

HERDING GROUP

wastebasket held at varying heights. The AKC offers virtual Trick Dog titles in addition to passing a test administered in person by a certified evaluator.

When a Pembroke must be on crate rest, such as because of an injury, the lack of exercise can present problems. Frozen, stuffed Kong toys can provide entertainment for a while. Knuckle-bones to chew or a toy to squeak can help entertain the patient. Keeping the dog on leash and rolling a tennis ball to him can replace the long chases to get the ball. Entertain him by letting him find a cookie under a cup, and then adding more cups to increase the difficulty level. Using his part of his regular meal ration for rewards can help keep his weight down. Teach the patient the names of his toys as a mental exercise.

You can use parts of any of the AKC events to teach your Pembroke to use his mind and body. Most of all, have fun, because that

is what being owned by a Pembroke is all about!

—Lynda McKee,

TifflynLDM@aol.com

[Pembroke Welsh Corgi Club of America](#)

Pulik

PULI CLINGONS

Getting debris tangled into a coated dog breed is no surprise. Enter the Puli with a coat that has Velcro-like qualities when the dog is transitioning from puppy coat to the adult coat of cords. It is a whole new ballgame! Anything and everything can end up in the coat—for example, I (and other Puli owners) have found plant material such as leaves, twigs, full-size branches, brambles, cactus (!!), thorny and non-thorny vines, burrs/stickers (including “beggar’s lice,” a type of plant that produces small hook-like seeds on the pods that they grow), catkins (oak tassels), pine needles, dandelion fluff, acorns, birdseed, and sweet-gum tree balls, to name a

few. Pulik especially seem to love to roll in mowed grass or hay, much to the horror of their caregivers.

Other natural items reportedly found in Puli coats include June bugs (often just in pieces), cicadas, baby toads, and even a live(!) bee.

The following household items (to name just a few) have also been found embedded in the Puli coat:—yarn/string, rug fibers, and even actual Velcro strips.

Puli owners, particularly those new to the breed, ask in exasperation how to get debris out of the coat quickly and without removing hair. The best method is using your fingers. Most every Puli owner has little piles of things picked out of the coat lying on the edges of coffee-tables and elsewhere.

I personally think it’s unrealistic to walk a Puli only on pavement or manicured grass. If you are someone who wants to take a Puli for a hike (i.e., somewhere where leaves or twigs may

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During the 2019–2020 bushfire season in Australia, many young wild animals were left orphaned. On two separate occasions during the season, while journeying outdoors a Puli named Kato allowed an orphaned baby possum that was drawn to him to cling to his coat and come home with him. Both possums were later successfully taken to wildlife rescue services.

be picked up by the coat), then you should anticipate that you might be pulling out individual bits of debris by hand for up to two hours. (Hopefully your Puli didn't get into something truly awful that would take longer!)

I like for my Pulik to be able to really run and stretch their legs. We live out in the country with a bunch of oak

trees, and there are times I feel like I actually need a leaf-blower for inside the house to get rid of what the dogs are bringing in. But a happy and well-exercised Puli to me is worth the extra effort.

Some folks swear by T-shirts or various types of outfits that they put on the dogs to try to lessen

the amount of debris in the coat—but then you have to remember you need to be careful that you don't cause the Puli to overheat while being wrapped up like a sausage.

A large part of having a Puli in coat is the realization that keeping a corded coat in good condition requires picking out debris *constantly*.

COURTESY SALLY AND JON WATKINSON

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Probably one of the most unusual things found clinging to Puli cords was reported during the 2019–2020 Australian bushfire season. A Puli named Kato had an orphaned young ringtail possum (later determined to be a young female) hanging onto him, the possum apparently having climbed aboard to hitch a ride. The owner reported that Kato was seemingly oblivious to his hitchhiker. After efforts were made to contact wildlife rescue, the owner walked Kato and his Puli friend Hugo to the vet, where the possum was removed and held overnight for wildlife rescue to collect her. The young possum was last reported to be doing well and would be staying there until she was well and old enough to be released on her own.

Surprisingly a similar event took place shortly thereafter, with yet another young possum found hanging onto Kato's back. After yet another walk to the vet (and again to the shock of

the staff), this possum too was removed and held for pickup by wildlife rescue. This second hitchhiker was a young orphaned male who also was apparently in good health and also transferred to wildlife rescue for care and later release.

Thank you to Sally Watkinson for allowing me to reshare the Puli and possum account, and to Jon for the great photographs.

(For readers in the U.S., please note that Australian possums do not look like their American relative, the opossum. While both possums and opossums are marsupials, they are, technically and scientifically, two very different animals.)

—Dagmar Fertl,
dfertl@gmail.com
[Puli Club of America](#)

Spanish Water Dogs

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES?

Averaging 126 registration in each of the five years 2017–2021 and considered a “low-entry breed” in AKC shows, Spanish

Water Dogs are still a rare breed in the U.S. While the concerns of ethical breeders of any purebred dogs should be similar, breeders of a rare breed require an extra level of vigilance, thoughtfulness, and fortitude in their breeding programs.

Deep understanding of dog structure and the breed standard is best accomplished with knowledgeable mentorship and rich, respectful discussion. An “eye” for type, proper coat, correct movement, and so on is greatly enhanced through the observation over time of many informally and in the show ring.

With an historical high of 73 “unique” dogs entered in conformation in 2021, it is clear that the show world isn't exactly “on fire” with Spanish Water Dogs. The breed would benefit from many more current breeders and owners entering dog shows with a desire to learn and also a subsequent willingness to make appropriate adjustments to their breeding programs.