Canvasback Labradors – Puppy care information 2017

The following information is provided to help you prepare for, and deal with your baby puppy ! Since most folks ask the same questions, and you will probably be shopping and purchasing items for him/her in the next few weeks, I thought I would attempt to compile the most common questions/concerns here for you. As always, if you have further questions, feel free to contact me directly.

1. Crates - I believe in, and crate train all my dogs. A crate is not a jail to a dog, but more their den. My dogs love their crates and hurry to get to them. It can be your savior as far as house damage etc, and also a safe way to transport your dog. My preference are to wire crates. The dog can see you and hear you and be a part of what is happening in the house. Also during crate training time, the slide trays are easier to clean then carrying the entire kennel outside as with a ‘Vari Kennel’. Now, for the hunters – I prefer Vari Kennels for car travel while training/hunting, because it also contains muddy water etc to the crate when the dog shakes ☺ .

There are many brands of wire crates – please look at them, and choose the heaviest gauge wire available. Many of the Walmart, Tractor Supply crates are cheap thin wire can be bent by a full size Lab and become a choking/suffocation hazard. If that is all you can obtain, consider using zip ties at all junctions to keep the crate secure. Size – most Labs use either a 24 X 36 or 24 X 42” Either is a good choice depending on the footprint of space you have in your house.

1. Food- There are a lot of good foods on the market today. Your puppy will be arriving having been raised on Purina Pro Plan Savor Chicken and Rice. I use this feed for puppies, so that my new owners can get it no matter where in the country the puppy will live, as many brands are ‘regional’. Grain Free/Limited ingredient vs regular. My philosophy is, if it isn’t broke don’t fix it. My lines have been allergy free for a very long time due to selective breeding practices. My adults are on regular dog food, no one needs sensitive stomach or grain free. So I leave those on the shelf incase I ever need it. All that being said, I recommend a few of the quality dog foods available. Your co-breeder, Dr Elizabeth Lloyd, recommends FROMM - Salmon and Vegetable is her favorite recipe. I like Fromm, Pro Plan , Infinia (made by Purina Mills and available at Purina Feed Dealers). The foods we both are NOT fond of are: (anything you can purchase at the grocery store), Blue Buffalo/Blue Wilderness, Science Diet, Nutro. There are specific reasons for each and if you need more information, just let me know. Your puppy is going to be eating approx. 1 cup 2 x per day. Most puppy care books say 3 x’s per day….that is not necessary, and just keeps pushing food through an immature digestive system. VERY quickly, 1.5 cups per day, and will level out at 2 cups 2x per day in just a few weeks. No matter what you decide to ultimately feed – do NOT change anything for three days, and then mix Pro Plan with your feed choice for several more days 50/50 , then switch. Puppies have fragile digestive systems, and if you switch environment, water, and food all at once you will likely have very loose water stools from the upset.
2. Collars – your first collar purchase should be adjustable – cheap – and small. The rapid growth of your puppy means that very soon whatever you purchased, will be outgrown and in the trash. Save the embroidery and rhinestones for the adult collar.
3. Avoid the temptation to take you new puppy to the pet store – wait until he/she gets at least one more shot in the series. The high load of pathogens from strange adult dogs in these places are more then the immature , not fully vaccinated puppy can take and is risky.
4. Once you get your puppy, call you vet and schedule a puppy wellness visit. Your vet will examine the pup – review the vaccines that I have given, and set you up on a follow up schedule that is appropriate for your area. Do not miss this step!!!!!
5. Your puppy will be microchipped - You will be filling out the registration information during pick up, and I will send them off to AKC Reunite. So have in mind and with you – the names and phone numbers of who you want the microchip company to call if your pet is found. If you know who your vet is going to be, bring that with you as well, they will be the third contact.
6. I am sked by just about every new owner – should the puppy ride home in a crate. Answer : in 25 years of breeding I have had about 3 puppies actually leave in the crate ☺ Most ride home in someone’s lap. If you are coming a long way, you may want to have the crate with you so that you can put the puppy somewhere safe if you need to stop for meals etc.
7. Nails = I have been clipping your dogs nails weekly. The very best thing you can do for you puppy and eventual veterinarian is to get a coarse nail file, and weekly put the dog in the lap or on the floor and file the nails. This does two things – gets him use to it so he doesn’t become ‘that dog’ that has to go to the vet to be sedated for a nail trim (and that is costly) – and also desensitizes them to being handled a lot. With this, wipe your dogs ears often and look in their mouth…..this will make your adult dog easy to exam, and be restrained for medically necessary treatments!

Puppy pick up days : Ok I have to be honest and say that I have not been in this situation EVER…. 18 puppies born the same day to schedule puppy pick ups. Upon reflection, there is no way I can meet with each and every family on the same day or weekend. Therefore - in prep for figuring this out could you all start looking at your schedules and see what modifications can work for you. I will let some go early (the weekend of 2/11) and my employer has agreed to let me have a few days off during the week, to help spread this out. I also would like to go to a dog show, in West Friendship MD on Sunday 2/19 to watch one of my dogs show. It occurred to me that a few puppies could ride along with me, if anyone wanted to meet me there before I go into the showgrounds, and it would save a few of you some driving.

Start thinking this through – and we will as a group get organized and the puppy pick up appointments scheduled. Whew – its going to be hectic but with spreading them out a bit, I think we can pull it off together……. Now pray for no blizzards!

Jane