



Expert Grooming Article



Belgian Shepherd

These striking herding & guard dogs, are long well established, dating back as far as the 1890's for their first written standard. A good working medium sized dog that proportionately should fit within a square, he must carry a coat that suits his open-air life and able to resist a variable climate such as his native Belgium. Both coats of the Groenendael & Tervuren are much alike, colour being the noticeable variation. Both coats must be dense and of good texture with the undercoat providing protective covering. The Malinois with its short coat and the Laekenois the rough coated variety with its distinctive roughness and dryness to its longer coat. (read more over page..)



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Lets start with shampoos. For the faces always use **Plush Puppy Let's Face It**. This is a hypoallergenic sulfate free low foaming shampoo designed for faces. It's no tear formula with the highest quality Blue Cypress Extracts, Panthenol with Pro Vitamin B and SugaNate. These special ingredients clean, soothes, adds moisture, aids healing and anti-inflammatory benefits. A small golf ball sized amounts directly to the face and eye area allows you to thoroughly clean without causing irritation. Can be used in and around ears also with the same benefits. It's low foaming design allows easy of rinsing yet complete cleaning.

For the Groenendael use **Plush Puppy Herbal Whitening Shampoo** diluted 1:5 (1 part shampoo to 5 parts water) for easy dispersion and to minimise rinsing time on this rather thick coat. The Whitening Shampoo is a toning shampoo and will not lighten but instead deepen the tone and give a pearly sheen to the black coat. This will also assist in offsetting any unwanted reddish tones too.

For the Tervuren use **Plush Puppy All Purpose Shampoo** again at 1:5. We call this the 'shine' shampoo and will give good lustre and vibrancy to the Tervuren and Malinois coat. So, having shampooed and rinsed, move onto the Seabreeze Oil as described below.



The Laekenois requires texture. The best shampoo is **Plush Puppy Texture + Shampoo** that will retain and improve coat texture. This shampoo thoroughly yet gently cleanses and deodorises the coat of wire, harsh or coarse coated breeds without softening or compromising texture. It's ideal for boosting body and coarseness in coats of all colours and coat types. Formulated to be pH controlled, it can create or maintain texture, is low irritant with a subtle apple fragrance and is easy to rinse out. It is full of beneficial and powerful extracts from the Gentian Root, Juniper Fruit, St John's Wart

Leaf, Hay Flower, Lemon Balm Leaf and Arnica Flower that combine to nourish and vitalise the skin. Use diluted up to 1:10 or apply undiluted directly to areas requiring intensive cleansing. Rinse thoroughly. This can be used on other varieties to increase texture also.

Coats tend to go through various stages and can be very frustrating when that all-important show is looming. So we need to be versatile and adjust our grooming techniques to suit the situation.

For extra boost to a less than abundant coat or when out of coat switch to **Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo** diluted 1:3. for maximum body and 1:5 dilution for a less needy situation.

The way to keep a coat hydrated without softening or changing texture is to oil the coat. However, we must not make the coat greasy either. I recommend **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil**.

Use this as a rinse after shampooing. This will not soften but retains the correct coat texture. Seabreeze Oil is excellent for maintaining the healthy vigour to the skin and coat and is all plant sourced from Evening Primrose and Calendula Oils. It is non greasy and totally water soluble making it easy to apply and remove each time without build-up. Dilute 1 tablespoon in 4 Litres of water and work well through the coat with a large sponge. LEAVE IN. DO NOT RINSE. It gives incredible sheen and finish to the hair. We cannot stress enough the wonderful attributes of this product. Adjust dilution rate according to coat needs.

Your standards also require the ornamentation around the neck to be long and abundant described as like a collarette. Thus, you are seeking to build and make much ado with this area as also the tail, the back of the forearm and the breeches. The procedure is that after applying the Seabreeze Oil mix, apply **Plush Puppy Puffy Dog+** which is a strong holding product to the areas described for maximum lift and volume. If a less strength of hold effect is desired, then use **Plush Puppy Volumising Cream** by using 1 tablespoon to 250ml of water and applying generously. This is also available in "ready to use" formula. This adds an overall volumising effect the whole coat, especially good when out of coat. The Volumising Cream will give a more coated effect whereas the Puffy Dog+ will give more lift to the coat. You can use the Volumising Cream after using Puffy Dog+ as they just do different things and sometimes you need to them all.

When drying use the innovative **Plush Puppy FAST Blow Dry Spray**

that combines clever ingredients to dramatically reduce drying time. It adds moisture and conditions while protecting the coat. It contains Australian Native Flame Tree extracts known for their hydrating properties that help make a dry or old coat feel and look perfect. It also protects the coat from damage from sun and heat. It contains a slight hold ingredient for better coat management and a special active ingredient that eliminates static electricity and stops the fly-away's. A brilliant blow drying spray that halves the drying time.

The other thing to keep in mind with a double coated breed is to blow dry using a pin brush such as the **Plush Puppy Pin Ultimate Pin Brush**. This has secure pins, without knobs that tend to rip the coat to bits, and is one of the best I have used. Blow dry everything up and forwards towards the head till 7/8ths dry and then use just the air of the dryer to finish off with the coat coming back into its natural fall. This method also assists in reducing unwanted wave.

A good wide toothed comb is beneficial also to be able to work the coat through from root to end to avoid any chance of matting or felting as the coat ages. Use a **Plush Puppy Professional Grooming Comb** that have a lightweight oval shaped spine combining fine and coarse pins made of hardened stainless steel with anodic oxide finish that reduces drag and static to the coat. Perfect for use for this breed of dog.

I often see coats that have only been half dried and or not worked through from the skin to ends. Maximise everything you have with these coats.

For texture to the coat, you can add extra harshness by using **Plush Puppy Ruffy Tuffy Coat Spray**. I go through bucket loads of this when Belgian Sheepdog people are around. They just love this. Spray lightly to the coat and wait a couple of seconds to allow it dry and then keep reapplying as before, until the level of harshness is achieved. This is not a sticky obvious product and one that is very popular for this purpose.

Sometimes when it's borderline to going or staying home as the coat is not quite grown back enough, you need to lift the coat back up after the dog has slept on it all night and flattened out what looked like a spectacular blow dry the night before, again use **Plush Puppy Volumising Spray**. This is perfect used to 'fluff' up the coat at the show. A light even spray, brush in until dry or use a dryer. Produced for easy use and scientifically balanced for all coat types. This is a hair thickener to add volume - not a hair stiffener and not detectable as it leaves the coat with a natural thicker look and feel.

Add a touch more Puffy Dog to the ruff and blow dry quickly to fluff the hair back up. Finish with the light spray of Ruffy Tuffy and a light last-minute spray of **Plush Puppy Shine and Comb** to the topline area, the pants and the front of the dog. The Shine & Comb gives just that extra bit of good natural looking sheen to the coat without weighing down the hair. Hold at least 30cms away from the coat when applying.

I don't mind a pleasant-smelling dog either without being too artificial or smelling like a room deodorant. **Plush Puppy Odour Muncher** is a clean smelling deodoriser with a light fragrance. It minimises odours and gets rid of that slept in a crate all night smell. I do believe judges use not just sense when judging but a lot of their senses including their olfactory senses and love a clean nice smelling dog.

These wonderfully confident natured dogs have a lot of grace and power. They have the ability to work with great skill in a pretty full on job yet remain calm. Your dog not only watches out for the flock but also is protective of and devoted to his master.

These are dogs ready to go and work at an instant including the show ring. With a beautifully presented coat you are a winner every time.

