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Gone To The Dogs With Adorable Airedales

By **Barry Gorman**

My wife and I were brought up in families with dogs. In her case, Corgis with the unfortunate name of Haggis. In my case, Welsh Terriers with the more prosaic name of Taffy. When we married we still wanted dogs, but what sort? The first was a mongrel named Lemon Curd. The second a Dalmatian named Miffy.

By now we had moved to a house in 8 acres and had 3 young children. We had chickens, ducks and goats and hit on the idea of breeding Airedales. As much as anything to give our children an insight into nature's cycle of life. Our aim was not to make money but to have fun.

My wife bought Troubadour a young male from one breeder and Misty, a young bitch, from another. Both were the offspring of Champions with no evidence of in-breeding. We set about training them, going for walks, playing with them and generally having a great time. My wife had read that it was best not to breed in the first season as this gave the bitch time to develop and mature. So as the second season approached we began our preparations.

After the pair had mated I built a large pen with foot high sides in the utility room. This was to keep the puppies contained but allow Misty to get in and out at will. Lots of newspaper was laid as bedding and we awaited events. The births were all straight forward and Misty had presented us with nine jet-black puppies. We were all excited, especially the children. All the puppies thrived, the Vet came to inoculate and dock them all and before we knew it they were ready to be weaned. Also they were developing their different characters and their coats started to turn brown. Organising the feeding of nine puppies was a challenge and we have many photographs. One very funny one is of a line of nine puppies all with heads down in their bowls and tails in the air.

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At about six weeks Misty had had enough and we put them up for sale from 8 weeks. People came to view and that was interesting too. Pretty well all wanted to buy and by 10 weeks they were all gone. We were tired, relieved and also sad. The 8 weeks had simply flown by.

Trouby sired and Misty bore us another two litters with a seasons rest between each. Each litter was of 9 puppies in each. The cycle of events was the same each time and we thought we were becoming experts in the field. Unfortunately Misty was then hit by a car and killed. We did not have the heart to buy another bitch and Trouby enjoyed a long and peaceful widower hood. When he eventually died of old age, the house seemed very empty.

Imagine my surprise when six months later my wife said she had been very naughty and presented me with two young puppies. She named them after two favourite maiden aunts, Bess and Nell and 12 years later, we still have them.

Barry Gorman writes for

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, an informative website dedicated to all things
canine.

Safe Dog Toys

By Kirsten Hawkins

Dog owners love to think of their dogs as children. "That's my baby," they'll say when referring to their dogs. They'll refer to themselves as "Mommy" or "Daddy" when talking to their dogs as well. And, of course, they buy their dogs toys to play with. Choosing the right dog toys can be tricky. People like to get cute, squeaky toys for their dogs or give them stuffed animals to chew on and carry around (the stuffed toy becomes the dog's "baby" quite often - "Get your baby, checkers! Checkers, where's your baby?") because they think it's "adorable." Dog toys don't need to be "cute." They need to be practical, fun for the dog, durable, and safe.

Avoid Non-Toy "Toys"

For as lovable, loyal, friendly, and playful as they are, dogs are not the brightest creatures. They are naturally attracted to things that can cause them the most harm. It's important to start early with your dog, providing safe toys to chew and play with while teaching the animal to avoid household items it may wish to use as toys. Dogs love to chew on pantyhose, for example, but these could easily be partially ingested, choking the dog. Some dogs will chew on power cords, risking a harmful (or fatal) electric shock. Teach your dog early on what things are for chewing and playing and what things are off limits.

The Best, Safest Dog Toys

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The size of a toy is an important consideration. Kongs, balls, and other typical toys must be small enough that the dog can chew them and carry them, but not so small that they can become lodged in the dog's mouth or throat.

Durability is a factor, especially for a dog that loves to chew. A toy that will break apart easily can become a hazard as the small, sharp parts can be swallowed, caught in the throat, or cut the mouth and gums. Again, a hard rubber Kong (easily one of the best dog toys ever conceived) is an excellent choice.

Softer toys, like the popular "squeak" toys made of thin plastic and full of air are good for dogs that are a bit gentler. They're unlikely to chew through such items and are usually attracted by the squeaking sound.

Tennis balls are great for some dogs, but poor choices for others. This is a question of size ratios. If the dog is too small to fit a tennis ball all the way in its mouth, then it can be an excellent toy that the dog will love but costs very little. If the ball can fit all the way in the dog's maw, however, it becomes a choking hazard.

Kirsten Hawkins is a dog lover and animal expert from Nashville, TN. Visit

<http://www.doghealth411.com/>

for more information on dog health, the care of dogs, and dog travel.

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