

KENNEL MANAGEMENT

The majority of KUSA affiliated and Affix registered Bullmastiff owner/ breeders in South Africa are selective or 'hobby' breeders running anything from one to ten or more dogs on their properties.

The dogs, which are regarded and treated as pets, are housed within the home and garden, as opposed to in conventional kennels. If the need is there, the garden is divided into what is commonly referred to as 'camps'. These are nothing more than divided and designated areas where the dogs are kept close to the home. I suppose they could be called super large runs. The dogs can, during good weather, enjoy the benefits of being outside to romp or rest within a safe fenced or walled parameter, and in inclement weather be brought into the home where the baskets and / or paw pads are located.

The dogs also have the option of taking refuge in the outside adjoining weather proofed kennel house if they so desire. I think this type of arrangement is a wonderful concept as it is so much more dog and human friendly than the conventional rows of small kennels with cement floors.

It is particularly useful for bitches in season that need to be protected from unwanted advances, multiple stud dogs that do not get on with each other or simply a safe haven in which to keep one's dogs.



Breeders who live within a municipal area may have to take cognisance of the relevant municipal rules and regulations. This could include the numbers of dogs that are allowed on one property, being in possession of a breeders licence, and the number of breeding bitches permitted at one given time. In built up areas noise could be a problem. In South Africa the majority of the registered breeders are fortunate to have enough space to accommodate their dogs without too many problems.

Hygiene

Whether the breeder uses camps or conventional kennels, or keeps all the dogs together, strict hygiene must be observed and maintained as a top priority. Here are some ideas for maintaining a well run kennel.

Daily or twice daily, depending on the number of dogs, waste matter should be removed and any contaminated surfaces sluiced.

In Africa fly traps are essential parts of any breeder's equipment and should be strategically placed for maximum effectiveness.

There should be a fresh clean supply of water for the dogs at all times. Other necessities include regular change and washing of the bedding whether it is blankets, paw pads, cushions or as I saw at one kennel I visited – straw.

If the home kitchen and pantry area are not used for the storage and preparation of the dog's food, there should also be a suitable area allocated for this function. The washing up of the dirty dog dishes should be done after each meal and any leftover food discarded if contaminated.

Flea and tick control is required constantly. There are many preparations on the market which can be used to avoid problems.

Grooming

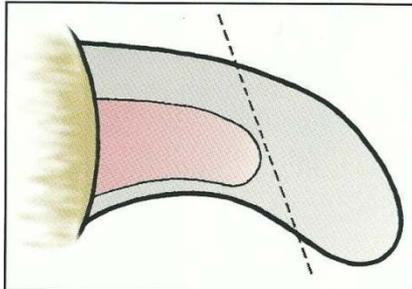
Beauty accretions, of which there seems to be an endless list needed for keeping one's pets clean and healthy, can range from brushes and combs, to towels, nail clippers, toothpaste and toothbrushes, collars and leads. Whatever the item, it needs to be kept clean and in a central area for easy accessibility.

The actual care and grooming of a Bullmastiff is very easy compared to some of the longhaired breeds and can be accomplished in minimal time. Daily brushes of five minutes will normally suffice. When the dog is moulting, which occurs at the end of the winter or post- natal, a more vigorous approach is needed to clear all the dead hair from the coat and it may take a week or so of almost continuous brushing to get the dog back into prime condition again. If the dog is to be exhibited in the show ring then no preparations that alter the coat are allowed.

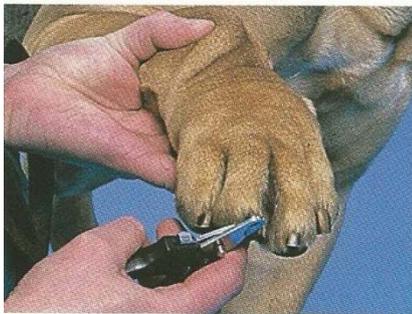
Some breeders/ owners actually bath their dogs on a regular basis. I do not think this is a healthy practice even if a good quality shampoo is used, as the natural oils necessary for the waterproofing of the coat, required by the Breed Standard, will eventually be removed. Owners should keep in mind that the Bullmastiff was initially bred to live and work outside in a cold climate, night or day

and is not a fancy lap dog. Obviously if the dog has been rolling in some undesirable substance then a wash would be in order.

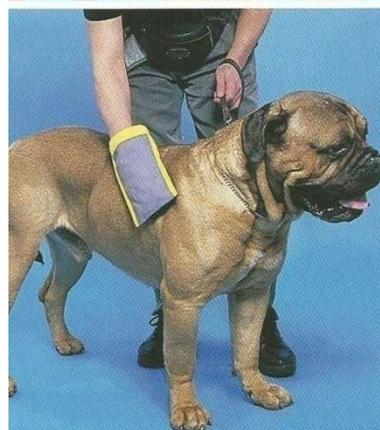
Trimming of the whiskers is not required even for the show ring and should not, in my opinion, be done at all. The nails should be kept short preferably by natural means. A Bullmastiff with long nails will have splayed feet and will be unable to walk or run with any comfort.



Trimming the nails. Illustration shows the position of the quick; be careful not to cut too close to it.

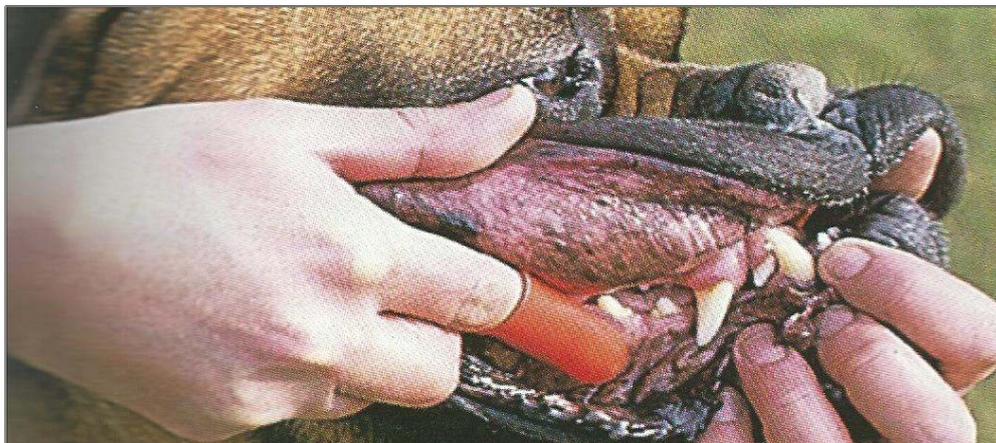


Spring loaded nail clippers are most effective on the strong nails of a Bullmastiff.



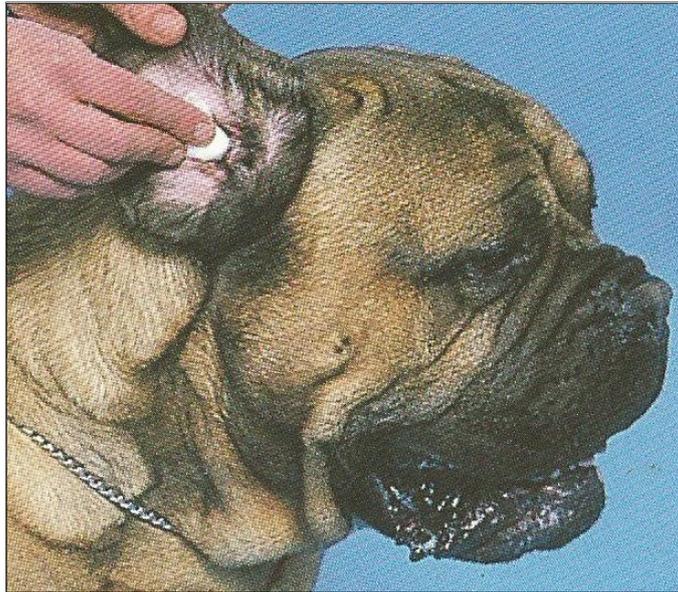
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The teeth should be cleaned at least weekly with a special veterinary toothbrush and toothpaste. Puppies that have their mouths handled frequently usually have no objection to this procedure. Human toothpaste should not be used as it erodes the stomach walls.



The mouth and eyes can be wiped whenever necessary with a small towel to remove excess saliva and dirt and if the nose is dry, plain Vaseline can be applied.

The ears, also an integral part of the grooming procedure, should be kept clean. Soft moist disposable cloths available in special containers and used on human babies are ideal for this and keep the visible area clean of any debris. An ear bud should never be inserted into the ear canal.



Acknowledgement & thanks : The above photo's illustrating grooming of the Bullmastiff have been taken from THE BULLMASTIFF MANUAL by Bill Walkey - pages 50, 51 52 and 53

Chizelhurst Bullmastiffs 2014

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