Finding and Working with a Vet	203
CHAPTER 14: First Aid: Dealing with Emergencies.....	215
CHAPTER 15: The Special Needs of Senior Dogs.....	227
Part 5: Having Fun with Your Dog	239
CHAPTER 16: Not Just for Purebreds: Showing Off with Your Mixed Breed.....	241
CHAPTER 17: Traveling with Charley	249
Part 6: The Part of Tens	259
CHAPTER 18: Ten Reasons to Spay or Neuter Your Dog	261
CHAPTER 19: Ten (or So) Fun Activities You and Your Mixed Breed Can Enjoy Together.....	267
Index	273

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book.....	1
Foolish Assumptions.....	2
Icons Used in This Book	3
Beyond the Book.....	3
Where to Go from Here	3
 PART 1: GETTING STARTED WITH MIXED BREEDS.....	5
CHAPTER 1: Mixing It Up: Introducing the Mixed Breed	7
A Mutt by Any Other Name: Defining Mixed Breeds	8
A Tale of Two Dogs: How Mixed-Breed Dogs Come to Be.....	9
Even Toy Dogs Aren't Toys	10
They Don't Call 'Em Man's Best Friend for Nothin'	11
 CHAPTER 2: Designer Dogs: Not Your Mother's Mutt.....	13
The Pros and Cons of Designer Dogs.....	14
The pros	14
The cons	14
The Major "Labels" in the Designer-Dog World.....	15
Oodles of Poodles.....	15
A basket of Toys.....	20
Intelligent perceptions: Border Collie hybrids.....	25
 CHAPTER 3: A Little of This, a Little of That: Deciding Which Mixed Breed Is Right for You	27
Asking Yourself the Right Questions.....	27
Do you have enough time for a dog?.....	28
Do you have enough money for a dog?.....	28
Are you ready to give your heart to a dog?.....	29
Looking at the Different Breeds	29
On the hunt: The Sporting Group	29
Ain't nothin' but a hound dog: The Hound Group	30
Workin' like a dog: The Working Group	31
Tenacious terriers: The Terrier Group	33
Big personalities in small packages: The Toy Group	34
All shapes and sizes: The Non-Sporting Group.....	35
Round 'em up: The Herding Group.....	36
Considering Age: Puppy or Adult?.....	37
Gender Bender: Male or Female?.....	39
Adding It Up: The Right Dog for You.....	39

CHAPTER 4: Choosing Your New Best Friend	41
Finding Your Very Own Mixed-Breed Dog.....	41
Breeders	42
Shelters.....	43
Rescue groups	43
Knowing Which Questions to Ask	44
Matchmaker, Matchmaker, Make Me a Match: Temperament Testing.....	45
Be gentle: Testing for touch sensitivity.....	45
What's that? Testing for movement and object sensitivity	47
Who's the boss? Testing for dominance and submission	49
I'll get that! Testing for possessiveness and retrieval ability.....	52
Follow the leader: Testing for social skills	53
PART 2: LIVING WITH YOUR MIXED-BREED DOG.....	55
CHAPTER 5: Getting Ready for Your Dog's Arrival.....	57
Dog-Proofing Your House	57
Removing chewing hazards.....	58
Protecting your furniture	59
Pushing up daisies: Giving your dog a place to dig	60
Born to run: Making sure your dog can't escape	61
Your Mixed-Breed Dog's Bedroom	62
Crate or pen? Your dog's first place to sleep.....	62
Thinking outside the box: Letting your dog sleep outside a crate or pen.....	63
Bedding.....	63
Giving Your Dog a Place to Eat	64
Stocking Up on Supplies.....	64
Collars and leashes	64
Dishes and bowls.....	65
Toys	66
CHAPTER 6: Bringing Home Your Mixed Breed	69
Giving Your Dog the Guided Tour.....	70
Walking her in and showing her around	70
Greeting the family	70
Meeting other pets	71
Taking her out to do her business	74
Showing the dog her sleeping area	75
Fighting Those First-Night Blues	76
Scheduling Time for Your New Dog	77
Exercise and playtime.....	77
Feeding time.....	78
Potty time	79

CHAPTER 7: Chasing the Chuckwagon: The Basics of Feeding	81
The Basics of Nutrition	82
Types of Dog Food.....	83
Commercial dog food	84
Homemade food	86
Raw diet	86
Don't touch! Foods and plants that are poisonous to dogs	87
How Much to Feed	89
Feeding according to your dog's age	90
Feeding according to your dog's size	91
Special Dietary Needs.....	91
It's My Treat: Giving Your Dog a Little Something Extra.....	92
CHAPTER 8: Grooming Your Mixed Breed	95
Why Grooming Matters: Inside and Out	96
Brushing Your Dog	96
Cleaning Your Dog's Ears	98
Look, Ma — No Cavities! Brushing Your Canine's Choppers.....	99
The Eyes Have It: Caring for Your Mixed Breed's Eyes.....	100
Mani/Pedi Time: Clipping Your Dog's Nails	101
Bathing Your Dog	104
Checking for Parasites	106
Preventing parasites	106
Curing parasites.....	107
The Daily Once-Over: Checking Your Dog for Problems	108
CHAPTER 9: Exercising Your Dog	111
Knowing How Much Exercise Your Dog Needs.....	112
Puppies	112
Adult dogs.....	113
Older dogs	115
Finding an Activity Your Dog Enjoys	116
Walking	116
Jogging and running	116
Biking.....	117
Fetch	117
Hiking	118
Swimming.....	119
Horse and hound.....	121

PART 3: TRAINING YOUR DOG	123
CHAPTER 10: Housetraining	125
When You Gotta Go: Looking for Your Dog's Warning Signs	126
Scheduling Potty Breaks.....	127
If you work away from home all day.....	128
If you work out of your house	129
If your schedule changes frequently	129
Crate-Training to Prevent Accidents.....	130
How the crate works.....	130
Introducing your dog to the crate.....	131
Teaching your dog to go in a specific area.....	133
Teaching your dog to get it done faster.....	134
Other Training Methods.....	135
Paper training.....	136
Using a litter pan	136
Watching for Success	136
Observing your dog.....	137
Giving freedom only when she earns it	137
Working on Some Advanced Housetraining Techniques	138
Training your dog to potty on command.....	139
You rang? Getting your dog to ring a bell when she has to go	139
CHAPTER 11: Hup, Two, Three, Four: Good Manners and Basic Training	141
Preparing for Training.....	141
Targeting: The first step in training.....	142
Using a marker: The second step in training.....	142
Buying the right training tools.....	143
Making your voice and body work for you	145
Training the Basic Commands.....	147
Come	147
Heel	148
Getting started: The basics of Heel.....	149
Handling a dog who pulls.....	152
Trying the Heel off-leash	153
Sit.....	154
Down.....	156
Stay	158
Time.....	159
Movement	160
Distance	162
Getting your dog to come from a Stay.....	162

Dealing with Distractions	165
Looking at the different levels of distraction.....	166
Introducing distractions to your dog	167
Helping your dog be reliable off-leash.....	168
Finding a Trainer	168
CHAPTER 12: Tackling Mixed-Breed Training Challenges	173
Unpacking the Mental Baggage: Helping a Dog	
Who's Been Abused or Neglected.....	174
Alone and Frightened: Separation Anxiety	174
Recognizing the symptoms	175
Knowing what to do about it	177
Severe anxiety: When to seek outside help.....	183
No More Mr. Nice Guy: The Aggressive Dog.....	184
Recognizing the types of aggression	184
Knowing what to do about it	186
Jumping for Joy.....	187
Knowing why dogs jump	187
Keeping your dog's feet on the ground	188
Curing the insistent jumper.....	189
Chewing Your Dog Out for Chewing.....	190
Understanding why dogs chew.....	190
Solving the problem	191
From Beggar to Chooser: Getting Your Dog to Stop	
Begging at the Table	195
Nipping and Mouthing	196
Understanding why dogs nip and mouth	196
Preventing the problem	196
Curing the problem.....	197
Digging to the Center of the Earth	197
Knowing why dogs dig	197
Giving your dog a place to dig.....	198
PART 4: KEEPING YOUR DOG HEALTHY.....	201
CHAPTER 13: Finding and Working with a Vet.....	203
Choosing a Veterinarian.....	203
Spaying or Neutering Your Pet	206
Microchipping or Tattooing: Keeping Your Dog Safe	207
Keeping Up with Regular Healthcare	208
Regular checkups and yearly vaccinations	209
Baseline tests.....	210
Controlling parasites.....	210

Addressing Special Health Problems	211
Skin allergies.....	211
Food allergies.....	212
Appetite issues.....	212
Skeletal disorders	213
CHAPTER 14: First Aid: Dealing with Emergencies.....	215
Gathering Emergency Contact Information.....	215
Assembling Your Canine First-Aid Kit	217
First-Aid Basics.....	218
Allergies.....	218
Bloat	219
Broken bones or dislocations	219
Burns.....	220
Choking.....	220
Cuts	220
Diarrhea	220
Heat stroke.....	221
Hypothermia	221
Insect bites	222
Poisoning	222
Puncture wounds	222
Run-ins with wild animals.....	223
Seizures.....	223
Shallow wounds.....	224
Shock.....	224
Snake bites	224
Vomiting	224
If You Lose Your Dog.....	225
Before your dog is lost: Getting proper identification	225
What to do when your dog is lost	226
CHAPTER 15: The Special Needs of Senior Dogs.....	227
How Old Is Old: Knowing When Your Dog Has Earned Senior Status	227
The Early-Bird Special: Feeding Your Senior Dog	229
Use It or Lose It: Exercising Your Senior Dog	230
Social time with other dogs	230
Walks with you.....	231
Identifying Health Problems Common to Seniors	231
Hearing loss	231
Blindness	232
Arthritis	232
Digestive disorders	233
Cancer.....	233

Dementia	233
Depression	234
Recognizing Behavior Problems That Sometimes Come with Age.	235
Saying Goodbye.	236
PART 5: HAVING FUN WITH YOUR DOG	239
CHAPTER 16: Not Just for Purebreds: Showing Off with Your Mixed Breed	241
Participating in a Mixed-Breed Dog Club.....	241
Competing in obedience matches and dog shows.	242
Competing in agility.	244
Competing in Rally.	245
Media Hound: Getting Your Dog on Camera.	246
Knowing what animal agents look for	247
Preparing for work	247
What to expect when your dog performs in front of the camera.	248
CHAPTER 17: Traveling with Charley	249
Deciding Whether to Bring Your Dog with You.....	250
Finding Pet-Friendly Places to Stay.....	251
Packing for Your Trip.....	251
Traveling by Car	253
Flying with Your Dog	254
What to do before you leave	254
Caring for your dog before and after the flight.....	256
Leaving Your Dog Behind.....	256
Finding an in-home sitter	256
Knowing what to look for in a kennel.....	257
PART 6: THE PART OF TENS	259
CHAPTER 18: Ten Reasons to Spay or Neuter Your Dog	261
It Doesn't Cost Much — and It May Be Free!.....	262
Breeding Is Time-Consuming and Expensive	262
You Reduce Your Dog's Risk of Cancer.....	263
You Help Control the Number of Unwanted Dogs in the World	264
Your Dog Won't Be as Likely to Stray from Home	264
Your Dog Will Be on Her Best Behavior	265
Your Dog Will Be Easier to Housetrain.....	265
Reproduction Can Be Risky	265
Your Dog Will Be a Better Watchdog	266
Your Dog Isn't You.....	266

CHAPTER 19: Ten (or So) Fun Activities You and Your Mixed Breed Can Enjoy Together	267
Competing with Your Dog at American Kennel Club Events	268
Participating in United Kennel Club Events	268
Training Your Dog to Dive	268
Joining the Fun at the American Treibball Association	269
Camping and Hiking: Finding Fun Outdoor Activities	270
Helping Your Dog Become a Good Citizen	270
Help Your Dog Help Other People	271
Dancing with Your Mixed Breed	272
Flying High with Flyball	272
INDEX	273

Introduction

A mixed-breed dog, as the name implies, is one that's a mix of two or more breeds — as opposed to purebred dogs, which can trace their lineage back to purebred parents and grandparents and on and on. Believe it or not, mixed-breed dogs are more numerous than purebred dogs and, until recently, they were thought of as less-than-ideal pets and companions. But with the new designer-dog hybrid craze, all that has drastically changed. Many people are willing to spend upwards of \$2,000 for a mixed-breed dog just because they know the dog's parents were purebreds.

Even though mixed-breed dogs — designer or not — may not have consistent attributes (like size and appearance), they can make *great* companions, often with fewer physical problems than pedigreed dogs.

I should know: I've been training dogs for more than 40 years. Plus, my studies in psychology and zoology have gone a long way toward helping me understand why dogs behave the way they do. I've written and published numerous articles and books about dogs, their behavior, care, breed specifics, and training. I've researched numerous breeds, including their characteristics and behavior. And as a professional trainer, I've worked with many breeds and breed mixes, teaching them to behave and live harmoniously with their human companions as well as other animals.

In this book, I've brought together all the material you need to help you live with and train your mixed-breed dog. *Remember:* A dog doesn't have to have a pedigree to be a good companion. It merely has to have quality care, guidance, consistency, and understanding. *Mixed Breeds For Dummies* will help you develop a great relationship with your mixed-breed dog.

About This Book

Although you'll find all kinds of useful information in each chapter of this book, you don't have to read it all to benefit from it. Each chapter contains all the tools you need to accomplish specific goals.

Though this book declares to be about mixed-breed dogs it's actually about *all* dogs, because mixed-breed dogs are the combinations of many dogs. Although designer dogs are actually hybrids, consisting of the breeding of two purebreds, mixed breeds often contain more than two breeds — sometimes as many as ten, or more, depending on the genetics of the parents. The information in this book pertains to all breeds of dogs, so whether you have a mixed-breed dog or a pure-bred dog, you'll benefit from reading this book.

Also, it's true that I have lots of credentials — from degrees to publications to hands-on experience — but this book isn't about my standing up on a soapbox and lecturing you. I know you're busy, so in this book, I tell you only what you need to know and nothing that you don't.

If you're short on time, you can safely skip the sidebars (text in gray boxes) — the information they contain is interesting but not critical. You can also skip any paragraphs marked by the Technical Stuff icon (see "Icons Used in This Book," later in this Introduction, for more information).

Within this book, you may note that some web addresses break across two lines of text. If you're reading this book in print and want to visit one of these web pages, simply key in the web address exactly as it's noted in the text, pretending as though the line break doesn't exist. If you're reading this as an e-book, you've got it easy — just click the web address to be taken directly to the web page.

Foolish Assumptions

Because you've picked up this book I assume you're not a dummy. You're either thinking of getting a mixed-breed dog or you already own one. Plus, the fact that you want to find out more about your dog makes you exceptionally intelligent. I make some other assumptions about you:

- » I assume you have, or are about to get, a mixed-breed dog because you wanted a unique individual to love and live with.
- » I assume that you want just the facts you need to make certain you accomplish your goals. You don't want all the scientific jargon and terminology explaining the background of each topic.
- » I assume you have a big heart to take on a dog and give her a happy home.

Icons Used in This Book

Icons are those little eye-catching pictures in the margin of this book. These icons are eye-catching for a reason: They flag important information. Here's what they mean:



TIP



WARNING



TECHNICAL STUFF



REMEMBER

The Tip icon helps you solve problems faster or explains an easier way to approach an issue.

The Warning icon prevents you from doing something dangerous to your dog, yourself, or others. Heed this icon!

The Technical Stuff icon precedes interesting information, though not vital to your mixed-breed dog's well-being. Although you really don't need to read the information preceded by a Technical Stuff icon, you won't lose much time doing so, and it may help you understand your dog better.

The Remember icon helps you stay on track in maintaining your dog's health and well-being. This information is so important I may say it twice!

Beyond the Book

In addition to the book you have in your hands, you can access some extra content online. Check out the free Cheat Sheet for questions to ask when adopting a dog, tips on temperament testing, and a checklist of supplies to have on hand. Just go to www.dummies.com and type **Mixed Breeds For Dummies** in the Search box.

Where to Go from Here

Because this book is written in a modular manner — with each chapter a stand-alone unit — you don't have to read everything in order. In fact, if you already have a mixed-breed dog, you won't need to read the chapters on where to find a dog, nor will you need the information on making sure the dog is right for you. If you get a designer dog, you might want to find out more about how to train her

than solve problems that she likely hasn't developed. Or, if you've had a mixed-breed dog for many years and are curious about the changes he'll be going through as he ages, you may want to skip to the chapter about senior dogs. Use the Table of Contents and Index to find the chapters that appeal to you now, and come back to this book as your needs and interests change.

Regardless of where you begin reading, you're sure to discover new things giving you the inspiration to spend time with your mixed breed and enhance your lives.

Yours is a partnership for life. Have fun together!

1 **Getting Started with Mixed Breeds**

IN THIS PART . . .

Find out what makes a mixed-breed dog a mixed breed.

Look at what goes into a designer dog.

Decide which mixed breed you want.

Meet and pick out the dog who's right for you.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Understanding what makes a dog a mixed breed
- » Recognizing that size doesn't matter — a dog is a dog
- » Remembering that your dog — no matter his mix — wants to be your best friend

Chapter **1**

Mixing It Up: Introducing the Mixed Breed

The offspring of purebred dogs all look alike on the outside, and have similar personalities and temperaments. You can't say that about mixed-breed dogs. No two are exactly alike — even those from the same litter. Although their environment has a lot of impact on their future behavior, they still have specific genetic codes that are difficult to decipher.

Mixed-breed dogs — especially so-called “designer dogs” — have recently experienced a surge in popularity. Though actually hybrids — the offspring of two purebreds — designer dogs are highly prized for their unique characteristics. Designer dogs are very expensive, because they're in short supply and highly desired.

Very small mixed breeds have also become very popular. They're easy to transport, can be carried in a handbag, and offer all the affection and playful antics of their larger cousins. From 3 to 7 pounds, so-called “pocket dogs” are gaining ground, probably fueled by the fact that they're carried by their celebrity owners down the red carpet. Many of the current, popular pocket dogs are hybrids — the mix of two very small purebred dogs.

Most dogs — regardless of their breed or size — merely want to be with their human companions. Your dog looks to you for direction, companionship, food, shelter, and understanding. In return, your dog offers friendship, trust, and love. He'll never grow up and move away, he's there when you need someone to talk to,

and he's always ready to join in a game. Your dog doesn't have to be purebred to fulfill your needs. After all, your dog doesn't know what purebred is — all he knows is that he wants to be with you.

A Mutt by Any Other Name: Defining Mixed Breeds

A mixed-breed dog is one who has been conceived by two different purebred or mixed-breed dogs. The parentage of many mixed-breed dogs is unknown, because the breeding wasn't planned. Two unsterilized dogs crossed paths when the female was in heat, and the rest is history.

Mixed-breed dogs are sometimes called mutts, mongrels, or Heinz 57 dogs. No matter what they've been called, they haven't traditionally been the sought-after purebred dog that people pay a lot of money to buy.

In recent years, though, mixed-breed dogs have become more popular. The American Kennel Club (AKC) has officially created a new grouping for mixed-breed dogs — the All-American — through its AKC Canine Partners program (www.akc.org/register/information/canine-partners). Now mixed-breed dogs can participate in any performance event that was formerly the domain of purebred dogs, including certifications such as the Canine Good Citizen (CGC; www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen) and AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy programs (www.akc.org/products-services/training-programs/canine-good-citizen/akc-star-puppy). Mixed-breed dogs are also being put to work as service dogs, therapy dogs, and search-and-rescue dogs. They're valued as pets and companions. And in some parts of the world, owning a mixed-breed dog is considered chic.

Each mixed-breed dog is unique. Even designer dogs don't meet any specific standard, such as those seen in purebred dogs. There's no guarantee of the adult dog's height, appearance, or temperament. What happens happens.



WARNING

Although some designer-dog breeders claim that their mixed-breed pups are healthier due to breeding two different breeds together, this isn't always the case. The health of the pups depends on the two individuals who are mixed. Only through careful testing of the parents — such as X-raying hip joints, testing the eyes and heart, testing blood for specific diseases, and temperament testing for overall personality — can a breeder be somewhat certain that the offspring will be healthy. Although most professional purebred dog breeders do these tests, few designer-dog breeders do so. And you can be sure that the owners of those wandering pets who crossed paths didn't do so either.



REMEMBER

A designer dog is a dog whose parents were both purebred dogs, of different breeds. For example, a Golden Doodle has one parent who is a purebred Golden Retriever and another parent who is a purebred Poodle. His mother may have been the Poodle, and his father may have been the Golden Retriever — or vice versa. The designer dog was bred intentionally by a designer-dog breeder. A non-designer mixed-breed dog is a dog who was bred either intentionally or by accident. One or both of his parents were *not* purebred dogs.

Even though you have no idea what your mixed-breed puppy will grow up to look like, there *are* ways to be sure he'll still be a good pet. Your good care, training, and love will make him the ideal companion. It doesn't matter what others might think when they see your short-legged, long-backed, droopy-eared, multicolored dog with the overshot jaw and wrinkled forehead. All that matters is your love and devotion to him, which he'll return tenfold.

A Tale of Two Dogs: How Mixed-Breed Dogs Come to Be

The story of mixed-breed dogs is often a sad one. Many people see them as a lower caste of animal — with no heritage and an unknown future. They overpopulate animal shelters and humane societies. They roam the streets in cities, suburbs, and rural areas, menacing wildlife and small pets. In their search for food, they raid garbage cans and alleyways. If captured by animal control, few are claimed, and most are put to sleep.

Just as people throw out old computers, or clothing that's no longer in style, mixed-breed dogs often suffer the same consequences when their owners no longer want to be bothered to care for them. The most common scenarios:

- » Someone falls in love with a mixed-breed pup, but quickly tires of the pup as he grows and develops behavioral problems (because the person treated him more like a toy than a dog). Broken toys are thrown away; mixed-breed dogs are abandoned in the streets or at local animal shelters.
- » Someone wants to let her children experience the wonders of birth. How great is it to watch puppies being born and nursing! How cute the puppies are as they crawl around! Seeing the pups' eyes open for the first time, watching them eat solid food for the first time, and watching them play with each other — what could be better? But when the pups' mother no longer cares for them, the task of feeding and cleaning up after the puppies falls on the adult in the house. And if homes can't be found for the pups, they're abandoned.

HOW TO TELL WHERE YOUR DOG CAME FROM

The best way to figure out the breeds that make up your mixed-breed dog is to look through an encyclopedia of purebred dogs. Most mixed breeds have *some* appearance or personality that resembles one of the parent breeds. Often, you just have to look at color, coat type, or size to have a vague idea of which section to look in. For example, if the dog is large, has a beauty mark on the cheek, and has upright ears, there's a good chance he's part Shepherd. If the dog is small, with long silky fur and a short nose, there's a good chance she's part of some Toy dog breed, likely some Pekingese.

Make a list of your dog's attributes. Compare them to those you see in the encyclopedia of purebred dogs or head to Chapter 3, where you can find an overview of the different breed groups. When you have a fairly good idea of your mixed-breed dog's genetics, read more about those breeds to learn about their behavior, temperament, and health-related issues. Doing so will help you know your dog even better than you already do!

- » A dog just gets loose. The dog's owner tried to keep him contained, but where there's a will, there's a way, especially if the air is carrying the odor of a female dog in season, which many male dogs can detect from more than a mile away. It's not unheard of for a male dog to climb a high fence to escape or boldly run through an invisible fence's electronic field.



WARNING

An unhappy dog without companionship will do what he can to get loose and find company. Dogs who are tethered outdoors break their ropes; those in pens dig under the fence; many in yards jump over a fence or take advantage of open gates because they want to find other dogs. And when they find other dogs, they often procreate — and then more unwanted mixed breeds enter the world.

Rarely does breeding of mixed-breed dogs happen intentionally. Though unplanned, many mixed-breed dogs can still bring joy and love to your life. Don't judge the dog on how he came to be, or where he was found — instead, consider how happy and fulfilling a future shared with that mixed-breed dog can be!

Even Toy Dogs Aren't Toys

“Mommy, Daddy, can I have a dog?”

Many families give in to their little one's wishes without thinking long and hard about it first. And many other people give a friend or loved one a dog for a holiday

or birthday gift — not knowing whether the person really wants the dog or is prepared to care for him. Unfortunately a good percentage of these “gifts” end up at the local animal shelters just a few months down the road — much like a toy that no longer works or isn’t played with anymore.



REMEMBER

Dogs take work. Yes, they’re adorable — as puppies and adults — but putting time and energy into the care of your dog is essential if you want a happy, healthy companion. Think seriously about how much time you have to give before you commit to getting a puppy or adult dog. If you can’t give a dog proper care, you’ll do yourself and the dog a favor by not bringing him home.

Proper care goes hand in hand with overall health and well-being. In Part 2, I let you know how to give your mixed-breed dog a good home, feed him correctly, groom him, and exercise him. A healthy dog is less likely to develop health and behavioral issues. Bottom line: If you take good care of your dog physically, he’s less likely to develop the kinds of behavioral problems that result in many dogs ending up in shelters, without homes.

Training is essential for every dog — big or small. A trained dog is happier, easier to live with, and more accepting of new situations. If all dogs were trained as puppies, the animal shelters wouldn’t be nearly as full. In Part 3, I guide you through the training process, as well as help you understand the special problems that can occur in mixed-breed dogs. As your dog ages, he’ll have special needs. In Part 4, I also discuss how to recognize signs of age-related behavioral changes, possible physical changes, and when the right time may be to let him go.

Any kind of dog can be a valued family member. What you get from your dog is entirely dependent on what you put *into* the relationship.

They Don’t Call ‘Em Man’s Best Friend for Nothin’

Wondering what you can do with a mixed-breed dog? Anything! You may not be able to compete in purebred dog club shows, but similar certificate-awarding shows are available for mixed-breed dogs. You and your dog are teammates in all performance activities. Your mixed breed can

- » **Participate in obedience trials.** These are tests of your dog’s response to obedience commands. See Chapter 16 for more information.

- » **Participate in agility.** Not only does this challenge your dog physically, but also tests how well you communicate with him while in action. See Chapter 16 for more information.
- » **Compete in flyball.** This is a relay team event with four dogs/handlers per team. The dogs run down a lane to fetch a ball and return. The fastest team wins.
- » **Take the Canine Good Citizen test.** This test is a way of testing your dog's obedience and temperament in public. (It's not a competition.)
- » **Work as a therapy dog.** Your mixed breed can bring joy to others by going to nursing homes, hospitals, and care centers.
- » **Work as a service dog.** Service dogs perform important tasks for those who are unable to. They are guiding eyes for the blind, ears for the deaf, and hands for those without.
- » **Assist with search-and-rescue operations.** Search-and-rescue dogs find lost people and save their lives.

In Chapter 17, I explain how to travel with your dog. I fill you in on preparing for your trip and help you make sure your dog is safe, secure, and relaxed during the trip, whether you're traveling by plane, train, or automobile. Because many dogs get stressed — or homesick — while traveling, I let you know what to do to help your dog become a traveling gent.

Mixed breeds can perform jobs to help people, save people, and inspire people. They're stars on the screen, stage, and television. They're heroes in the line of duty or while sifting through debris. They keep our borders safe, sniffing out dangerous chemicals and drugs.

Many mixed breeds have a bad start, but you can change that by adopting one that steals your heart. Just one stroll through an animal shelter or humane society, and you're bound to find one, or two, who'll give you the love and devotion you're looking for.

They don't call dogs man's best friend for nothing. Nobody can love you like a dog.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- » Hearing the hype about hybrids
- » Identifying the pros and cons of hybrid dogs
- » Looking at the most popular designer dogs

Chapter 2

Designer Dogs: Not Your Mother's Mutt

What do Julianne Moore, Uma Thurman, and Jake Gyllenhaal have in common? No, they haven't all won Oscars. They all have Puggles — the designer-dog hybrid of a Pug and a Beagle. Designer dogs are growing in popularity, and they're often more expensive than purebred pups. Why? Because they're unique.

So, why would someone pay upwards of \$1,500 for a mixed-breed dog when he can go to the local animal shelter and adopt one for \$30? Aren't all mixed-breed dogs unique in their own ways? Yes — but not all mixed-breed dogs purposely designed. Not all mixed-breed dogs have pedigree parents. Not all mixed-breed dogs have a well-documented lineage. Designer dogs are intentionally chosen to create a specific appearance and temperament in the offspring. The puppies are calculated, created, and planned. Most mixed-breed dogs are accidents — but there's nothing accidental about a designer dog, and many people are willing to pay more to get one.

Designer dogs are not without controversy, though. Purebred dog *fanciers* (a fancy name for people who are enthusiastic about dogs) are vehemently opposed to mixing their purebred dogs with any other breed. In this chapter, I fill you in on the pros and cons of designer dogs, so you can decide for yourself whether they're right for you. I also let you know which designer dogs are the most popular, and tell you a bit about those hybrids and what you can expect if you get one.

The Pros and Cons of Designer Dogs

Although breeders of designer dogs feel they're meeting the needs of a particular niche of people, purebred breeders and purebred dog clubs, such as the American Kennel Club (AKC), think the entire trend is dangerous to all dogs. In the following sections, I offer up both sides of the debate and let you make up your own mind.

The pros

One of the advantages of designer dogs is the sheer number of varieties available. Over 200 different hybrid combinations exist, which means there is a designer dog for every taste. Most of these hybrids are small and designed to have good personality combined with adorability.

Designer dogs are created to fit every need — from pocket-size dogs for easy travel to low-shed dogs for those with allergies. Many of these designer-dog creations are free of some of the traits that can make life difficult for the purebred dog. For example, some purebreds, like the Pug, have a very short snout, making breathing difficult. But the popular Puggle — the hybrid of a Pug and a Beagle — has a longer nose while still maintaining the Pug's wrinkled forehead and loopy gait.

Many hybrid breeders claim their dogs have *hybrid vigor*, a strength that comes from having parents of two different breeds. The offspring of two different breeds rarely inherit genetic defects, because the bloodlines aren't as close as those of purebreds. Purebred dogs often have inherited traits that can cause genetic defects. For example, many retriever breeds tend to have cataracts or epilepsy, many large-breed dogs have hip dysplasia, and many small-breed dogs are prone to dental problems. Mixed-breed dogs rarely inherit these genetic defects, because their genetics are more varied. (Incidentally, this is true of all mixed-breed dogs, not just designer dogs or hybrids.)

The cons

The major con of designer dogs is the price. Most designer dogs cost upwards of \$1,500, whereas many purebred dogs begin at \$800.

Although each designer dog was bred for specific appearance and traits, there's a good chance that some or all of them will not develop in the offspring. Mixing breeds is chancy, because the outcome is not absolute. Although purebred dog offspring will always mature to appear like the parent dogs, the hybrid offspring may appear more like one parent than the other, or have a personality more like one parent than the other. So, although you might be searching for a small Yorkipoo,

the pup might grow up to be the size of a large Yorkshire Terrier instead of a Teacup Poodle.

As much as the breeders of designer dogs claim that mixing two breeds improves the offspring's overall health, that fact is debatable. Although many of the puppies don't show symptoms of the recessive genetic dysfunctions commonly seen in purebred dogs, many other puppies do. In fact, a hybrid puppy can have the poor luck to inherit the worst physical and temperament traits of both parents.



REMEMBER

There are no guarantees when you get a dog — purebred, hybrid, or mutt.

The Major “Labels” in the Designer-Dog World

In the following sections, I introduce you to some of the most popular designer dogs.



TIP

I can't cover all 200+ varieties of designer dogs in this chapter. But if you're curious about the wide variety of designer dogs available, a great resource is the American Canine Hybrid Club (www.achclub.com). Click the Breeds tab to see a list of all the breeds the club recognizes.

Oodles of Poodles

Few hybrids are more popular than those with a Poodle parent. In fact, it was the Poodle mixture that started the entire fad of designer dogs, beginning with the Labradoodle and Cockapoo.

Poodles bring many great attributes into the hybrid crossing, plus they come in four sizes: Standard, Miniature, Toy, and Teacup (a size not currently recognized by the AKC). Plus, they're low- to no-shed dogs with dirt-resistant coats. When combined with a Retriever, or other straight soft-coated breed, they can produce a beautiful wavy or large-curl coat that's very attractive.

The smaller Poodle breeds also tend to live a long time. So instead of having a dog for only 10 to 12 years, you'll have one who will live upwards of 15 years. That, alone, makes a Poodle mix very attractive.

When compared to other purebred dogs, Poodles are rated high on the intelligence scale. They learn quickly and can work their way through problems faster than most other breeds. What's not to like about fast housetraining? Poodles are sensitive, highly aware, and learn by watching others.

Unless very poorly bred, Poodles have few genetic defects, though they aren't totally without health concerns. Their hips are far better than most retriever and shepherd breeds. They aren't prone to heart problems seen in many types of dogs. And they rarely have epilepsy, retinal atrophy, or allergies. Overall, mixing any purebred dog with a Poodle will create great offspring.

Labradoodles (Labrador Retriever/Poodle)

Created as the ultimate service dog, Labradoodles (see Figure 2-1) quickly became popular around the world. Just as the Labrador Retriever is the most popular purebred dog in the United States, the Labradoodle is also the most popular, large designer dog.

FIGURE 2-1:
Labradoodles
have three coat
types, two of
which do shed.

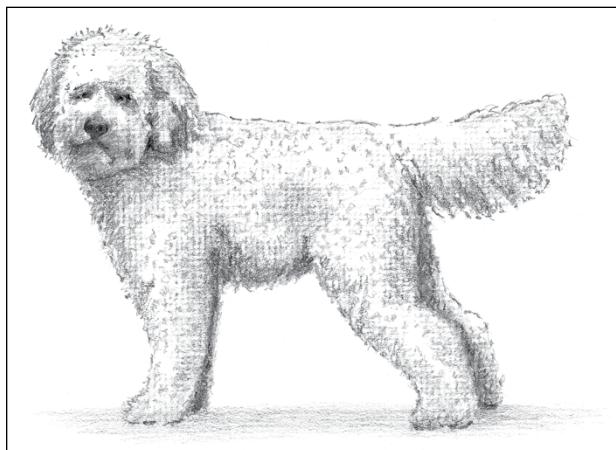


Illustration by Barbara Frake

Initially, Labradoodles were bred to aid people who needed service dogs, but were allergic to dog dander and fur. Labradoodles are large, solid, strong, and intelligent. They're eager to learn and love to please their human companions. As with the purebred Labrador service dogs, Labradoodles can work all day without tiring. And they're very loving. Labradoodles are ideal with children.



WARNING

Labradoodles don't interact well with assertive people or dominant dogs. Any heavy-handed training technique, such as being yelled at or jerked around on a leash, will cause a Labradoodle to shut down and want to crawl into a corner.