



## PUPPY REARING

### The new puppy

When you get your puppy home, remember that everything in the big world will be quite strange to him and that he has probably never seen anything quite like it before. He will have left his mother and littermates for the first time and will be feeling very bewildered. Gentle sympathetic and correct handling will enable him to adjust to his new situation with minimum stress, but this requires time and patience. Try to arrange to collect him from his breeder early in the day to allow him time to settle in before nightfall.

Make sure your breeder gives you information about feeding your puppy up to and including adulthood. Most breeders give a small amount of the food that the puppy has been reared on, to enable any changeover of diet to be gradual so as not to cause stomach upsets. At 8 weeks, the age most puppies go to their new homes, the puppy should be on no less than 4 meals per day, but some breeders feed 5.

The first night will probably be noisy. A good tip is to leave a radio on or a loud ticking clock. If you give in and take the puppy up to bed, every night will be the same. Also be prepared that he will not be able to go all night without relieving himself.

### Clean in the house

Rottweilers learn very quickly to be clean in the house. Puppies should not be scolded minutes after making a mess on the floor – their memories are short and limited to events which occurred seconds before. For toilet training to be effective the puppy should be caught in the act and immediately put outside in the same spot each time, if possible where there is bare earth or grass, and it is important you go out with him and when he does a toilet – praise the puppy lavishly! Eventually the puppy will go to the door and whine to go out. We cannot stress too strongly that the puppy's nose should NEVER EVER be rubbed in any mess he has made. A puppy should be frequently put outside in the same place each time and always first thing in the morning, after sleep, after food and after play.

## **Children**

Rottweilers are generally extremely good with children, but it is emphasized that children **MUST** be taught how to treat a new puppy. They should **NOT** be permitted to tease, to scold or to punish him and his feeding should be done by an adult. Although young children start with the best intentions in the world, they tend to neglect the rather mundane everyday requirements. Some breeders will not sell a pup to anyone with children under 10.

**IT MUST BE STRESSED STRONGLY THAT NO BABY OR CHILD SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE WITH ANY DOG – THEY MUST BE SUPERVISED AT ALL TIMES.**

## **Meeting the people**

Many people think that to become good 'protectors' of persons and property, puppies and young dogs should be prevented from meeting strangers, being patted by people other than their owners, and seeing anything of the outside world. **THIS IS QUITE WRONG**; the only result of keeping a puppy in seclusion is to make it shy and wary. It is very necessary to take your puppy about with you as much as possible so that he may become used to meeting strangers, hearing loud noises and seeing unusual things. All these experiences build up his confidence so that he grows up to take everything in his stride. A bold, alert and confident dog always attracts attention and is a pleasure to own.

## **Mouthing**

Something which happens quite naturally and often worries new owners, is 'mouthing'. This is **NORMAL** behaviour. When a pup is with his littermates they 'play bite' with each other quite hard. When your pup comes to your home your hands and arms etc. are to him the same as his littermates. Until taught otherwise he will exert the same pressure. If pup grabs a hand or arm those teeth are like sharp needles. **DO NOT** snatch your hand or arm away quickly. Let pup know he is hurting, say 'Ouch, that hurts' or 'Gently, gently,' or similar words, always use the same ones. Lift the upper and lower jaw gently and take away your hand or arm. Next time do the same and over a period of time the pressure lessens. This needs kindness and patience, some take longer than others. Do not get pup excited or let children play with him unsupervised. **NEVER USE HARSH METHODS.** Get advice and help if you need it.

Remember it is **TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE** for an adult dog to mouth hands, arms or any part of clothing; so please ensure it does not happen. It must also be remembered that when a puppy is teething, that is losing his 'baby' teeth and the permanent teeth are coming through, his gums will be sore, and this also causes him to mouth and chew objects. This behaviour can recur at around 9 months of age when the permanent teeth are settling into the jaw.

## **Other animals**

Do not allow puppies to chase cats, chickens, squirrels or other animals as once formed it is a habit which is difficult to break.

## **Exercise**

Pup will get all the exercise he needs on his own, toddling about and playing in the garden. Do not let children chase him or let adult dogs fly around with him. Injuries can result. **NO**

enforced walks for him. Five or six months is quite early enough to start a gentle walk on a lead, and gradually increase the distance. Bones don't harden until well over a year or later so care must be taken. No chasing up and down stairs and jumping up into backs of cars.

## **Gardens**

Gardens are lovely, but beware some plants are poisonous, laburnum seeds, foxgloves, rhubarb leaves to name a few. And slug bait can be lethal. Take care. Also pups are fond of picking up stones, be watchful. It is imperative that you do NOT leave pup alone with a collar on. Some dogs have died by getting caught up on branches of shrubs etc., and even on the teeth of another dog in the household. Tragic and avoidable!! Be warned.

## **Training**

Take your pup to a training class, some breeders insist on this in their contract. This will get him used to other dogs and situations. Many clubs run puppy classes which they can attend once their inoculations are completed. These courses run for varying periods of about 8 to 12 weeks, and are invaluable for socialising and accustoming pups to other dogs in a controlled environment. Visit a club or clubs before enrolling and avoid any where handling is rough. Training classes organised by the Kennel Club run the Good Citizen Dog Scheme and young puppies are always welcome. Make sure that the club has trainers experienced with Rottweilers, not all are, so ask around before you go.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, we would like to stress that it is YOU who make the dog what he is – obedient/disobedient, a pleasure to own/or otherwise. It is easy to prevent bad habits forming, but far more difficult to eradicate them once they have been formed. Start your pup's training in manners once you get him, always be consistent in your behaviour towards him and in the commands you give. NEVER FORGET TO PRAISE HIM when he has been good – so many omit to do this. Be kind but firm and you will have a dog of which to be proud. Always remember that a dog, any dog, is not good at knowing WHAT to do – only what it is ALLOWED to do.

If any problems arise your reputable breeder will offer advice or give you names of people to contact.

THE ROTTWEILER CLUB has many experienced breeders and owners who will only be too pleased to help in any way possible.

**This is a wonderful breed and deserves owners who appreciate it.**