

The Soft-Coated Wheaten
Terrier Association of Canada



Buyer's Guide

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DO YOU REALLY WANT A DOG? BEING A DOG OWNER HAS ITS RESPONSIBILITIES

Are you ready to commit the next fifteen years to take care of your canine friend? Before you decide to share your life with a dog, carefully consider your lifestyle, the cost of veterinary care and expenses for food and proper training. Let's face it, you will need to plan your work and home life around your dog's needs. Future vacations, children's sports, school and work schedules and day trips on impulse will need to be weighed against the needs of your canine family member. No matter the weather, or how difficult your day has been, your dog must be exercised daily. This is the key to a happy and well-behaved pet. The more time you invest in training and building a relationship with your new dog, the more likely your dog will respond in kind as a happy, loving family member.



Sharing your life with a four-legged friend will be a very rewarding experience where the rewards will definitely outweigh the efforts. Please visit this website:
http://www.ovma.org/pet_owners/ownership_benefits/index.html

THE TRUE COST OF OWNING A DOG

Training, grooming, veterinary costs and purchases related to welcoming your new dog, like toys, bedding, grooming supplies and food all add up very quickly. Are you ready to factor in these expenses to your budget?

Management of your puppy's environment and training needs begin before your puppy arrives home. Wheaten Terriers thrive with positive, non-punitive methods



that teach respect and also takes advantage of their sharp minds and athleticism. Is your yard fenced? Many feel this is necessity, especially with children. Enrolling your puppy in a quality Puppy Class will give him and you the best directions for eliminating future problems. Puppy Classes are designed for puppies 8 to 18 weeks old – when the window of opportunity is open for that all-important inter-species socialization and temperament training, partnering with puppy obedience. A qualified trainer can help you plan strategy for common puppy issues like biting and mouthing, excessive barking, jumping up and basic everyday obedience. That glorious coat that may make you want a Wheaten Terrier will require frequent grooming at home to avoid knots, in addition to professional grooming. The health of your Wheaten Terrier is of the utmost importance and establishing a relationship with your veterinarian is essential to good health as well as choosing a premium food.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT DOG

The decision to add a dog to your home should be made with careful consideration of breed and characteristics. Did you know that there are more than 160 different breeds of dogs recognized by the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC) with more being recognized every year?

Here are some helpful questions to help you choose the right breed for your lifestyle:

- Whom is the dog for?
- What characteristics do you want your dog to have?
- How much grooming are you prepared to do? Can you afford a professional groomer?
- Are allergies a concern?
- Where do you live? Can you provide enough exercise for the dog?
- Will the new dog fit in with your family's activities?

IS THE SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER THE RIGHT DOG FOR YOU?

Besides using this guide to learn more about the breed, take the time to meet an adult Wheaten Terrier in person and discuss their characteristics with knowledgeable owners and breeders. Learning as much as you can about both puppies and adults, and their needs for grooming, exercise and training will give you a clear picture of what's ahead and will help keep both you and your dog happy.

AN INTERESTING HISTORY

The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier is perhaps one of the oldest breeds of dogs native to Ireland. In an engraving by F. Bacon from 1843, "Aran Fisherman's Drowned Child" there is a Wheaten Terrier in the foreground looking anxiously at the child held in her mother's arms.

Unlike many other purebred dogs of





today, the Wheaten Terrier is a “natural” dog, developed without much human intervention, and as a natural producer, only the strongest survived. This dog did not belong to the gentry of Ireland, as did the noble Irish Wolfhound, but rather to the poor fisherman and farmer. Their stamina proved them useful in sheep herding, and their quietness permitted them to accompany poachers who hunted the large estates. There was a period in the early history of

the breed where their speed, agility and tenacity were useful in “fighting and killing the badger” at Terrier trials.

From these humble beginnings, recognition as a purebred was not a priority until 1932 when interest was sparked in Ireland, and a new club formed to promote the breed. It was originally named the “Irish Wheaten Terrier” and an application was sent to the Irish Kennel Club for breed recognition. However, it was not until the breed was renamed the Softcoated Wheaten Terrier, distinguishing it from the Irish Terrier, that the breed became formally recognized.

The first recorded Wheaten Terrier imported to North America was in 1946, with The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America being formed in 1962 and full breed registration in the United States in 1973.

In Canada, the Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association was started in 1975 with the breed first recognized in 1978, and eligible for showing in 1979.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BREED



Wheaten Terriers have two types of coat: North American Coat (left) and Irish Coat (right).

The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier is a sturdy, medium sized dog, that is square in outline. The Wheaten Terrier is distinguished by a soft, flowing, non-shedding, wheat coloured coat that sports a gentle wave. The ideal size for an adult male is 18 1/2

inches (47 cm) at the withers (peak of the shoulders) and weighs between 35 and 40 pounds (16- 18 kg). The female is generally smaller with 17 1/2 inches (44.5 cm) at the withers being ideal and 30 to 35 pounds (14-16 kg) being the best weight. A Wheaten Terrier should have dark pigment, with the pads of the feet, nose, eye rims and lips all being black. The Wheaten Terrier eyes are dark hazel or brown, medium sized and well protected under a strong brow. It should be noted, Wheaten Terrier puppies should be expected to be more richly coloured than their adult parents.

Breeders strive for the “ideal” in size, structure, coat and all physical attributes. Most puppies do not meet these stringent requirements. Adult Wheaten Terrier coats vary from light beige to a deep bronze in colour and from soft and silky to harsh and woolly in texture. Size varies greatly, with some males reaching as tall as 22 inches (56 cm) at the withers or as small as 16 1/2 inches (42 cm). Females often fall into the same size range as the male but are generally somewhat smaller than the male. Some Wheaten Terriers may have brown noses and lighter coloured eyes. All of these conditions do not indicate an unhealthy dog; they are just variations which make each dog unique. Only those dogs that most closely approximate the breed ideal should be used for breeding purposes.

Official Breed Standard can be found at:
<http://www.ckc.ca/en/Portals/0/pdf/breeds/SCW.pdf>

WHEATEN TERRIER PERSONALITY AND TEMPERAMENT

Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers are happy, quick-witted, lively and affectionate dogs that retain their puppy exuberance and active curiosity throughout their lifetime. They are steady, self-confident and exhibit less aggressiveness than is sometimes associated with other terriers. Training is of the utmost importance if you are to have a Wheaten Terrier that is obedient. They are highly intelligent, eager to please and easily trained if the appropriate methods are used. Harsh treatment may make them stubborn or timid. They respond much better to positive reinforcement than to hard discipline. They are good travellers, adaptable and enjoy life in the country or city. The Wheaten Terrier is a family dog, usually attaching themselves to a family, rather than an individual. They are at their best when they share family life to the fullest. They thrive on human companionship and attention. This is not a backyard type of dog. Wheaten Terriers should be an active part of your family.



The Wheaten Terrier has a special affinity with children. When introduced to children early, and socialized, their bouncy nature, natural exuberance, patience and tolerance to withstand rough and tumble play make them an ideal family dog. Children and Wheaten Terriers must always be supervised. The Wheaten Terrier is equally at home as a companion of older people, willing to forego romping for a gentle scratch behind the ear. However, their high energy may make it difficult for some seniors to manage. Occasionally breeders will have an older, trained dog available that may fit into your life better than a puppy. Ongoing socialization with children, other dogs and the elderly (even if they are not in the immediate family) helps the Wheaten Terrier react calmly in new situations with strangers and other animals.



The Wheaten Terrier's naturally good disposition makes the personality and temperament of Wheaten Terriers dependant more on the dog than the sex. The male is generally larger and stronger than the female. As with all breeds, proper training will bring out the best characteristics of your Wheaten Terrier. It is generally felt that males tend to be more loyal with females being slightly more independent. The spayed/neutered dog of either sex is easier to live with.

Wheaten Terriers are not guard dogs. Most Wheaten Terriers will bark when people approach, but tend to be friendly even to strangers. Be forewarned, the Wheaten Terrier jumps and kisses to express his affection. This is not just reserved for his immediate family but anyone welcomed into the family home. Wheaten Terrier owners refer to this as the traditional "Wheaten welcome". This personality is not for everyone, so if you prefer a dog who will be quiet and sedate the Wheaten Terrier is not the dog for you.



CARE OF THE SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER



The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier is a high maintenance breed. As an owner you should be prepared to put aside time to properly maintain your dog. All dogs fare better and are healthier if they are groomed on a regular basis. This care includes:

- Feeding - Wheaten Terriers are high energy dogs. A high quality dog food will assure the optimal health for your dog.
- Exercise - The exercise needs of Wheaten Terriers are moderate. They have a lot of energy and enjoy walking, jogging or playing with their favourite toy.
- Training - Early training of your Wheaten Terrier is recommended. This can be as a puppy training course and/or consistent training in your home. Early training will make your Wheaten Terrier a more enjoyable adult.



- Nails and pads - You can expect to clip the nails of your Wheaten Terrier every two weeks. At this time you should check the pads of his/her feet and trim the hair between the pads of the feet when necessary.

- Ears - It is necessary to monitor the health of your Wheaten Terrier's ears frequently and consult your veterinarian and breeder about preventive care and treatment, as required. The hair in the ear may require regular plucking, using hemostats or your fingers. It is

important to keep the hair off the inside flap of the ear and trimmed short on the cheeks of the face to allow air to circulate in the ear canal to help avoid ear infections.

- Teeth - Regular brushing of teeth should become part of your routine. A weekly brushing will help to avoid tartar build up on your dog's teeth.
- Bathing - Bathing your Wheaten Terrier every other week will keep him easier to comb and brush. He should be bathed at least every two months, sooner



if he gets into dirt. This requirement will change based on your climate and the season of the year. Wheaten Terriers should never be bathed without first clearing them of mats. The effort you expend in the bathing process is directly dependant on the amount of time you spend maintaining your dog's coat between baths.

- Grooming - Wheaten Terriers have a heavy requirement for grooming. Most breeders recommend that you brush your dog every two days to avoid problems. As a pup, this requirement may seem extreme. Early introduction pays dividends when your dog begins to go through a coat change and mats begin to appear. A dog that is used to being regularly groomed will pose little problems when the grooming begins in earnest.

You should expect to have your Wheaten Terrier's coat trimmed every six to twelve weeks. The shorter the coat the easier it is to keep mat free and the less time it will take to brush, bath and dry.



HEALTH OF THE SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER

Wheaten Terriers are generally healthy and happy dogs. A breeder, well educated about Wheaten Terrier health issues and selection of breeding stock, will improve your chances of receiving a dog that you will enjoy for a long time.

Much care goes into breeding healthy, sound Wheaten Terriers. A healthy litter is not only dependant on a clean environment and proper care by the breeder, it starts with proper assessment of breeding stock and selection of parents that have shown no signs of genetic problems. Many breeders will use stud dogs that are in different parts of the continent, not just to get the perfect show dog, but to get the healthiest puppies possible.

Like all dogs, Wheaten Terriers are subject to hip and eye disorders. Ethical breeders have all breeding stock screened by veterinary specialists, before their dogs are bred, to reduce

the incidence of these abnormalities. If the dog's hips and eyes are determined to be normal, a certificate of examination will be issued. Testing is normally undertaken before the Wheaten Terrier reaching two years of age and is continued throughout their life. Your breeder should be able to produce proper certification of hips and eyes for both parents of the puppy you are seeking to purchase.



Other health issues that face many breeds, including Wheaten Terriers, are protein-losing diseases (Protein-Losing Nephropathy, known as PLN and Protein-Losing Enteropathy, known as PLE) and renal dysplasia. These conditions affect kidney and bowel function with devastating effects. It is recommended that all Wheaten Terriers, not just breeding stock, be routinely tested for these problems. Early diagnosis and proper treatment may greatly increase the life span of an affected animal. Addison's Disease also occurs which has been a serious problem among Wheaten Terriers in other countries and there have been some cases of the disease in North America.

Genetic Testing for PLN-Associated Variant Genes is now available for all Wheaten Terriers. PLN affects 5-15% of Soft-Coated Wheaten Terriers (SCWT). The SCWT Open Registry, which lists hundreds of SCWT with PLN diagnosed since 1997, shows no limitation for age of onset nor evidence of predictive biologic markers. The mode of inheritance appears complex.

For the latest information on Wheaten Terrier health go to: <http://scwtca.org/health/>

Conscientious breeders of Wheaten Terriers test annually for these conditions in their

breeding stock. A “clear” result today does not mean that it will not show up in the next testing or at some point in their life. A “clear” result in both parents does not mean that all pups will definitely be “clear”. It is not possible to determine the total genetic makeup of the sire (male) and dam (female) as it relates to these conditions. An unfortunate matching of two parents that carry the genes necessary, may result in the expression of these abnormalities. However, breeding non-affected animals, with little or no history of these problems in their genetic background, increases the chances of producing non-affected offspring. Ask the breeder what steps they are taking to reduce the risk of these diseases in their breeding program.

As with all breeds of dogs, Wheaten Terriers may develop allergies to some foods or to allergens in their environment. A buyer should discuss allergies with their breeder.

WHERE SHOULD YOU BUY A SOFT-COATED WHEATEN TERRIER?

BUYER BEWARE - HOW TO IDENTIFY A GOOD BREEDER

The internet has become the go-to place to research and find almost anything, including puppies. One popular site is Kijiji which will list puppies from any source and they are often listed as “registered breeders”. The only place they are “registered” is Kijiji. There are stories of scams with buyers paying for a puppy they saw on the internet expecting to greet their puppy at the airport only to learn that their money is gone and no puppy is arriving. There are sites that mimic responsible breeders and those that truly care about the breed. Some sellers will highlight their dogs as being AKC or CKC registered but this again is no assurance of quality, good temperament or health. What’s a buyer to do? It is best to visit in person with the breeder and not to rely on photographs, nice sounding emails or phone conversations.

BREEDERS TO AVOID: PET SHOP/PUPPY MILL PUPPIES

A responsible and reputable breeder would never sell their puppies to a pet store. They want to know where their puppies are going and to make certain that you are the right match for their puppy. They want their puppies to have the best start possible and remain in their forever homes.

Pet stores will highlight that their dogs are AKC or CKC registered which as stated previously is not an indicator of good temperament or health. Pet store puppies come from puppy mills, a place where dogs are raised in filthy, unhealthy environments. There is no opportunity for socialization and little planning goes into the breeding which often results in higher than usual genetic health problems. Some people may think these dogs are a bargain, but when considering the vet bills for genetic related problems, and the extra training often necessary to correct housebreaking and socialization problems, the costs can be astounding.

These puppies are exposed to many viruses and often arrive sickly at the local pet store. Those cute little faces may pull at your heartstrings, but remember this is a volume business and the more puppies sold, the more will suffer breeding in puppy mills. In this case, the best way to help is to just say “no” and reduce the demand, avoiding pet store puppies altogether.

BACKYARD BREEDERS

These people can be very caring, but their lack of background can be a serious shortcoming. Their puppies may be less expensive precisely because they may not have invested as heavily in screening for health and in studying pedigrees and breeding stock for soundness. If the dog has one health problem that could have been avoided by choosing to buy from a committed breeder, the economic benefit will pale in comparison.

Backyard breeders are often well-meaning dog owners that have a nice dog and want to breed so that others will have a chance to own a nice dog like their dog. If breeding were as easy as putting two nice dogs together, the world would be full of happy, healthy, nice pups.

Backyard breeders generally have one or two dogs that they love. They do very little, if any, dog related activities such as showing in conformation competitions, obedience or other training. They generally don't belong to the related breed clubs or other dog training clubs. They know little, if anything, about the genetic concerns and are unaware of currently recommended testing protocols. They know nothing about the breed standard or the pedigree of their breeding stock.

BREEDERS YOU SHOULD CONSIDER - THE COMMITTED BREEDER

A committed breeder will work actively with their dogs having some success in the show ring. This is important because it gives them firsthand knowledge to assess the physical and mental characteristics of their dogs before breeding them. They breed for sound dogs with good temperaments with show ring success being second to healthy



puppies. Their passion is obvious in their eagerness to share information about their breed and they will ask many questions about you, your family and your lifestyle. They are not being “nosy” but trying to have the best interest of their dogs and you in mind. They will welcome you to

see their dogs and the environments they were raised in.

They recognize that all breeds have health problems, and are willing to discuss the problems that are prevalent in the breed and what is being done to correct



them. A good breeder will recognize the importance of socialization and discuss this with you.

Did you know that before your puppy even arrives home these breeders will spend time working with the puppies to acquaint them with household activities and noises? They handle the puppies frequently and will not place puppies in homes until they are at least eight weeks of age. Finally they will choose a pup for you. They have spent numerous hours with the puppies and they know what personality lies behind that pretty face. They have attempted to determine your needs for a pup and are in the best position to make a match.

TIPS FOR IDENTIFYING A COMMITTED BREEDER

- Breed Club websites will have a list of breeders that agree to abide to their Code of Ethics.
- Assess your lifestyle and be realistic in how a dog will fit into your life.
- Become familiar with the health concerns in the breed and the testing that is done to combat these concerns. Discuss test results with breeders. Consider a pup only from parents with good test results.
- Don't be a victim. The breeder will assess you but you should also assess the breeder. It takes two satisfied individuals to make a positive relationship.
- Look for a breeder that asks numerous questions about you, your family and your lifestyle.
- Ask if the breeder participates in dog related activities. Also ask if they are members in good standing of breed or training clubs.



- Select a breeder that can tell you about the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents in your dog's pedigree. The pedigree is only paper without this background.
- Meet the dogs. It is the best if you can see the sire and dam. Often it is not possible to meet the sire as he may live many miles away. The parents should indicate the temperament and physical characteristics you could expect in your pup.
- See the dog's environment. The environment should be clean. The dogs should be healthy and well kept.
- A breeder's trophies and ribbons will not guarantee that you will receive a dog that is best for you.
- Look for someone you like. A good breeder takes an active interest in their pups. If you don't feel comfortable with your breeder you will be missing a valuable

source of information throughout your dog's life.

- Ask about health guarantees and the return policy. These should demonstrate that the best interest of the dog is paramount, not the interest of the breeder or the buyer.
- Get everything in writing. The best relationships are based on a common understanding. A clear and understandable contract, signed by both parties, sets the stage for this relationship.
- Look for a spay/neuter condition in the contract for all pet/companions. This is a sign of a breeder concerned about their dogs and the breed.
- Beyond the ongoing support of your breeder, buyers should expect the following items to come with or before receiving their Wheaten Terrier:

(1) A written commitment to have the pup registered with the Canadian Kennel Club (CKC);

(2) A four or more generation pedigree;

(3) A non-breeding agreement for dogs purchased as pet/companion dogs;

(4) A written and signed sales agreement with a health guarantee and a spay/neuter clause for all pet/companion dogs;

(5) An up-to-date health record;

(6) Written instructions on the feeding, training and care of your dog; and

(7) Signed receipt with tattoo number and/or microchip number, CKC registration number and registered name of the dog, if available, and official breed name.

(8) CKC registration papers within 6 months of transfer of ownership. This is a Canadian federal law.



RECOMMENDED SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

WHEATEN TERRIER SPECIFIC INFORMATION

Caring For A Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier by The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association of Canada (1997)

The Complete Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier by Roberta A. Vesley (Hardcover - Jul 7 1994)

The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier: Coat of Honey - Heart of Gold by Roberta A. Vesley (Hardcover - Jan 5 1999)

Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier by Marjorie Shoemaker (Hardcover - 1997)

The Softcoated Wheaten Terrier by Maureen Holmes (Softcover - 1990)

GENERAL TRAINING INFORMATION BOOKS:



Dr. Ian Dunbar generously offers two books on line - FREE: <http://www.dogstardaily.com/free-downloads>

Good Owners Great Dogs by Brian Kilcommons

How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With by Rutherford and Neil

Culture Clash by Jean Donaldson

A Dog and A Dolphin by Karen Pryor

WEBSITES:

<http://www.scwtac.com> The Soft-Coated Wheaten Terrier Association of Canada

<http://scwtca.org> The Soft Coated Wheaten Terrier Club of America

<http://www.apdt.com/petowners/resources/> The Association of Pet Dog Trainers (U.S.A.)

<http://www.asPCA.org/pet-care/> ASPCA Pet Care

<http://www.webvet.com/main/2010/01/28/poop-puppy-mills> "The Poop on Puppy Mills"

DVDS:

Sirius Puppy Training by Dr. Ian Dunbar

Click & Treat Training Kit by Gary Wilkes



