



Expert Grooming Article



Schipperke

The curious and independent Schipperke originated from the Flemish areas of Belgium. Derived from the black sheepdog called the Leuvenaar he is an excellent watchdog and vermin hunter. His small cobby body is characterised by his unique coat which must display different lengths in a specific pattern of short on face, ears, hocks and forelegs, medium on body and longer at ruff, cape, jabot and culottes. This differentiation in coat lengths is a breed hallmark. (read more over page..)



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The hair should be abundant, straight and a fairly harsh texture and the coat should lie flat down the middle of the back.

This distinct silhouette of the Schipperke with its stand up ruff appears to slope from the shoulders to the croup and as our quest is always to have the dog fit the ideal silhouette, it is paramount that we achieve this through our bathing and drying process as trimming is disallowed in this breed.

The Schipperke coat colour is black with some tendency when shedding to acquire a reddish hue which though recognised, is penalised in degree to its detractor. Thus the outcome for our endeavours should be to minimise any reddening and always accentuate the ideal outline.

Starting with the bathing, use **Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo** diluted 5:1 (5 parts water to 1 part shampoo) for extra lift to those areas of the main body coat and wonderful for those times of shedding to bulk up the coat.



Use Plush Puppy **All Purpose Shampoo** diluted 5:1 for shine on the topline and where the coat is required to sit flat.

When the Schipperke coat acquires a reddish hue, use **Plush Puppy Black Opal Shampoo** lightly diluted ½ water and ½ shampoo.

This is a staining shampoo and not a dye. It will deepen in colour the more it is used. As it's

prime aim is to reduce red and enhance the black, you can accelerate the process by shampooing first with Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo diluted 5:1 and towel dry well after rinsing BEFORE doing the second shampoo with the Black Opal. Leave Black Opal on for 5 minutes for better staining and then rinse.

All the shampoos are naturally derived and are direct outcome focused. They do much more than just cleanse and with your quest to gain the perfect silhouette without trimming, you are attempting to sculpture through other means and in this case, with the products we use. The shampoos are very much oriented in this direction.

Now don't use conditioner. That will simply flatten the coat but could be useful on the topline if this is an area that won't sit flat. View the products as tools to achieve your ideal! However we do need to hydrate the coat and keep the moisture content in the hair so for final rinse implement one teaspoon **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil** with 1 litre warm water and thoroughly saturate the coat with a decent sized sponge to work the mix well through to the skin. Leave in and don't rinse out. This dilution will work well and give good healthy vigour to the skin and coat. It is just the most amazing product and one we all cannot live without. It will allow you to retain texture, won't soften but will give the coat all the benefits it needs for longevity and shine.

For out of coat situations, add 1 teaspoon **Plush Puppy Volumising Cream** into the Seabreeze Oil mix and leave in just as described above. This is a non sticky bulking agent that appears to make the coat look fuller. It is not detectable in the coat and is quite a favourite with all the double coated breeds people. We often find people using this even when the coat is

at it's peak as they just like that extra lift and fullness it gives.

For normal situations use 1 tbspn Volumising Cream to one cup warm water and apply liberally around the ruff area for extra fullness to tweak the shape.

Thus, extra lift at the ruff, the All Purpose Shampoo used to keep the topline smooth and the Body Building Shampoo to give maximum fullness to the main coat. It really is quite simple!

Now blow dry using a cool turbo dryer using the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Pin Brush** starting at the rear and working through to the front and drying at the root for full lift against the growth of the coat for those maximum lift areas and with the growth of the coat minimising any lift to those areas required to sit flat. Once the coat is 75% dry, switch to the ½ bristle ½ nylon cushioned **Plush Puppy Ultimate Porcupine Brush** for final finish. I personally like to use the heel of my hand to work the coat open when drying and pushing the coat to where I want it to go. It's a choice!

For show day it ought to be a breeze as your hard work has been done prior to the show. It should mean quite literally a quick brush through using a diluted mix of **Plush Puppy OMG Concentrate** diluted at 30:1 in a 250ml **Plush Puppy Spray bottle** for all your brushing needs. OMG is one of those special products that you can tailor to suit the individual coat by less or more dilution. 30:1 is the one I like to work with on this type of coat. There is no residue and the brush will glide through. One ought not to brush a dry coat. Look after your coats and the results will be worthwhile.

I do believe in between show maintenance being the mainstay of longevity and perfection to the Schipperke coat. Live by the rule that the harder your work between times means the less you work at the show. Treat the coat every couple of weeks with a slathering of **Plush Puppy Coat Rescue** worked to a watery slurry with some water and slogged onto the coat. This has everything known to man in the formula and is just amazing for pushing that bit extra into the coat. Oil your coats with Seabreeze Oil and then a regular treatment of Coat Rescue and you will have perfection every time.

Black needs to be black and any dehydration, any sun damage, any over stretching or breakage will hasten the loss of coat colour and condition. Protect, oil, treat and do it religiously. It must be routine. There is a lot of emphasis in your standard on the coat so judges will focus on this aspect a lot.

Of course he must be able to do his job of vermin catcher and watchdog and his lovely smooth graceful trot is a pleasure to view in the ring. The Schipperke is curious and agile and his fox like face and mischievous nature make him an engaging competitor.

The Schipperke is a terrific little breed

to show and an easy one to put together if you are prepared to just do the repetitious work of keeping the coat in A1 condition. It's easy to shape without trimming and a good working little specimen of this breed is pretty hard to go past.

