

## Pedigrees and the First Few Weeks

**Protect your breed by raising the best litter you can.**

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Did you ever look at the pedigree of your bitch, that is due in season, and realize just how much it can mean to you, the fledgling breeder? Here is a history going way back of your bitch... and you don't have a clue as to how to breed her! Let's start there colors indicated on the pedigree? This matters a lot in many breeds; look them up if you can in any book that's put out by e.g. the parent club of your breed. I bet you will find a lot of information that you can use while going through one of the marvelous books many parent clubs publish, such as Poodles in America, which is published and updated with new editions when necessary by the Poodle Club of America, Inc.

You can trace pedigrees almost back to the Ark if you are patient! However, you must now put this new knowledge to the test "I know all of this now, but what does it mean?" Find an "old-timer" who still has a good memory (!) and who has been successful in producing dogs of your breed that are big winners and producers. (Actually, these dogs do not have to be big winners as long as they have been good producers, with a good record of being free of the known heritable diseases in your breed and producing progeny free of the same.)

If you show intelligent interest, the OT (old-timer) can give you insights to the strengths of the dogs and bitches that make up your bitch's pedigree. What type were the dogs or bitches in question? You can discern some of this from pictures; please remember that type is the total picture, not just the head. What temperament did the key dogs in your pedigree have? This is a very important point. What were their feet like, the mouths, the color of their eyes, the set on and carriage of the tail? Were they "look at me" showmen? That pedigree, and a grey-haired successful breeder, can mentor you (if you are nice) into so much background and knowledge that unless you taped the conversation, or made notes, you will never be able to remember all the things that you will hear!

Many who enjoy the sport today see a winning dog that they think they like and breed to it "to see what they will get." The answer is, a litter of puppies! Then they wonder why these puppies don't look the way they hoped they would! Perhaps they were expecting things to come out in the litter that did not exist in the gene pool that they have gambled on.

Be honest about your bitch. Have all of her tests done that is, all that are offered today in your breed. What are her strong points? List them and be honest. What are her weak points? Be honest! What is her temperament, in the show ring and in your house? Was she raised to have a good temperament, by you or another person? Good and great show dogs today are bred to be that way, and then helped down the Garden path (no pun intended) by strictly following the guidelines, starting as early as four to five weeks of age and continuing until the teething begins. Don't try to teach anything in this teething period, as the puppies are dopey teen-agers, probably running a slight fever, and their minds are not at all open for training!