

Ask Yourself and the Breeder These Questions Before You Decide to Get a Brittany

Why do you want a Brittany?

Is it for shows, hunting, performance events, or as a beloved companion for yourself and/or your family? The Brittany is a very loving, people-oriented dog but if you don't want a pet that has lots of energy, then a Brittany is surely not for you!

How much time do you have to devote to a puppy?

Any puppy requires a tremendous amount of early care, training and attention and the Brittany is no exception. The amount of time you spend training your puppy during the first several months to a year will determine whether you will end up with a companion you can live with for the rest of your dog's life.

Do you have time to spend with your dog? Are you willing to spend time training, grooming and playing with your Brittany?

Brittanys are a versatile breed with very high energy. They thrive on being kept busy and love being challenged with opportunities to develop their natural hunting instincts. Obedience, tracking and agility are other activities they might enjoy as well as being fetching, running & playing companions for you or your family. A destructive, hyperactive Brittany is nearly always a bored, under-exercised Brittany!

Can you afford a Dog?

Aside from your initial purchase price which can be significant, there are routine, ongoing expenses that must be considered as well. Such expenses might include high quality food, veterinary care, training, supplies, spaying/neutering, etc. The initial cost is only the beginning of responsible dog ownership and you should be prepared to spend whatever is necessary to maintain the health and well-being of your Brittany. The average lifespan of the Brittany is 13-15 years.

Do you have the proper facilities for a Brittany?

Is your yard securely fenced? Do you have a safe, comfortable place in your home that your dog can call his own such as a crate or a special bed? Where will your Brittany stay while you are at work?

How much exercise will you be able to give a Brittany?

The Brittany requires lots of exercise in a secure area. They can also become quite creative and destructive landscapers if left unattended in your yard for long periods of time. No matter how large your yard, it is never a good idea to just put the dog in the yard and forget him/her. You must make sure you provide a safe and constructive way for your Brittany to get necessary exercise.

Questions to ask a breeder:

How long have you had Brittanys?

The longer a breeder has been involved with Brittanys, the deeper their level of commitment. Experienced breeders are in it for the long haul and always with the goal of improving the breed. They feel a deep responsibility toward the breed, toward the individual dogs they have bred, the dogs they hope to breed, and also to all the people who have dogs of their breeding.

Do you raise other breeds besides Brittanys?

It takes an astonishing amount of time, energy and money to devote to one breed and raising more than one breed may not do justice to the Brittany. A breeder of multiple breeds could stretch themselves too thin.

How often do you have puppies available?

Be extremely cautious of breeders who always seem to have puppies available or on the way. Most "backyard breeders" and "puppy mills" are mainly motivated by a desire to make money. They are usually in the business of selling puppies to anyone who will pay the price without regard for the long-term experience of both the dog and owner.

Can I visit the puppies and see some of your other dogs?

The breeder should be willing to show you both their dogs and their facilities. Check to see that the puppies are raised indoors, in clean sanitary conditions, fed a high quality food and properly socialized with plenty of handling and loving care

Can I see the puppies' parents when I visit?

Be cautious if the breeder refuses this request. In such a case, it is possible that one or both of the parents are in poor condition or have an unstable temperament. Brittanys should be friendly, outgoing and curious--not shy, aggressive or anxious. Please note that many reputable breeders send their females to a sire in another area of the country for many valid reasons so you should not necessarily expect to meet both parents on your visit. In such a case, the reputable breeder has already evaluated and approved the sire's temperament. Never purchase a puppy from a pet store or parking lot!

What are the genetic problems Brittanys can have?

A reputable breeder should be honest and able to explain known genetic problems to you in clear, easy to understand terms.

What sort of health and temperament guarantees do you provide?

A reputable breeder will usually provide a written contract outlining the both buyer's and seller's responsibilities. A good breeder will often ask you even more questions than you ask them in an attempt to screen for the best possible match.

What sort of competitive and performance events do you participate in with your dogs?

A reputable breeder will be actively involved in one or more competitive/performance events as a means of proving the versatility of the Brittany. A reputable breeder will rarely breed unless both parents have one or more titles in conformation, field, obedience, tracking, agility, etc.

Are the puppy's parents OFA (Orthopedic Foundation for Animals) certified to be free of hip dysplasia?

Ask to see copies of both the sire and dam's OFA certificates. Reputable breeders will not breed unless both parents have a hip certification and should not be offended when you ask to see such documentation. A dog must be at least 2 years of age before the hips can be OFA certified.

At what age may I take a puppy home?

Eight weeks is the recommended age so a pup can learn dominance and submissiveness in the litter pack and be better adjusted around other dogs as an adult. Be wary of a breeder who sells puppies as young as 5-6 weeks. Do not, however, regard an older puppy as a "leftover" or "reject". Breeders often keep a certain puppy for a few months in order to further evaluate its potential and/or find the perfect match between puppy and owner.

Will I get a health record and AKC registration at the time I purchase a puppy?

The health record should show at least one recent worm check and recommended vaccinations at about 6 weeks of age. The buyer should also be given a list of required follow-up vaccinations needed at intervals after the puppy goes home to protect it from serious (frequently deadly) diseases such as Distemper and Parvo. In most cases, you should receive the AKC registration at the time you take the puppy home.

What type of maintenance and routine care does the Brittany need?

Yes, Brittanys shed! Ask the breeder about the recommended frequency of brushing, bathing, toothbrushing, ear cleaning and toenail trimming. Many breeders will provide you with a "new puppy book" or perhaps some articles explaining such details.

What dog-related or breed organizations do you belong to?

Virtually all reputable breeders will be members of our national club--the American Brittany Club (ABC) as well as a local breed club. Members of ABC have a Breeders Code of Ethics that includes many of the points covered in this article. Breeders show their depth of involvement

with Brittanys by being active and involved in the national and local breed clubs. Some breeders may also belong to an all-breed kennel club or perhaps a Brittany rescue organization.

Could you give me names of previous puppy buyers as references?

Be sure to check on the references! Please thoroughly research both the breed and the breeder before you purchase a Brittany puppy!