



# Buying a Puppy

## 1. Is this the right breed?

Hopefully the prospective puppy buyer will have done lots of homework, reading about the breed, meeting some animals and talking to their owners, and looking at web sites. Of course there needs to be adequate room for a dog with a safe, well fenced backyard. Also there has to be room in the lives of the family to take the dog out each day for its physical and mental health.

## 2. Why buy this kind of pup?

Border collies have many qualities and though most pups are bought to be the family pet, they also may be wanted for the show ring, to do agility and/or obedience, and even to work sheep or cattle. The buyer needs to have thought this through, remembering that Borders have lived close to their masters for generations, and that their greatest need is to be with others, either human or animal. Like all dogs, they are pack animals needing company. Whilst this closeness is usually the main reason for buying a pup, many people forget that companionship goes both ways - the dog needs company too.

## 3. A bitch or a dog?

There is no difference in the intelligence, cleanliness or trainability of either sex - each animal has its own identity, and will develop characteristics according to its genetic inheritance and the environment in which the pup was initially raised, and how you raise the dog. Generally speaking, males are larger, with heavier bones and longer coats. Females are usually smaller, lighter and have shorter coats. Neutering any animal may reduce those characteristics related to sex, for example males can be quite vocal, or seek to wander if a female in the area is in season (on heat). Female dogs when in season may choose to 'look for a mate', that may not necessarily be of your choosing! However, if the pup barks a lot, jumps on everyone, and chases cars, the pup will keep doing these things, as this is more of a behavioural issue. If an animal is to be shown, generally they are not desexed, however some clubs hold events and offer a 'Neuter class' for desexed dogs. If there is a possibility of breeding, and you are able to manage an entire animal (not desexed) neutering can be put off indefinitely.



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## 4. When to purchase a pup?

Bitches produce young at any time of the year, although the warmer months tend to be the months that Breeders have preference for raising a litter. Many people would like to purchase a puppy for Christmas – this may not always be possible. When considering buying a puppy, you must ensure you have time to raise the puppy, particularly when it first comes into the new home. Young pups need to be fed regularly during the day (frequency of this determined by age), and need company to keep their social skills; the company can be the human family, but may also be other pets in the home. To ensure the puppy has a safe home environment when you are at work, you might need to get help from friends and family to check on the pup to make sure water is freely available, and the meal is given as appropriate during the day.

## 5. What does the prospective buyer look for when viewing pups?

As all young are more like their parents than any others it is sensible to note the bitch - how she relates to her owner and to visitors, how big or small she is, and whether she is the sort of animal the buyer would like to own. If the pups are quite young, the bitch may be protective and dislike visitors - this is not to say that she is not usually a friendly animal under normal circumstances. The sire of the pups can usually be viewed too if he does not live too far away. Frequently pups are viewed before 8 weeks, the age at which they leave for their new homes, and breeders may request a deposit to ensure the buyer receives a pup. Most breeders prefer to leave the final indication of which pup will go to which buyer until as late as possible, enabling them to best decide which pup would suit the needs of each buyer. Remember that the pups markings are not anything like as important as such things as general health, suitability for the show ring, activity level, apparent intelligence and the place in the 'pecking' order in the litter. Its difficult enough to try to assess these attributes when pups are 8 weeks, but by then they show more than they did when younger. Most long time breeders will say that they are still learning!



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## **6. What help is offered to the new owner?**

The Border Collie Club provides each new owner with a form to join the club, a short article on 'Obedience Training in First 6 Months', and a pamphlet on Ceroid Lipofuscinosis (CL). In addition the breeder will provide the pup's Registration Certificate duly signed on the back, and information on joining the DOGS Victoria. Breeders also provide the new owner written information on diet and general care, when immunisation was given and is next due, and on subjects such as worming, playthings and necessary exercise.

## **7. What colours do they come in?**

The Australian Border Collie Breed Standard includes Black and white, blue and white, chocolate and white, red and white, blue merle and the tri-colour black, tan and white. Approximately 90% of all Border Collies in Australia are Black and White. Blue and Whites make up a further 5%, with the other colours making up the remaining 5%. The ratio may change with the general pattern of breeding. The Appearance page shows examples of all the Border Collie colours.