

## Dog Grooming for Convenience

**A Labrador Retriever-Poodle mix with a wiry coat can be trimmed short for easy maintenance.**

*By Kathy Salzberg, NCMG*

Q. We recently adopted a 1½-year-old Labrador Retriever-Poodle mix and I have a question about grooming. He has the straight wire-type coat, not the wooly, curly type. I would like to have his coat trimmed even all over, not a "lion" or a "Poodle" cut. Is that possible? In the muddy season, I am hoping it will cut down on how much mud he accumulates on his paws when we have him out walking and playing fetch. We previously had a yellow Lab who did not require this type of grooming so this is all new to me.

A. Because the popular "doodle dogs" are not pure breeds, but come from many types of dogs cross-bred with the Poodle, you can end up with different types of coat. I have one like your dog as a client, an adorable little red-coated girl with straight, shaggy hair more like that of a terrier. Labrador Retriever-Poodle mixes are "designer dogs," crosses between two purebred dogs, so when you purchase one as a pup, you do not know for certain what your pet will look like when it grows up whereas a purebred dog's ancestors have been bred over many generations and it will look and act like its forbears. This is just a reminder to prospective owners that they may not always end up with the curly-coated low-shedding dog they have in mind.

You certainly can have your dog trimmed to look adorable and cut down on maintenance at home. Using a snap-on comb attachment, the groomer can clip the body and legs anywhere from ½ to two inches and trim the head to look more terrier-like with a beard, and the hair above the eyes and atop the head trimmed as well. I prefer a softer-looking natural face on this type of dog rather than the sharp eyebrows and squared beard of many terriers. It's kind of a "Disney dog" look, lending a very gentle and endearing expression that shows the dog's personality. The tail can be trimmed shorter and the feet rounded to match the width of the leg.

One benefit of a wiry coat is that in most cases, mud and debris picked up on those fun-filled romps will brush out fairly easily. In addition, this type of coat does not form mats and tangles as readily as the curly-coated variety so a weekly brushout with a slicker should suffice between trips to the grooming salon.