



Expert Grooming Article



Bouvier Des Flandres

Known originally as the Flanders Cattle Dog from the areas of South West Flanders and the French Northern Plains, these wonderful farmers dogs are known for their herding ability and as a draught dog. His scenting instincts also lent him to be used as a tracking dog and he was also kept as a messenger dog and gamekeepers' dog. What becomes clear is that this dog was very highly valued for his working ability and the standard reflects this strongly stating that "any changes which could harm this, should be penalised. (read more over page..)



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Though he is mostly used today as a farm dog, guard dog and defence or police dog, it doesn't alter the need for the very attributes that made him what he was bred for. His coat is a huge part of his ability to work and the texture is vitally important, calling for a coat that is rough to touch, dry and Matt. One does not want a shiny, silky coat on this dog. His coat must be abundant and is double-coated with a dense undercoat and a harsh outercoat providing a protective layer that is waterproof. Colours range from grey, brindle through to black with a washed-out, light coat unacceptable.

So, the quest is to maintain that tousled, double coat which gives him that all-weather protection. Trimming is minimal to maintain the silhouette, yet he must not appear over groomed either.

To bath the Bouvier Des Flandres, use **Plush Puppy Body Building Shampoo** or **Plush Puppy Herbal Whitening Shampoo** which is, in fact, a toning shampoo and not a lightening shampoo. Use either of the shampoos at 1:5 dilution (1 part shampoo to 5 parts water). This allows easier dispersion evenly throughout that dense "waterproof" coat. The Body Building shampoo will give you all the lift and fullness so required, and the Whitening Shampoo allows you to tone any unwanted warmer tones from sun bleaching or damage or just to give a darker depth to the coat.

For a black Bouvier Des Flandres or a dog that needs to intensify a washed-out black coat colour use **Plush Puppy Black Opal Shampoo**. This is a black coloured shampoo for toning black coats, giving depth to faded coats and enhancing natural colour. This is not a dye that colours the coat but a strong stain. Use at 1:3 dilution or for badly reddened ends on a dark coat, and up to 1:10 for maintenance. The drier the coat the better the grab factor of the tone. Do not use on any area where black is not wanted like on the small white chest star that is allowed in the standard. Repeat the process to achieve a greater the depth of colour.

Shampoos are not just shampoos. However, most are used to just cleanse and smell good. Plush Puppy shampoos are very specific giving a direct outcome and allowing you the pro exhibitor to achieve the exact silhouette you are seeking. You can intermix the shampoos using say the Body Building and the Whitening together if you require both the outcomes.

For a coat that is lacking or wishing to maintain texture use **Plush Puppy Texture + Shampoo**. This shampoo is formulated to retain and improve coat texture. It 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 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.

There is a lot of work to doing a Bouvier Des Flandres as he is a lot of dog, and one should minimise the work by putting in the hard work prior to shows.

Now in order to hydrate this coat and keep it from getting brittle and to prevent breakage, especially around the beard and moustache, use as a final rinse after shampooing, **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil**. Add 1 teaspoon to 4 Litres of water, then either sponge on or sluice well through the coat and LEAVE IN. DO NOT RINSE. This is quite a unique product in that it is not greasy and totally water-soluble. It just adds all the goodness of Evening Primrose and Calendula Oils for an outstanding healthy vigour to the skin and coat. Use after a wet shampoo routine, or between baths during the week for maintenance to the coat and furnishings. This is one product you cannot be without.

As show people, we like to bath and present well but it can dehydrate the coats especially if one is not able to use a conditioner as in the case of a Bouvier, where we don't want soft texture as a conditioner will surely do.

You can also add 1 tablespoon of **Plush Puppy Volumising Cream** to the Seabreeze Oil mix to save time and add body and more lift if the coat is at all sparse. This coats each hair without giving a sticky, foreign feel to the coat. Also available is **Plush Puppy Volumising Spray** is a 'Ready to Use' for quicker, easier and fuller coat results. Perfect either before blow-drying or used to 'fluff' up the coat at the show. A light even spray,

brush in until dry or use a dryer. For the legs and head to give more strength and body, use **Plush Puppy Puffy Dog+** which is a strong hold mousse but totally water soluble. Apply at root area around head and all over the legs. Dry as usual. Puffy Dog+ does not get flaky, nor leave white build up on the coat.

To keep the coat in top condition you can try a mixture of **Plush Puppy Seabreeze Oil** and **Plush Puppy Coat Rescue** as a treatment. This helps protect and hydrate the coat. Mix 1 tablespoon of each into 1 Litre of warm water. Apply all over, do not rinse and then dry.

Coat Rescue has been specifically formulated to bring dry or damaged coats back to life. Coat Rescue's naturally blended essential oils and pure plant extracts help restore strength and elasticity to dehydrated and tired coat hair. The treatment is exceptional on brittle coat hair.

You could also use **Plush Puppy Coat Rescue** on the beard or any areas needing treatment. Dilute 1 tablespoon into 250ml of water and apply well through the coat. Rinse after 5 minutes or leave in until show bathing. All of these are for that extra effort but not part of the usual routine.

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.

For the legs and head to give more strength and body, use **Plush Puppy Puffy Dog+** which is a strong hold coat shaping mousse but totally water-soluble. Apply at root area around head and all over the legs. Dry as usual. Puffy Dog+ does not get flaky, nor leave white build up on the coat.

Plush Puppy Powder Puff Regular and **Plush Puppy Powder Puff Terrier** are both brilliant cleaning powders that will clean a mess in a crate or while traveling. The spinoff is that they are also deodorisers leaving a clean fresh fragrance. The extra bonus with the Terrier powder is that it leaves an extremely harsh texture. A very light sprinkle of Powder Puff Terrier will give the coat added texture.



For the feet you can use **Plush Puppy Wonder Wash** which is a no rinse wet instant shampoo. Spray and foam up and towel off. I dislike using anything wet on the body of the coat after I have gone to such trouble to blow dry and shape, so prefer if having to clean quickly, to use the Powder Puff cleaner.

The ideal brushes when preparing and blow drying a Bouvier are the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Pin Brush** and the **Plush Puppy Ultimate Slicker Brush**. These brushes promise durability and flawless brushed results every time. They are both ergonomically designed to lessen strain on the groomer's hands while at the same time offering maximum brush contact.

The soft slicker features a soft, flexible rubber air-cushion housing the strong pins. These pins penetrate through the dogs coat without excessive pulling on the hair or scratching the skin. The Ultimate Soft Slicker Brush ensures a gentler, more comfortable brushing experience.

So, showtime is here and your Bouvier is all done? Not quite - he could have a light mist of **Plush Puppy Odour Muncher** applied to the top area of his coat to keep him smelling fresh and clean. Not bad if you have to travel with dogs in crates a good distance or the dog has been crated overnight. Judges judge with all senses so make this an olfactory sensation as well as visual.

Your Bouvier Des Flandres with his calm and sensible attitude and frank expression should be looking a treat. His strength and personality should shine through with your presentation and your grooming and handling should be enhancing all his breed characteristics to their best. He is intelligent, energetic and agile with a free and proud gait. Above all, he is a Working dog. This dependable and courageous dog is not just another dog to show, he is part of the heritage of good working dogs and it is your mission to maintain the integrity and beauty of this marvelous breed.