



The Coton De Tuléar Club of the United Kingdom



About the Coton De Tuléar Breed

History

The Coton de Tuléar is a breed of small dog named for the port of Tuléar in Madagascar and for its cotton-like coat.

Coton is the French word for Cotton.

The Coton is believed to be related to the French Bichons Friese, Havenese, Maltese, Italian Bolognese or the Bichon Tenerife, and Tenerife Terrier.

How and when it arrived in Madagascar is uncertain but it is thought they were brought to the island by sailors from and bred with the islands terriers to form the present

Coton. What is known is that the breed was developed on the island of Madagascar and is still the island's national dog and was companion to the residents, Merina (the ruling tribe) in Madagascar. A tri-colour Coton was honoured on a postage stamp in 1974. A similar dog was popular on the French island of Reunion off the east coast of Madagascar but became extinct. When Dr. Robert Jay Russell discovered the breed in Madagascar in 1973 and brought the first ones to America, he coined the phrase the Royal Dog of Madagascar and the name stuck. They were also imported occasionally into France by returning French colonists but were not officially imported to Europe until the 1970s.

Although still rare, it is becoming increasingly popular in the United States and Europe. The first Cotons were imported into the UK in 1997 and were recognised by the UK Kennel Club in 2000 and made their debut at KC licensed shows in 2001 and are shown in the Toy Group.

Coat and colour

Like the name suggests, the most conspicuous feature of the Coton de Tuléar is its coat, which is cottony or fluffy rather than silky, considered hair rather than fur and is regarded as a non-





The Coton De Tuléar Club of the United Kingdom



shedding breed with low dander but does loose hair rather like humans do when brushing. Like the poodle, it has very low allergic affects and is deemed hypoallergenic. Grooming the Coton de Tuléar can be quite a challenge if you don't keep on top of it. To prevent mats, the coat should be brushed and combed daily. This breed does not have the common "doggie smell" and when properly bathed and groomed does not smell at all.

Solid white is the preferred colour in the Kennel Club Breed standard with colour on the head accepted. However there is colour in the breed and this is needed by breeders to encourage good pigmentation and also is often preferred by some owners. Cotons can come in white, black and white, tri-coloured and white and apricot. Some puppies are born with black or apricot patches but these can fade to almost white or even fade completely as the puppy grows.

Size

There is a slight difference in the standard height given by the European and American Kennel clubs.

The European standard gives the Coton's weight as from 4 to 6 kg (about 9 to 13 lb) for males and 3.5 to 5 kg (8 to 11 lb) for females. The Coton's height is from 25 to 32 cm (about 10 to 12½ inches) tall for males and from 22 to 27 cm (8½ to 10½ inches) for females.

The Interim Standard of the UK Kennel Club follows the European (FCI) size, but what is a breed standard? Essentially, the breed standard is the picture in words for how a breed should look and also details the temperament of a breed. It is what lies behind the 210 different types of pedigree dog that we know and love today. A breed standard is the pattern used by breeders in their attempts to breed typical specimens of the breed, and it is the tool of the judge in assessing dogs in the show ring.

Temperament

The Coton is a very friendly, gentle, affectionate, intelligent and alert dog. Cotons are very sociable dogs that get along well with children, other dogs and other animals. Most Cotons love meeting new people and are very curious in new situations. Cotons are easy to train, as they are



The Coton De Tuléar Club of the United Kingdom



very eager to please. They are very attached to their home and master - wanting always to be in their presence and trying their best to please. Cotons are known to have a habit of jumping up and walking on their hind legs to please people. Although generally quiet the Coton makes a great watchdog and can become vocal when it hears noises. The Coton de Tuléar has a large dog personality. Cotons love to swim, run, and play. They adapt well to any kind of living environment. The Coton learns quite quickly, but can be a little bit stubborn without the proper leadership so make sure you are this dog's firm, confident, consistent leader.

Cotons like to play and they can adapt to wide open spaces and apartment living so long as they get daily exercise. They can however suffer from separation anxiety if left on their own for extended periods of time and this must be considered before deciding to have a Coton. So if you are out at work full time and can't arrange company then perhaps you'd need to reconsider.

Health

The Coton de Tuléar has few health issues compared to many other breeds. However it is important that breeders are constantly striving to breed for health primarily. The average life span of a Coton de Tuléar is approximately 12 years.

Detailed description

The General Appearance is that of a small white dog which is slightly longer than high with a long coat of a distinctive texture.

The head should be medium with a short foreface and slight stop. The ratio of the muzzle to skull should be 5:9 and the skull should be slightly convex. The eyes should be round dark and expressive with black rims, eyes should be well spaced. Ears should be high set, pendulous, slender and well covered with fine long hair. The mouth should have a strong jaw with black lips. The teeth should have a complete scissor bite (the upper teeth closely overlapping the lower teeth and set square to the jaw). The neck should be of medium length, slightly arched with tight skin.



The Coton De Tuléar Club of the United Kingdom



The forequarters should have well laid back shoulders with straight forelegs. The body should have a good depth of chest with a medium tuck-up and a slight rise over the loin. The hindquarters should have well-muscled legs with moderate angulation. The feet should be small round and tight with black pads. The tail should be well feathered and low set tapering but never coiled. When at the rest tail should be carried low with the tip slightly raised, when moving the tail should be carried above the back. Movement should be smart, free and parallel front and back.

Coat Care

The Coton has a coat which requires brushing and combing almost every day, and requires bathing at least once per month. Coton's, like Poodles, do not "shed", meaning they do not drop hair on furniture, carpeting etc. but they do lose hair the same way humans do. The dead hair should be brushed and combed out to ensure it does not get trapped in the coat and cause mats. Excess hair between the pads of the feet and in the inner ears should be removed. If the coat is not cared for it will mat up quickly and may require shaving, however if you do not want the coat to grow into the full adult coat you can have it regularly clipped as with the poodle and bichon.

A couple of points to bear in mind in relation to coat care is puppies do have a change of coat when going through puberty into their adult coat (around twelve to eighteen months), which can affect the amount of hair lost, but again this will only cause mats and as such you will need to keep on top of your grooming regime to prevent matting. Also bitches can have a coat change following a season or a litter of puppies and again at these periods extra coat care will probably be necessary.