

Reasons Not To Own a Giant

Based on Mary Glazman's "Reasons Not to Own a Standard" 2005
Revised with permission for Giant Schnauzers by C. May-Bowers 2006

Obedience instructors, canine behaviorists, and rescue organizations often see instances of people who buy a puppy or adopt a dog that is the totally wrong breed for them. Sometimes breeders who love their dogs don't always realize that their breed is not right for everyone. This can sometimes cause them to present a lopsided view of a breed that is not fair to the dog or its new owner. What makes a Giant the best dog in the world for one person can be same reason it is the worst dog for someone else. When someone is investigating a particular breed they should be given both the good and bad facts about that breed.

Originally developed as an all-around farm dog, the Giant needed to be able to work with and independently of their masters as they performed daily chores and protected the family and farm. As a cattle drover, the Giant was required to move and outmaneuver stubborn, large, and ornery livestock. This required a dog that knew how to use every tool at its disposal to be able to move a herd by barking, nipping, and applying physical intimidation. As their job as a farm dog and drover disappeared, the Giant's intimate relationship with its owners and instinctive ability to evaluate a situation while also responding accordingly made them a dependable and desirable guard dog and family companion.



Now, reasons not to get a Giant Schnauzer.

If you have had a Miniature Schnauzer and want the same dog in a bigger package, don't get a Giant! The Giant is NOT the same breed as a Mini. Minis were designed to be a ratter whereas Giants are drovers and guard dogs. Giants require more training, socialization, grooming, and are a lot more expensive to take care of. If you love being able to travel and take your mini everywhere with you, don't expect to get the same welcome reception with a Giant.

If want one of those majestic and regal dogs you saw at a dog show, don't get a Giant! What you are seeing is a Giant at work. They have gone through hours of grooming, and have been trained since puppyhood to behave appropriately in public. These same Giants act completely different when they get home. They counter surf,



bark at the mailman, chase and catch the cat, get hair and mud all over the house, climb onto the furniture, bang on bathroom doors, hide or destroy their owner's "toys", swat and bark at people when they want something, and suddenly develop selective hearing whenever they like. In other words, they can also be obnoxious annoying pests that demand tons of attention.

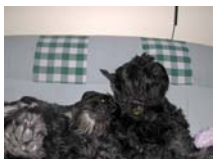
Giants DO SHED and do require lots of grooming! If you have allergies or don't like dog hair around the house you may want to re-think getting a Giant. Giants are not hypo-allergenic! Regular



bathing can reduce some of the dander, saliva, and oils that affect people with allergies. Their coat falls out year round instead of blowing the dead hair in the springtime like other breeds do. They require constant and ongoing grooming. An ungroomed Giant's coat looks a lot like a Bouvier de Flanders. The Giant's beard and furnishings (the long soft hair under the chest and on the legs) collects stickers and tangles easily. Plan on brushing, combing and dematting your Giant at least once a week and clipping every 2-4 months depending on the individual coat and hair growth.



If you keep an immaculate home and yard, don't get a Giant! This is not the breed for spotless white carpets, perfectly manicured gardens, or dog free areas. They are clean dogs, however, they LOVE mud puddles, ripping around the yard, hiding in bushes, digging, and rolling in grass and they will leave BIG muddy footprints all over your floors and furniture. When we say clean, we mean they will clean themselves off by rolling and rubbing every part of their large bodies on



your nice clean furniture and carpet. After they finish dinner their favorite thing to do is rub their heads on the furniture and roll around to remove any food particles that may have gotten embedded in their beards. If you think that dogs are not allowed on the furniture in your home, think again. A Giant will take great pleasure and pride in obeying you...while you are at home. Once you are out of sight they will make themselves at home anywhere they please.

Giants love water and will share this love of water with anyone they adore. If you do not like water or wet dogs do not get a Giant. They are absolute pagans when it comes to anything wet. Most Giants will wade, roll, or fling themselves at the nearest body of water or mud puddle and then expect you to share in their joy and excitement.



Giants will drop their toys in their water dishes just to have an excuse to dig them out. They will pick up a water bucket and carry it around, spilling water everywhere as they head into the house. A Giant will drop their favorite toy--or worse yet the remote control or your cell phone--into the bath water or the toilet and then dunk their heads in to retrieve it. Giants simply adore laying their heads on your lap after they have taken a nice big drink of water.



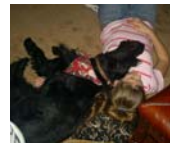
If you believe that dogs should be calm and patient until you are ready to do something with them, don't get a Giant.

Giants are very energetic, physical and active dogs that can often be too active for some people. They are driven to be part of your family activities and will throw a pretty impressive tantrum or become destructive if not allowed to be part of all aspects of your life. Giants are dogs who need a job. Their energy needs to be directed into something useful. If they are not given a job or not allowed to perform their job of being with their human companions, they will find a job on their own and it may not be a job you approve of.



If you can't or won't stand up for your rights, don't get a Giant. Giants are a dominant breed that needs a firm authority figure to look up to, otherwise they WILL take over. The harder you push a Giant the harder they will push back. This is a hardheaded breed that can and will make its own decisions and unless the owner gives it boundaries and guidelines to follow they will encounter problems. Giants do best in a situation that is consistent and predictable, where they know their place and the place of everyone in their immediate family.

If you plan on having children and think that a dog is a good way to find out if your spouse can handle the responsibility, or if you want to give your child a dog, don't get a Giant. They are not the breed to bring into your home to baby and spoil, and then be expected to take the back burner when a child arrives. Giants are a selfish breed and may not be able to share your attention with a new family member. There are lots of great books on preparing your dog for new babies, read one BEFORE you get any dog. **Giants should never be left unsupervised around children!!!**



Giants need a lot of training and socialization throughout their life, not just one or two basic obedience classes. While a Giant can do well with children if raised with them, they will also be able to outmaneuver and manipulate a young child all too easily. A Giant does not reach full adulthood until it is 3-4 years old and will continue to play with, bash into, and challenge his owners into the senior years. They are a strong and very physical breed—ask any Giant owner and they will show you their bruises. A Giant will pull you over if they decide to take off after the neighbor's cat, bang into your nose as you are bending over, lay on top of you so you can not get off of the couch or out of bed, and knock you over when they go flying down the stairs or forget to stop on one of their rips (dashing madly around the yard or house).

If you think all dogs should be friends with EVERYONE, don't get a Giant!!!! Giants are excellent watchdogs that will defend their family and home when necessary. Being a guard dog means that they will be aloof and cautious with strangers and in unusual situations. The more a young Giant is socialized and trained the better able he or she will be to judge whether someone is a friend or foe. A foe will be made to feel uncomfortable by being glared at, watched, and possibly growled or barked at by the Giant. You may have the friendliest, most outgoing Giant in the world, but you will still need to watch your dog at all times. If they perceive a serious threat to their family Giants can deliver a lightning fast, frightening, and very painful snap or controlled nip. This breed has amazing control and if properly socialized and trained will gauge their response accordingly. The bottom line is that this breed is a guard dog and if you expect it to be otherwise, don't get a Giant!!!



If you think that your Giant should be friends with other dogs or pets, don't get a Giant. Many Giant owners are impressed at how well their Giant puppy does with other dogs, however, once that puppy hits the teenage stage its natural protection and working tendencies begin to develop and to be expressed. This is a dominant and terrier-like breed that may not tolerate another dog that is acting inappropriately. Their main purpose in life is to work alongside their human companions, not to romp frivolously with strange dogs. Giants are also very selfish when it comes to their owners and may not do well sharing attention with other pets. Giants were originally developed as an all-around farm dog, which means they are rodent exterminators by nature and as a result, Giants do have a high prey drive and some are not suited for homes with smaller animals of any kind.

If you think that a dog will give you its absolute devotion and affection in return for being fed, given water, taken out periodically, given a nice house to live in, being taken to the vet when it is sick or needs shots, and having its ears scratched once in a while, then don't get a Giant. They expect and will demand more of you. You have to earn their respect before you get their devotion and affection.

Giants are a very unique breed. Do not expect them to behave or respond like other Working Breeds, Herding Dogs, or Terriers; do expect them to be able to easily perform the jobs of all three. While there are many very intelligent dog breeds, the Giant's intelligence is different. Giants are one of a handful of breeds that were designed to do multiple jobs and this makes them very adaptable, extremely clever, and physically capable of doing almost anything their owners ask of them. They also are able to do anything they want if their owners do not provide them with an appropriate outlet.



There is an independent streak in Giants and they are easily bored by repetition. Training needs to be made interesting and challenging and Giants should be encouraged to figure things out on their own. Giants have a sense of humor. They can be serious when necessary, but they do prefer to have fun. They are a lot like little kids. They like to tease, splash in puddles, dig holes, race around at full speed and bounce off wall, chase stuff; sneak up on someone and scare the wits out of them with a loud “woof” or a cold, wet nose and watch them jump. Giant will laugh at you when you do something dumb and act embarrassed when they do something dumb.

