



RHODESIAN
RIDGEBACK

R E S C U E

Introduction and Information
for
Animal Shelters, Humane Societies
and Rescue Groups

August 2000



RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.,
a Virginia corporation
A 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Corporation

The Official Rescue Program of the
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the
United States, Inc.
and the
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Canada

www.ridgebackrescue.org

www.rrclubofcanada.org

Unless otherwise noted, all materials
are Copyright © 1998-2003 by
Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.,
a Virginia corporation
All Rights Reserved.

Introduction and Information for Animal Shelters, Humane Societies, and Rescue Groups

Table of Contents

This packet was prepared to provide you with an introduction to the activities and operations of Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, and to provide you with assistance in identifying, caring for, and placing Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs that come into your care. We have also included several articles prepared by the US national breed club, the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, Inc. ("RRCUS"), that you may reproduce and distribute in their entirety to your adoptive homes, volunteers, veterinary specialists, and others interested in the breed provided that the credits and copyright statements are included.

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. makes no representations or warranties regarding the information contained in this packet. It is intended to be solely an introduction to the organization and the breed. For more complete information and assistance, please contact one of our Rescue Coordinators, RRCUS, or the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Canada. You can also find more information at these organizations' web sites:

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
- www.ridgebackrescue.org

Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, Inc.
- rrcus.org

Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Canada
- www.rrclubofcanada.org

This packet contains:

- A Letter of Introduction
- Sample Pictures of Rhodesian Ridgeback Dogs Showing Some of the Variations in the Breed
- "About Us" - Organizational Information
- "Our Activities" - Operational Information

The following items may also be included or are available upon request:

- Sample Rescue Documentation:
 - o Adoption Application, including Pre-Reading, "Do You Have the Right Stuff?"
 - o Surrender Form
 - o Adoption Contract
- RRCUS Articles (These articles may be distributed to your adoptive homes):
 - o "Dermoid Sinus - A Potential Congenital Condition in Ridgebacks"
 - o "Is a Ridgeback the Right Dog for Your Family"
 - o "Living Happily and Comfortably With Your Rhodesian Ridgeback"
 - o "A Thumbnail Sketch of the Rhodesian Ridgeback"

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE

The Official Rescue Program of RRCUS
Post Office Box 5587 • Washington, DC 20016-1187 • www.ridgebackrescue.org



Dear Animal Shelter, Humane Society, and Rescue Group Friends!

Thank you for your willingness to work with and support the efforts of Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. We are the official rescue program for both the US and Canadian national breed clubs, the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, Inc. and the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Canada.

This "Introduction and Information" packet has been prepared expressly for you. It includes background information on our organization and information to help you identify Rhodesian Ridgebacks that come into your care. We have included a color photo sheet of Ridgebacks in various sizes, colors, and positions to give you an idea of the possible variations within the breed.

Our hardworking and dedicated volunteers across the USA and Canada have a wide range of experiences and expertise with the breed. If you would like assistance with identifying, evaluating, or placing a Rhodesian Ridgeback at any time, please do not hesitate to contact us. Our Rescue Coordinators would be happy to answer your questions.

Also, please visit our web site at www.ridgebackrescue.org for further information about our organization and the many dogs we have placed.

Thank you for your support of the *Msaada*¹ Rhodesian Ridgebacks!

¹ "Msaada" is the name used by Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue for its "family" of rescued dogs. Msaada means "aid, assistance, help, or support" in the Swahili language.



RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.,
a Virginia corporation
A 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Corporation

The Official Rescue Program of the
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the
United States, Inc.
and the
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Canada

www.ridgebackrescue.org

Unless otherwise noted, all materials
are Copyright © 1998-2003 by
Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.,
a Virginia corporation
All Rights Reserved.

ABOUT US

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. is a non-profit, charitable organization dedicated to the rescue, care, and adoption of Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs in need. It is an all-volunteer organization that includes breeders, owners, and other devotees of the breed. Ridgeback Rescue was established under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code.

Ridgeback Rescue is the official rescue program of the US and Canadian national breed clubs, as well as most local and regional clubs. It is comprised of a network of dedicated volunteers across both countries, and operates under an established set of Rescue Policies.

National Breed Club Affiliations

Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, Inc. (RRCUS)
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Canada (RRCC)

Local and Regional Breed Club Affiliations

Association of Rhodesian Ridgeback Fanciers (ARRF)
Chesapeake Bay Area Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (CBARRC)
Greater Valley Forge Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (GVFRRC)
New England Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (NERRC)
Northwest Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (NWRRC)
Orange Coast Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (OCRRC)
Raisin River Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (RRRRC)
Rhodesian Ridgeback Association of Metro Atlanta (RRAMA)
Rhodesian Ridgeback Association of Western New York (RRAWNY)
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Wisconsin (RRCOW)
Rhodesian Ridgeback Enthusiasts of Dallas (RRED)
San Diego Rhodesian Ridgeback Club (SDRRC)
Trinity Valley Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of Texas (TVRRCOT)

Ridgeback Rescue endeavors to assist all Rhodesian Ridgeback owners in raising happy, healthy dogs by providing information about the breed and assisting with training and care throughout a dog's life.

Copies of our Annual Report, IRS Form 990, IRS Form 1023, and IRS determination letter are available upon request by writing to the following. Please include your name and mailing address:

By EMAIL: info@ridgebackrescue.org

By MAIL:

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE INC
PO BOX 5587
WASHINGTON DC 20016-1187
USA



RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
A 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Corporation

The Official Rescue Program of the
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the
United States, Inc.

www.ridgebackrescue.org

Unless otherwise noted, all materials
are Copyright © 1998-2000 by
Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

OUR ACTIVITIES

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. ("Ridgeback Rescue") provides for the rescue, rehabilitation and re-homing of unwanted, neglected and/or abused purebred Rhodesian Ridgeback dogs.

<> Rescue -- Ridgeback Rescue takes ownership of unwanted, neglected and/or abused Ridgebacks. These dogs are surrendered or given to Ridgeback Rescue by their owners, animal shelters and humane societies, and other persons. Ridgeback Rescue provides these dogs with food, care and shelter until adoptive homes can be found.

<> Rehabilitation -- Ridgeback Rescue evaluates the temperament, health and other characteristics of Ridgebacks that are rescued for the purpose of determining their preparedness and suitability for placement in an adoptive home. Based upon this assessment, Ridgeback Rescue rehabilitates rescued Ridgebacks to the extent necessary, if at all, to prepare them for placement in an adoptive home. Rehabilitation is accomplished through obedience and behavioral training, and arranging for veterinary care.

<> Re-homing -- Ridgeback Rescue seeks out prospective adopters for rescued Ridgebacks. Ridgeback Rescue evaluates each prospective adopter for the purpose of determining their preparedness and suitability for owning a rescued Ridgeback. Ridgeback Rescue transfers ownership of rescued Ridgebacks to adopters that have been approved during the evaluation process if a rescued Ridgeback suitable to that adoptive home is located. Ridgeback Rescue provides continuing support and education to adopters in the form of information about the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed and the care and training of the rescued Ridgeback for the remainder of the rescued Ridgeback's life.

Ridgeback Rescue also provides education to the general public about the Rhodesian Ridgeback breed and the care and training of dogs. Education is provided by offering freely-accessible information on the organization's web site and links to other informational web sites, recommending and selling books by unrelated third parties, distributing informational brochures and other materials prepared by Ridgeback Rescue and other dog-related organizations, maintaining tables and booths staffed by Ridgeback Rescue volunteers at dog shows and other dog-related events, organizing and operating dog-related events, such as training classes, lure coursing and "Fun Days," and conducting other activities and events.

Ridgeback Rescue currently conducts all of these activities in the United States of America, Puerto Rico and Canada. All of these activities are conducted by the hard-working and dedicated volunteers of Ridgeback Rescue.

OFFICIAL STANDARD FOR THE RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

GENERAL APPEARANCE

The Ridgeback represents a strong, muscular and active dog, symmetrical and balanced in outline. A mature Ridgeback is a handsome, upstanding and athletic dog, capable of great endurance with a fair (good) amount of speed. Of even, dignified temperament, the Ridgeback is devoted and affectionate to his master, reserved with strangers. The peculiarity of this breed is the ridge on the back. The ridge must be regarded as the characteristic feature of the breed.

SIZE, PROPORTION, SUBSTANCE

A mature Ridgeback should be symmetrical in outline, slightly longer than tall but well balanced. Dogs - 25 to 27 inches in height; Bitches - 24 to 26 inches in height. Desirable weight: Dogs - 85 pounds; Bitches - 70 pounds.

HEAD

Should be of fair length, the skull flat and rather broad between the ears and should be free from wrinkles when in repose. The stop should be reasonably well defined. Eyes-should be moderately well apart and should be round, bright and sparkling with intelligent expression, their color harmonizing with the color of the dog. Ears-should be set rather high, of medium size, rather wide at the base and tapering to a rounded point. They should be carried close to the head.

Muzzle-should be long, deep and powerful. The lips clean, closely fitting the jaws. Nose-should be black, brown or liver, in keeping with the color of the dog. No other colored nose is permissible. A black nose should be accompanied by dark eyes, a brown or liver nose with amber eyes. Bite-jaws level and strong with well-developed teeth, especially the canines or holders. Scissors bite preferred.

NECK, TOPLINE, BODY

The neck should be fairly strong and free from throatiness. The chest should not be too wide, but very deep and capacious, ribs moderately well sprung, never rounded like barrel hoops (which would indicate want of speed). The back is powerful and firm with strong loins which are muscular and slightly arched. The tail should be strong at the insertion and generally tapering towards the end, free from coarseness. It should not be inserted too high or too low and should be carried with a slight curve upwards, never curled or gay.

FOREQUARTERS

The shoulders should be sloping, clean and muscular, denoting speed. Elbows close to the body. The forelegs should be perfectly straight, strong, and heavy in bone. The feet should be compact with well-arched toes, round, tough, elastic pads, protected by hair between the toes and pads. Dewclaws may be removed.

HINDQUARTERS

In the hind legs, the muscles should be clean, well defined and hocks well down. Feet as in front.

COAT

Should be short and dense, sleek and glossy in appearance but neither woolly nor silky.

COLOR

Light wheaten to red wheaten. A little white on the chest and toes permissible but excessive white there, on the belly or above the toes is undesirable.

RIDGE

The hallmark of this breed is the ridge on the back which is formed by the hair growing in the opposite direction to the rest of the coat. The ridge must be regarded as the characteristic feature of the breed. The ridge should be clearly defined, tapering and symmetrical. It should start immediately behind the shoulders and continue to a point between the prominence of the hips and should contain two identical crowns (whorls) directly opposite each other. The lower edge of the crowns (whorls) should not extend further down the ridge than one third of the ridge. Disqualification: Ridgelessness. Serious Fault: One crown (whorl) or more than two crowns (whorls).

GAIT

At the trot, the back is held level and the stride is efficient, long, free and unrestricted. Reach and drive expressing a perfect balance between power and elegance. At the chase, the Ridgeback demonstrates great coursing ability and endurance.

TEMPERAMENT

Dignified and even tempered. Reserved with strangers.

SCALE OF POINTS

20 - General appearance, size, symmetry and balance
20 - Ridge
15 - Head
15 - Legs and feet
10 - Neck and shoulders
10 - Body, back, chest, and loin
5 - Coat and color
5 - Tail
100 - TOTAL

DISQUALIFICATION: Ridgelessness

Approved by The American Kennel Club and effective September 30, 1992.

A THUMBNAIL SKETCH OF THE RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

(Written to hopefully answer some of the many questions people have about this wonderful, versatile animal.)

As puppies, Rhodesian Ridgebacks are fun loving, exuberant, inquisitive, and somewhat rambunctious. A six-month old Ridgeback puppy can unmeaningly knock over a toddler. A toddler can unmeaningly heap arbitrary punishment upon a young and impressionable puppy. Therefore, parents should exercise a great amount of supervision so that neither puppy nor baby inflicts abuse upon one another. This holds true throughout the preschool age period of a child and for the first 18 to 24 months of a Ridgeback's life. Mature Ridgebacks and school age children are best buddies and friends for life.

The Ridgeback is not a trouble-maker; however, once attacked or threatened by another dog, the Ridgeback will stand its ground and fight if it has to. Most of the time a Ridgeback is only looking for a doggy pal to play with and does not normally view other dogs as a threat. However, multiple, intact males around unspayed females can create some problems. A Ridgeback is very good with cats, but should be exposed to them when it (the Ridgeback) is young.

As guard dogs, Ridgebacks use great discretion. They are not frantic barkers and they are not looking to attack anyone. Usually, they will give a couple of loud bellows to get your attention and let you know someone is on the property. They do not bark indiscriminately. When Ridgebacks bark, they have a good reason to do so but will usually stop when you tell them -- unless they are certain you are not aware of what they are trying to tell you. It is always wise to investigate when Ridgebacks bark. Until you tell them everything is okay, they will continue to act alert and wary around strangers.

A Ridgeback should not be trusted to stay within unfenced property boundaries. They are hounds and have a good nose and excellent vision. Because of this they will take off, completely forgetting imaginary boundary lines, if they see something that captures their interest. Fencing is a must -- a minimum of 5 feet. Young Ridgebacks get bored easily and they can dig some good-sized holes. If you are going to have to keep your puppy or young dog alone for hours on end, day after day, construct a good-sized indoor/outdoor run to keep him out of boredom mischief.

Because of his short coat and very little shedding, the Ridgeback stays clean and odor free. Once a week currycombing, occasional baths, ear cleaning, and nail trimming are all that is needed to keep him well groomed and fit to live in your house. Ridgebacks are "people" dogs. They like to be where you are, and if you allow it, they'll crawl into your bed, onto your sofa or favorite chair and your lap. You have to decide what is acceptable behavior and train them accordingly at a very early age. They are very easy to housebreak if the owner is diligent and exercises common sense in the training period. It is best to limit a young dog to certain areas of your house where you can keep an eye on him. As older dogs they usually can have full roam of the house with no problems.

Train them early to ride in the car. A crate is strongly recommended as it acts as their seat belt and allows you to open car windows widely in warm weather. Never leave a dog in the car in hot weather -- even for a short period of time.

It is rare that a Ridgeback is found to be a fussy eater. If a Ridgeback suddenly refuses to eat, it is most likely sick and a veterinarian should be consulted. Their appetites are large, and no matter how much food you give them, they will try to convince you that it is not enough. Free feeding is not recommended for a Ridgeback. The biggest problem with first-time Ridgeback owners is that they allow their dogs to get too fat. It is best to follow your breeder's advice to the letter concerning type and quantity of food to feed. Ridgebacks are inherently adept at stealing food off of table tops -- so stand warned.

A Ridgeback, especially a young one, should have a safe place to exercise. This does not have to be several times a day or even every day. A couple of times a week to run and stretch muscles and get rid of young-dog exuberance is usually all that is needed. A brisk walk a few times a day in combination with periodic high energy runs are all that is needed for those who do not have the benefit of fenced property or who live in the city or an apartment.



RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
A 501(c)(3) Not-for-Profit Corporation

The Official Rescue Program of the
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the
United States, Inc.

www.ridgebackrescue.org

Unless otherwise noted, all materials
are Copyright © 1998-2000 by
Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
All Rights Reserved.

DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT STUFF?

Pre-Reading for the Adoption Application

So you love dogs, eh? We do, too, and we REALLY love Ridgebacks! Because of our devotion to this breed, and our commitment to placing rescued Ridgebacks in the homes they deserve, we ask that you first read the following, then ask yourself:

"Am I (Are we) the right person (people) to adopt a Rescued Ridgeback?"

WHAT A RESCUED RIDGEBACK DESERVES

- ❑ A home where EVERYONE gives the dog an opportunity to live up to its potential as a great companion. A few of the rescued Ridgebacks come from good, loving homes that had to give them up due to major, life-changing events. Most, however, have lived difficult lives or have lost someone they loved very much. In either case, they often go through an adjustment period when they join a new home, which is sometimes difficult.
- ❑ Owners who are committed to the dog's needs -- exercise, obedience training, socialization, understanding, patience and plenty of "quality" time. Sometimes this means you will have to re-arrange your work or other schedules to attend the dog's needs, or arrange for someone else to do this for you. If you work 9, 10, or more hours each day away from home, then this might not be the best time for you to have a dog -- regardless of how much you love dogs.
- ❑ A comfortable crate. What is a crate? A crate is a specially-made wire or plastic enclosure. It has multiple uses that are beneficial to both you and the dog -- safe housing during transport or while you are away from home, an effective means for housetraining, sleeping quarters, feeding area, etc. What a crate is not -- A crate is not cruel. It is not a means of punishment. Moreover, it is not a doghouse in the yard. To the dog, a crate is his/her "room" -- a place where the dog can retire to sleep or eat or feel secure.
- ❑ A fence, if you have a yard, or a secure, fenced area, such as a dog run, kennel, etc. Normally, a minimum of a five foot/1.5 metre fence is necessary to contain a Ridgeback.
- ❑ Regular exercise. This does not mean simply putting the dog out in the back yard. It means your commitment to a regular schedule of walks, runs, playing with other dogs, and playing with you! Not only will this interaction help to strengthen the bond between you and your Rescued Ridgeback, it will help to make a happy, healthy, well-socialized dog!

WHAT A RESCUED RIDGEBACK IS NOT

- ❑ It is not for the entertainment of your children. Rescued Ridgebacks are rarely less than a year or two old, and rarely have perfect temperaments or manners. While most Ridgebacks love children, you must keep in mind that they are large dogs and can accidentally and unintentionally knock down very young

children while playing.

- ❑ It is not a cheap alternative to a well-bred, purebred dog. There are many expenses to consider, including adoption fees and initial veterinary care, as well as the ongoing care of the dog (training, feeding, healthcare, etc).
- ❑ It is not an animal that you can expect to act like it has lived with you all its life. Rescued dogs frequently have severe cases of separation anxiety or were "disposed of" by their former owners because of destructive behaviours, lack of socialization or lack of obedience training. They usually require large amounts of attention and patience to help them adjust to their new home and family. NOTE FOR CAT OWNERS: Not all rescued Ridgebacks will be good with cats.

In addition to the above, please review information about the breed (temperament, health issues, traits, etc) provided by the Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, the national breed club, including the article:

"Is a Ridgeback the Right Dog for Your Family?"

This information may be obtained from the club's web site at <http://rrcus.org/>, or ask your local Rescue Coordinator how to obtain a copy.

If you have a question about anything you have read here, please feel free to contact your local Rescue Coordinator.

Now, after reading the above, if you can truthfully say to yourself:

"I am (We are) the right person (people) to adopt a Rescued Ridgeback!"

then, Congratulations! -- Please proceed to the next step and complete this Adoption Application. Please note that references will be checked and a Ridgeback Rescue representative might visit your home.

If, however, you are now saying to yourself, "We're not ready for a Rescued Ridgeback, but maybe a puppy would be better," then please review our "Things to Know Before You Buy a Rhodesian Ridgeback Puppy." It can be downloaded from our web site at www.ridgebackrescue.org, or request a copy from your local Rescue Coordinator.

APPLICATION TO ADOPT A RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE DOG

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE, INC.

Please complete the form below and mail it to:

ATTN: ADOPTION APPLICATION
RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE INC
PO BOX 5587
WASHINGTON DC 20016-1187
USA

NOTE: This form may also be completed and submitted online from the Ridgeback Rescue web site -- <http://www.ridgebackrescue.org/> and follow the link to your area's Regional Adoption page.

For information about the breed, rescue policies, and adoption procedures, please see the following web sites:

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the United States, Inc

<http://www.ridgebackrescue.org/>
<http://rrcus.org/>

or contact your Regional Rescue Coordinator.

ABOUT YOU

Names of all Adults in Household:

| | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|--|------------------------|--|
| [] | | | | | |
| Address [] | | | | | |
| Address [] | | | | | |
| City [] | | State/Province [] | | ZIP/Postal Code [] | |
| USA? <input type="checkbox"/> | Canada? <input type="checkbox"/> | Other Country? <input type="checkbox"/> | | [] | |
| Home Phone [] | Work Phone [] | Best time to call [] | | am / pm | |
| Email [] | FAX [] | Where to call | | Home Work (circle one) | |

Number of persons in your household?

Adults: Women Men
Children: Girls Ages Boys Ages

How did you learn about:

Ridgeback Rescue?
Our web site?

ABOUT YOUR HOME

What type of dwelling do you have?

Apartment / Condominium Detached Home Duplex / Triplex
 Townhouse / Rowhouse Farm Other? _____

Do you Own? or Rent? your home?

If you rent your home, do you have your landlord's permission to keep a dog? Yes No
(Please provide an approval letter from your landlord.)

Do you have a yard? Yes No

If you have a yard, is it fenced? Yes No If yes, how high and what kind is it? []

If your yard is not fenced, how do you plan to ensure that the dog receives safe and adequate exercise?

Do you have a dog kennel run? Yes No If yes, how large is it?

Where will the dog sleep?

Do you plan to use a dog crate? Yes No Please explain why or why not?

Are there currently animals in your home? Yes No If yes, please list them:

| Type (dog, cat, bird, etc) | Breed, if known | Age | Gender (M/F) | Neutered or Spayed (Y/N) |
|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|--------------|--------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

PET OWNERSHIP QUESTIONS

How many dogs have you owned in the past five years? If you no longer have the dog(s), what happened to it (them)? (Please be specific.)

What makes you a good pet owner? (Include how you would handle any behavioural problems, eg, chewing, biting, barking, etc.)

How did you learn about Rhodesian Ridgebacks? Have you ever owned a Rhodesian Ridgeback before? Please tell us about your experience with the breed and any specific dogs.

Why do you want a Rhodesian Ridgeback versus another breed or type of pet?

How will a Rhodesian Ridgeback fit in with your hobbies, activities, and lifestyle? [eg, will your dog be left alone for extended periods of time (ie, more than six to eight hours a day); how will your dog be cared for while you are on vacation?; etc]

Why do you want to rescue a Rhodesian Ridgeback rather than acquire a puppy?

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your family and its suitability to adopt a rescued Rhodesian Ridgeback?

RESCUE DOG PREFERENCES

Please indicate here any preferences you have for adopting a rescued Rhodesian Ridgeback:

If there is a specific dog that you are interested in adopting, what is its name? _____

Gender: Female Male Either Age:

Would you be willing to adopt :

-- A "Ridgeless" Ridgeback? Yes No

-- A Dog with Health Problems Yes No

If yes, to what extent would you be willing help a sick dog?

Are there any other traits you prefer?

REFERENCES

Please provide the names and contact information for at least three references who can speak to your fitness as a pet owner in general and, more specifically, as the owner of a medium-to-large-sized dog. If you currently own or have in the last five years owned a pet, **please include your veterinarian as one of the references.** PLEASE DO NOT LIST MORE THAN ONE FAMILY MEMBER OR OTHER RELATION AS A REFERENCE.

Reference 1 (**Please include your veterinarian as one of the references**)

Relationship to you Veterinarian Other

Name

Address

Address

City State/Province ZIP/Postal Code

USA? Canada? Other Country?

Home Phone Work Phone Best time to call

Reference 2

Relationship to you

Name

Address

Address

City State/Province ZIP/Postal Code

USA? Canada? Other Country?

Home Phone Work Phone Best time to call

Reference 3

Relationship to you

Name

Address

Address

City State/Province ZIP/Postal Code

USA? Canada? Other Country?

Home Phone Work Phone Best time to call

OTHER COMMENTS

INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT: The undersigned Applicant(s) hereby agree to release, indemnify, and covenant to hold harmless, Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc., its officers, directors, members, agents, and successors and assigns, from any claims, damages, injuries, costs, or actions incurred as a result of adopting any dog from Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.

X _____
 APPLICANT DATE

X _____
 CO-APPLICANT DATE

Thank you for your interest in adopting a Rhodesian Ridgeback. As dogs become available, Ridgeback Rescue representatives telephone people who have submitted an adoption application. Ridgeback Rescue requires all adopters to pay an adoption fee in an amount to be determined by the Rescue Coordinators. If you have any questions, please contact your local Rescue Coordinator.

RESCUE DOG SURRENDER FORM AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE, INC.

INSTRUCTIONS: Please complete as much information as possible at the time the dog is surrendered to Ridgeback Rescue. Be sure to have all surrendering owners read and sign the Surrender and Indemnification Agreement at the end of this form.

Dog's Name: Call Name:
AKC- or Other-Registered Name:

Gender: MALE FEMALE

Birthdate:

Have Registration Papers: YES NO (Attach original or copy of papers, if available)

If YES: Where registered:
What is registration number:

Spayed/Neutered: YES NO If YES, is there proof?: YES NO

Housebroken: YES NO If NO, why not?:

Tattooed for ID purposes: YES NO If YES, what is ID number:

Crate Trained: YES NO

Have Fleas: YES NO

Physical Problems or allergies: YES NO
If YES, please describe:

Who is Veterinarian: Name:
Address:
City, State ZIP:
Phone:

Date of Last Visit to Vet:

Immunizations Received: Rabies: YES NO Expires:
(Attached immunization

record, if available) DHLLP: YES NO Expires:

Bordetella: YES NO Expires:

Other (describe and give any expiration dates):

Is this dog on heartworm preventative: YES NO If YES: What kind:
Date of last treatment:

Has this dog been checked for: Hip Dysplasia: YES NO Result:

Dermoid Sinus: YES NO Result:

How long have you cared for this dog:

Has this dog ever run away: YES NO

Has this dog ever bitten or nipped anyone: YES NO

If YES, please describe the incident(s) in detail:

What family members is this dog accustomed to (men, women, children, cats, other dogs, etc):

How does this dog react to:

| | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| Other dogs: | <input type="text"/> |
| Cats: | <input type="text"/> |
| Children: | <input type="text"/> |
| Infants: | <input type="text"/> |
| Strangers: | <input type="text"/> |
| Walking on leash: | <input type="text"/> |
| Being alone in fenced yard: | <input type="text"/> |
| Being alone in house: | <input type="text"/> |
| Being alone in car: | <input type="text"/> |
| Being groomed: | <input type="text"/> |
| Having nails clipped: | <input type="text"/> |

What does this dog:

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Like best: | <input type="text"/> |
| Like least: | <input type="text"/> |
| Fear: | <input type="text"/> |

How does this dog react:

| | |
|---------------|----------------------|
| When unhappy: | <input type="text"/> |
| When afraid: | <input type="text"/> |

How would you describe the dog's overall temperament (circle one): FRIENDLY AGGRESSIVE SHY

Where is this dog used to spending:

| | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| Its days: | <input type="text"/> |
| Its nights: | <input type="text"/> |

Dog Food: What brand food does this dog eat:

How much do you feed this dog:

How many times a day do you feed this dog:

Has this dog been through any obedience training: YES NO

If YES, who was the trainer: Name:

 Address:

 City, State ZIP:

 Phone:

What type of training did it receive:

What commands or tricks does this dog understand:

How would you characterize this dog: OBEDIENT DISOBEDIENT Why (describe in detail):

What behavioural problems has this dog exhibited:

Escape Artist: YES NO

Car Chaser: YES NO

Animal/Livestock Killer: YES NO

Excessive Howling: YES NO

Excessive Barking: YES NO

Chewing: YES NO

Digging: YES NO

House Soiling: YES NO

Other (please describe):

Describe what you believe is the ideal home for this dog:

Where was this dog originally obtained (circle one): PET STORE BREEDER SHELTER OTHER: _____

Please provide contact information for this source: Name:

 Address:

 City, State ZIP:

 Phone:

Please list anything else you believe is important to tell us about this dog:

SURRENDER AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

I(We), _____ ("I," "We," "Our," or the "Surrendering Owner"), hereby release and surrender this Rhodesian Ridgeback dog named _____ (the "Rescue Dog") to Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. ("Ridgeback Rescue"). I(We) certify that I am (we are) the owners of the Rescue Dog, free and clear of any other rights, title, or interests and certify that the Rescue Dog is, to the best of our understanding, not possessed of any dangerous or vicious propensities.

I(We) irrevocably relinquish to Ridgeback Rescue all rights, title, and interest in and to the Rescue Dog. I(We) hereby forever release, discharge, and agree to hold harmless and indemnify Ridgeback Rescue, its officers, members, agents, and other representatives, and any and all of their successors and assigns, from all claims, demands, actions, causes of action, or liability of any kind whatsoever arising as a result of or in connection with the surrender and adoption of the Rescue Dog.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO this _____ day of _____

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE, INC.

SURRENDERING OWNER

By: _____
Name: _____
Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
Post Office Box 5587
Washington, DC 20016-1187 USA

X _____
Name: _____

X _____
Name: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE RESCUE DOG SURRENDER FORM AND INDEMNIFICATION AGREEMENT

1. Interview the Surrendering Owner and respond to all the questions with as complete and detailed information as possible. The best time to obtain this information is at the time you take possession of the Rescue Dog.

In the Indemnification Agreement:

2. Fill in the Surrendering Owner's names.
3. Fill in the Rescue Dog's name.
4. Fill in the Date the Agreement is Signed.
5. Fill in the Name of the Ridgeback Rescue Representative who will sign the agreement.
6. Fill in the Name(s) of the Surrendering Owner who will sign the agreement.
7. Fill in the Home Street Address and Home Phone Number of the Surrendering Owner.
8. Execute one original of the agreement and give it to the Regional Rescue Coordinator. A copy should also be delivered to the Rescue Archives:

RIDGEBACK RESCUE ARCHIVES
ELISE LEWIS
6526 HARRISON PIKE
CHATTANOOGA TN 37416-1200
USA

RESCUE DOG ADOPTION CONTRACT AND RELEASE

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE, INC.

Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc. ("Ridgeback Rescue"), in consideration of the sum of \$ _____, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, releases the full responsibility and ownership of _____ (the "Rescue Dog") to the undersigned Adopter. The Adopter agrees to abide by the terms and conditions of adoption as follows (the "Agreement"):

- 1. Indemnification and Hold Harmless.** The undersigned Adopter hereby agrees to release, indemnify, and covenant to hold harmless Ridgeback Rescue, its officers, members, agents, and other representatives, from any claims, damages, injuries, costs, or actions incurred as a result of this adoption or caused by the actions of the Rescue Dog.
- 2. Non-Breeding.** It is understood that the Rescue Dog, if not already neutered or spayed, will be neutered or spayed as soon as possible, in accordance with a licensed veterinarian's recommendations. If the Rescue Dog is not neutered or spayed by fourteen (14) months of age, unless otherwise recommended by a licensed veterinarian, Ridgeback Rescue may reclaim the Rescue Dog. If the Rescue Dog is bred, a fee of \$500.00 is payable immediately to Ridgeback Rescue.
- 3. Transfer of Ownership.** The Adopter will not transfer ownership of the Rescue Dog to any other person. If for any reason the adoption is not satisfactory, the Rescue Dog will be returned to Ridgeback Rescue. The Adopter agrees to notify Ridgeback Rescue with his or her new address upon moving and to notify Ridgeback Rescue if the Rescue Dog is lost or stolen.
- 4. Health.** The Rescue Dog will be placed on an inoculation and parasite check program as prescribed by a licensed veterinarian in order to assure and maintain the health of the Rescue Dog. The Rescue Dog will receive a rabies vaccination and be licensed in accordance with state and local ordinances. The Rescue Dog will be tested for heartworm and a heartworm preventative will be administered as prescribed by a licensed veterinarian.
- 5. Control.** The Rescue Dog will not be allowed to run loose off the Adopter's property, except if involved in a *bona fide* sporting event, and the Rescue Dog will be under voice control or on lead when not within the boundaries of the Adopter's property.
- 6. Training.** Ridgeback Rescue strongly recommends that the Rescue Dog and the Adopter enroll in an obedience or American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen class. The Adopter hereby agrees not to train the Rescue Dog for protection, guard, or attack purposes.
- 7. Care.** The Adopter accepts full responsibility for maintaining a reasonable level of care for the Rescue Dog, including food, water, grooming, adequate sanitation, exercise, attention, safety, and shelter. The Rescue Dog will be treated with affection and kindness, and never be subjected to abuse, animal research, dog fighting, or use as a guard dog for any agency, corporation, or organization.
- 8. Reservation of Rights.** Ridgeback Rescue reserves the right to an ongoing review of this adoption and to follow-up on any complaints or reports to protect the welfare of the Rescue Dog.
- 9. Remedies Upon Default.** Should the Adopter breach any of the agreements contained in this contract or have misrepresented any facts to Ridgeback Rescue to obtain the Rescue Dog, Ridgeback Rescue shall have the right to rescind this contract and demand return of the Rescue Dog. Should the Adopter fail to return the Rescue Dog, Ridgeback Rescue may, at its option, a) peaceably enter the Adopter's property to take possession of the Rescue Dog, or b) seek an order from a court of competent jurisdiction for return of the Rescue Dog and payment of damages and may retain the sum paid for the Rescue Dog pursuant to this agreement.
- 10. Attorneys' Fees.** The Adopter agrees to pay actual attorneys' fees and other costs incurred by Ridgeback Rescue to obtain the remedy available under Paragraph 9 above.
- 11. Additional Conditions.** If this box is checked, then the Additional Conditions as set forth below shall be made a part of the Agreement.

(Initial) I (we), the Adopter, hereby acknowledge that I (we) have received and read copies, if available, of the
 Dog Surrender Form and Foster Care Report for the Rescue Dog.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED TO as of this _____ day of _____

RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK RESCUE, INC.:

ADOPTER:

By: _____
NAME: _____
Rhodesian Ridgeback Rescue, Inc.
Post Office Box 5587
Washington, DC 20016-1187 USA

By: _____
NAME: _____

By: _____
NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____
ADDRESS: _____
PHONE: _____

Additional Conditions

If the box in Paragraph 11 above is checked, then the following Additional Conditions shall be made a part of the Agreement. If there is a conflict between the following Additional Conditions and any of the conditions set forth in Paragraphs 1 through 10 above, then the following Additional Conditions shall prevail:

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING THE RESCUE DOG ADOPTION CONTRACT AND RELEASE

1. Fill in the Amount of the Adoption Fee.
2. Fill in the Original Name of the Rescue Dog.
3. If there will be Additional Conditions to the Adoption that are not part of the standard Agreement, then check the box in Paragraph 11 and list the Additional Conditions in the space provided on page 2.
4. Check the "Dog Surrender Form" box if one is available **AND** the Adopter has reviewed it.
5. Check the "Foster Care Report" box if one is available **AND** the Adopter has reviewed it.
6. Have the Adopter Initial that he/she reviewed the "Dog Surrender Form" and/or the "Foster Care Report."
7. Fill in the Date the Agreement is Signed.
8. Fill in the Name of the Ridgeback Rescue Representative who will sign the agreement.
9. Fill in the Name(s) of the Adopter who will sign the agreement.
10. Fill in the Home Street Address and Home Phone Number of the Adopter.
11. Execute the agreement in triplicate:
 - One Original to the Regional Rescue Coordinator,
 - One Original to the Adopter, and
 - One Original to the Rescue Archives:

RIDGEBACK RESCUE ARCHIVES
ELISE LEWIS
6526 HARRISON PIKE
CHATTANOOGA TN 37416-1200
USA

Dermoid Sinus – A Potential Congenital Condition in Ridgebacks

Dermoid Sinus in the Rhodesian Ridgeback

By Diane Jacobsen
4561 Todd Road
Sebastopol, California 95472-5227
DIJS@aol.com

The dermoid sinus (D.S.) has been known by many names, a few of which are dermoid cyst, hair cyst, and African cyst. It is a sinus, in that it is tubelike and does drain, and dermoid because it is skinlike. It may or may not contain hair follicles or be lined with hair. As the hair sheds on the outer coat of the pup, so does the hair inside this tube. The body's natural response to dead material is to flush it out and thus the serum builds up and expels the debris. Not all of the dermoid sinuses are true tubes. Some are not hollow and the serum and debris cannot drain. In these cases an abscess forms and the resulting swelling that accompanies can rupture the skin. This results in a very painful situation for the pup. At its worst it is life threatening.

The D.S. is generally found on the midline of the neck, back, and tail along the spinal column. Although rarely found in the ridge there have been several cases noted. Dermoid sinuses have also been noted on ridgeless puppies.

The D.S. is a congenital condition, meaning that it is present at birth. It can be palpated on the newborn pups, and the affected pups identified. The affected pups should be put to sleep or if they are to be kept, surgery to remove the D.S. should be performed before sending them to their new homes. The affected pups are pet stock only and should not be considered as breeding material.

To find the D.S. you must palpate along the midline of the spine, starting at the top of the head close to the occiput (bump) bone. To do this you may pick the pup up and hold it in the cup of your hand or palpate as the pup is sleeping. Take the other hand and envision yourself picking up a baby kitten by the scruff of the neck with your thumb and forefinger. Exert enough pressure to feel, but not enough to bruise. Use your whole hand as one unit, pulling first up toward the nose and then down

toward the tail. The skin will stretch quite a bit in both directions. Do not roll the skin through your fingers. The fingers remain exactly where you placed them on the skin. The D.S., being attached on the top to the skin and at the base to the spinal cartilage, will slip through your fingers. A large D.S. will feel like a wet noodle and a finer D.S., like a small string. Reposition your fingers on the neck just below the starting spot and repeat this process. Continue to work your way down the neck and back to the tail.

At the tail it is very difficult to raise enough skin to palpate effectively. It is best to use your thumb in this area. With fingers underneath the pup supporting it, place the flat of your thumb over the spinal column at the pelvic area. Push skin first to one side and then back to the other side. Again, remember that the D.S. is attached and will slip under your thumb. This will feel like a squiggly noodle on a larger, longer D.S., or just an area that simply will not move at all on a shorter D.S. If you do not feel anything by sliding the skin from side to side, try sliding the skin toward the nose and then back to the tail, taking care to slide the skin, not your thumb.

As you palpate the area over the shoulders, you may feel connective tissue that holds the skin to the shoulder area. The tissue is heavier in this area than in the other areas of the spinal column. It will feel flat and you will not be able to trace it from the area close to the muscle all the way to the skin, whereas the D.S. is easily traced from the muscle to the top of the skin and feels round. The D.S. can be visually detected by looking for a group of hairs that protrude straight up out of the hair coat of the pup. When you see this, the pup should be palpated for a D.S. The hair can also be shaved at this site and upon examination, a small dimple will be revealed. By moving the skin back and forth, the

dimple will become more apparent as the anchor of the D.S. will pull the skin down more.

The D.S. can be surgically removed. It is advised that a vet be contacted that is familiar with this condition and has performed this operation before. Dermoid sinuses are not alike in their makeup and it is impossible to tell which ones are easily removed or which ones go to the spine. They can wrap around or enter the area of the spinal cord, which makes them almost, if not impossible, to remove. In cases such as this some success has been achieved by folding the D.S. over and tying it off, but some have had re-growth. Since there is no way to detect which type of D.S. that the pup has, instructions to the vet should include that if the D.S. is not completely removable, the pup be put to sleep. D.S. pups should not be promised to a new home until after the surgery.

The healing process can be as traumatic as the operation itself. In the simple cases that remove easily, there will be little or no serum build-up in the surgical area. In the more complicated surgeries, where the tissue damage has been more severe, the serum will start building up as soon as the surgical site heals over on the top of the skin. Usually this will be on the fourth or fifth day. This requires aspiration with a large gauge needle and syringe, sometimes three or four times daily, to remove the serum build-up. This can last for three to 10 days after surgery.

Pups that have had surgery must be removed from the litter to prevent damage to the surgical site. As puppies play, they grab and shake areas of skin on the other pups. If they were to grab and shake over or near the surgical site, damage would occur and the serum buildup would become a bigger problem.

Dermoid sinuses have been detected on other parts of the body, but are not as commonly seen as on the midline of the spine. A few have been noted on the head, attaching to the skull or the base of the ear. Another area of note is on the neck under the ear or on the front of the neck. Sometimes these can be dermoid sinuses and sometimes they are skin tabs.

The exact mode of the inheritance of the D.S. is not known. It is thought to be polygenic (multiple genes), rather than simple dominant or recessive. It has been noted that there can be carriers, or individuals that produce more dermoid sinuses than their littermates. Some lines are relatively D.S. free. Dogs that are subjects of D.S. are not candidates for a breeding program. The surgery removes the visual defect but not the genetic one. Pups having had surgery to remove a D.S. are eliminated from the conformation ring as per the AKC rules, which clearly state that a dog that has been surgically altered cannot compete.

The ethics of breeding require you to put the best possible representative of the breed out there. It should not only look like a Rhodesian Ridgeback, but it should be as healthy and sound as possible. As the D.S. is a very serious unsoundness, much thought should be given in your decision of the disposition of a D.S. puppy. If you decide to keep and operate on a D.S. subject, care must be taken to assure the pup of a home that will spay or neuter. Euthanasia is a permanent solution.

[NOTE: Because of the D.S., avoid injections in the area of the top of the neck and shoulders. Occasional reactions to vaccines can produce an inflammation that resembles a D.S.]

Dermoid Sinus - A Summary

By E. Clough, V.M.D.
1010 Daniel Webster Highway
Merrimack, New Hampshire 03054

INTRODUCTION:

Dermoid sinus (D.S.) was first used to describe the Rhodesian Ridgeback skin anomaly by Steyn, et al. This skin condition has also been called trichiasis spiralis, dermoid cyst, dermoid inclusion cyst and epidermal inclusion cyst. All of these terms have some applications; however, Dermoid, skin-like sinus, channel or fistula; (cyst means sac, i.e., not open to the surface) is most applicable. The Rhodesian Ridgeback Club of the U.S., Inc. prefers to use D.S. to describe the condition.

DESCRIPTION:

No reports have been located which substantiate the author's impression that D.S. has been found in other breeds. Dermoid sinus included in the ridge has been reported only once. They also occur in the sacral (rump) area and in this location are sometimes connected to the dura (spinal cord covering). This is not the case in the more common cervical (neck area) D.S., which connects the skin to the dorsal spinous ligament (the ligament which connects the top parts of the vertebrae). One or more D.S. may occur in the same animal. These sinuses are congenital (present at birth) and can be palpated (felt) as cords running between the skin and the spine. They form a small external opening which can be readily seen once the hair has been shaved.

Histologically (microscopically) the sinus is a thick-walled tube composed chiefly of fibrous tissue and lined with stratified squamous epithelium (skin cells). The surrounding connective tissue may or may not contain hair follicles, sebaceous glands and sweat glands, which open into the lumen (hollow center) of the sinus. In uncomplicated cases the sinus is filled with sebum (oil), skin debris and hair. Once infected with bacteria the resulting inflammation and abscessation can lead to myelitis

and encephalitis (swelling and infection of the spinal cord, its covering, and the brain). The reason for discrimination against animals with D.S. is the almost inevitable abscess which forms.

HERITABILITY:

Although not well understood, transmission of D.S. seems to be a dominant, polygenic problem with inconstant penetration. Another geneticist thinks that D.S. is due to a single completely recessive autosomal gene. This is not likely because normal parents do produce pups affected with D.S. Because of the genetic complexity and the difficulty in arranging, coordinating and collating the breeding studies necessary to prove the heredity of D.S., it is unlikely that we will be able to substantiate the exact mechanism of genetic transmission. There is a widely held belief that breeding Ridgebacks with D.S. produces an increased prevalence of pups with D.S. The R.R. Club of the U.S., Inc. believes that this could be substantiated if breeders had accurate records, which could be collated and computed. It is our belief that careful controlled breeding studies would prove the inheritance of D.S. to be not only complex but also inter-related with other characteristics. Therefore, the likelihood seems to be remote that we will ever have Ridgebacks that are entirely free of D.S.

Because selective breeding will unquestionably reduce the prevalence of D.S., but probably not eliminate its occurrence, and because the condition results in difficult to treat abscesses unless surgically removed, it is our opinion and strong recommendation that dogs which have D.S. not be acceptable as show or breeding candidates. Surgical correction can be accomplished; however, culling at birth is a more humane way to handle the affected pups.

References

1. Antin, I.P.: Dermoid Sinus in a Rhodesian Ridgeback Dog. J.A.V.M.A., Vol. 157 No. 7, (1970): 961.
2. Burns, M. and M.N.Fraser: Genetics of the Dog. J.B.Lippincott Co., Philadelphia PA (1966): 84.
3. Hawley, T.C.: The Rhodesian Ridgeback Craft Press, Pretoria, S.A., (1957): 53.
4. Hofmeyr, C.F.B.: Dermoid Sinus in the Ridgeback Dog J.Small Animal Practice., Vol. 4. Suppl. (1957): 5-8.
5. Lord, L.H.; A.J.Cawley and J.Gilray: Mid-Dorsal Dermoid Sinuses in Rhodesian Ridgeback Dogs - A Case Report. J.A.V.M.A., 131 (1957): 515-518
6. Lutman, F.C.: How to Raise and Train a Rhodesian Ridgeback. T.F.H. Publications, Jersey City, NJ (1966).
7. Personal communications from numerous Rhodesian Ridgeback friends.
8. Severin, G.A.: Inheritable and Congenital Diseases in Dogs. Dog World (December 1974).
9. Steyn, H.P. J. Quinlan and C. Jackson: A skin Condition seen in Rhodesian Ridgeback Dogs: Report on two cases. J.S.A.V.M.A. X(4), (1939): 170-174.

Dermoid Sinus - A Case History

By Tina Moodhart
19013 2 Mile Road
Franksville, Wisconsin 53126-9633
bsmoodha@wi.net



Duncan, a four-month old, livernosed Ridgeback was bred on a Missouri puppy farm and sold via a broker to a pet shop in Orange, California. After being informed by a Ridgeback breeder that Duncan was affected with dermoid sinuses, the pet shop gave Duncan away. However, the new owners were not fully aware of the seriousness of Duncan's condition. Unable to cope emotionally with Duncan's need for extensive surgery, that he might not survive, and the long recovery period, his new owners surrendered him to Ridgeback Rescue so that he could be cared for by experienced Ridgeback people.

The dermoids could be felt in Duncan's neck and are pictured here (right) as they looked from the surface with the hair clipped.

Dr. Gregg Rex in Highland, California (Starland Rhodesian Ridgebacks) performed the surgery to remove Duncan's dermoids for free as a donation to Ridgeback Rescue. Dr. Rex removed four dermoids, which are shown below.





Duncan is shown here during the time when the incisions in his neck were healing.

Is a Ridgeback the Right Dog For Your Family?

Many times people see a breed of dog and fall in love with its looks, never considering that that breed may be totally unsuitable for their lifestyle, their facilities or their ability to train and control it. All they know is they've got to have one! Buying a dog on impulse is always a bad idea! As with buying anything, YOU must educate yourself first: find out what the breed is truly like, visit in the home of several people who have that breed and find out what problems they have encountered. Learn to ask the correct questions, not only about the positive aspects of a breed but the negative, too. And learn what questions to ask of the litter owners ... think of it as finding out what the "warranty" covers and the "features" of the item.

Ridgebacks are not Labradors or Golden Retrievers in short coats. They are hunting dogs and have a high prey drive. Translation: They are quite independent – they don't fawn over your every word, they can be oblivious to being called and require a lot of positive motivation to train them in traditional obedience. Many people are just not prepared for the stubbornness and hard-headedness in this breed.

Any dog ownership requires responsibility. Dogs are not something to decorate your home or yard, they are living, feeling creatures who should be treated as members of your family. This is especially true of Ridgebacks. They must be made to feel as part of your "pack", i.e., your family, or they will strike out on their own. You should think of them as a new addition to your family and plan for them as you would a new child.

Planning for Your Ridgeback is Essential

Dogs, especially puppies, will make a big demand on your time. It takes time to properly feed, train and play with a new puppy. Just like babies, young puppies are not able to make it through the night and you will have to get up and take them out. If you work, a new pup might require that you come home at lunchtime to let them out or hire a noon time helper to assist you.

Ridgebacks need plenty of exercise to stay happy and healthy. You'll need to set aside playtime and time for training. Young puppies need a lot of socialization to be good companions. A weekly obedience training class and daily practice is a must for your Ridgeback to become a welcome member of the community!

If this seems like too much for you and your family's schedule, then perhaps this is not the right time to get a Ridgeback.

Your Ridgeback Will Need Protection

Ridgebacks naturally want to hunt and have no sense of cars or yard when they go after a squirrel, rabbit or cat. A fenced yard is important for your dog's safety. Once a Ridgeback starts after a squirrel or rabbit, nothing short of a six foot wall or fence may stop them. Dogs allowed to roam are in danger

from becoming lost, of being hit by a car or being poisoned. You certainly don't want your dog to run away or get lost or killed. It's also good idea to have your Ridgeback wear an identification tag or, better yet, to have your dog permanently identified with a tattoo or microchip just in case he manages to get loose despite your efforts. And, of course, when he leaves the yard he'll need a leash.

Your Ridgeback must have adequate shelter if he is outdoors while you are away. Shelters must be cool in the summer and warm in the winter.

Ridgebacks Grow to be BIG Dogs

Puppies don't stay little for long! When looking for any breed you need to consider one that suits your environment and lifestyle. Take the time to research a breed you are interested in ... visit in the homes of breeders or individuals who own that breed. Ridgebacks may be appealing to you in a physical sense, but they may not have the temperament suitable to your lifestyle. For example: Ridgebacks at play are very energetic -- they need lots of space, can knock down children and adults when they are roughhousing. If you live in the city, you will need to first locate a dog park or area where your Ridgeback can safely run and exercise -- a tired puppy is a good puppy!

It's those people who buy on impulse that most often find they can't live with a Ridgeback and decide the dog has to go ... this is not fair to the dog! Often it's these irresponsible owners who further burden Rescue with having to take in the dog and rehabilitate it.

Again, take the time to read up on the Ridgeback, talk with several knowledgeable owners, check the Internet and try to visit in the home of several breeders. Try to go to some shows and talk with exhibitors, but most of all observe, observe, observe!

Money Concerns

The initial price of a dog is of concern to some, but it's the lifelong cost that they sometimes forget. In some communities, dogs need a license. Failure to comply with local laws may result in fines or penalties and may endanger your right to keep your dog!

In addition to the purchase price of your dog, you must plan for food, grooming, collars, a leash and some toys and a special bed. Add in vet care and those training lessons!

All dogs need annual vaccination, heartworm medication, and ... just like humans ... regular checkups. Sometimes, dogs require flea and tick treatments or expensive treatments for unexpected ailments or illnesses. Ask yourself if you can afford a dog.

Ridgebacks Need Companionship

Friendship is a two-way street. Your dog deserves plenty of attention so he'll be less inclined to bark or chew your belongings or run away from home by climbing out, if he gets your love and devotion. Dogs are emotional beings and to neglect them by banishing them to a lonely life in the yard, on a chain or in a run is cruel and abusive. Just like children, you have to love and instruct them on proper behavior to have a well-adjusted Ridgeback that is a pleasure to be around.

Ridgebacks Need All of the Above For Their Lifetime

The average life span of most Ridgebacks is ten to twelve years, but some have lived for sixteen years! So, your dog will depend on you for love and care for a long time. Being a responsible dog owner is an important job and requires your serious commitment.

What are the GOOD points of Ridgebacks?

1. Ridgebacks have a short coat, don't shed much and are practically odor free -- great for hot climates.
2. They are quite discriminating in who or what they bark at ... you should ALWAYS go check it out.
3. They are not fussy eaters and have virtually "cast-iron" digestive systems.
4. They love living with people and are generally quiet in the house.
5. Ridgebacks are intelligent and want to please their owner.
6. Ridgebacks are easily house-trained.
7. And, of course, they are the most handsome of dogs!

The Drawbacks:

1. As puppies they have surgical -- knife sharp teeth and the jaw power of a Doberman Pinscher ... they should never be allowed to play roughly with humans of any age. They can do major damage to coffee tables, shoes and anything else they can find to chomp on. Crate training is a must to protect home furnishings while you are not at home. As juveniles, if left unattended, they can cause your house to self-destruct ... at least, it may appear that way! If left in the yard, they will find things to chew on that you may not even know you own until it ceases working. A bored Ridgeback is a major disaster waiting to happen.
2. They are capable of digging ranch-sized holes, biting the limbs off shrubs and ripping up small trees. People who love to garden must contend with the fact that their backyards will belong to the dog!

3. They are not fussy eaters and have cast-iron stomachs -- and you thought this was a good thing -- NOT! It also means they will attempt to eat anything that doesn't eat them first. They are master counter-surfers ... nothing is spared and they are fast. Ridgeback owners have a tendency to overfeed their dogs, causing gas -- not the most pleasant aspect of dog ownership. Remember, a Ridgeback always thinks it's hungry! You have to feed on schedule and stick to your plan.
4. Ridgebacks are "people" dogs, which means they should be treated as family and not made to live solely alone in the yard, otherwise, you wind up with a big, powerful, pushy creature of your making! An adult RIDGEBACK can clear a five foot fence if it wants to. A bored dog is going to look for something to do, even if that means outside your yard. No one wants to live next door to someone who lets their dog out to eliminate on the neighbors' yards, whose dog gets out and kills cats or scares the walkers, joggers and bike riders.
5. Ridgebacks grow to be big dogs and must attend obedience classes with you so he won't become a "bad apple" and make an ugly impression of the breed on anyone. Learning to walk on a loose lead at an early age is essential -- nobody should be drug around by a big dog.
6. Ridgebacks are intelligent ... this too, has been said - what this means is they are fully capable of training you before you can train them. They are quite clever and can be willfully disobedient. The earlier the obedience classes the better. We can't say this enough - A bored Ridgeback can be quite destructive and may develop bad habits of chewing, escaping crate and fencing, barking out of boredom and generally making a pest of themselves. It is essential that you have the time to put in with them, which can be as simple as having them in the house with you when you are home or spending time making sure they get a good amount of exercise ... whether outside hiking, training, running or walking with them in safe areas.
7. Ridgebacks must be introduced to cats and even so, may be aggressive towards strange felines.

Before you get a Ridgeback, please consider the adult size of a Ridgeback and whether you and your family members will be able to properly keep the dog and to train the dog to be a great companion and a good canine citizen.

LIVING HAPPILY AND COMFORTABLY WITH YOUR RHODESIAN RIDGEBACK

There are two areas that a great many dog owners forget about when attempting to teach their dogs good manners and good behavior. They are:

1. Mistaking the canine brain for the human brain, and
2. Failing to be consistent.

As the Rhodesian Ridgeback is a profusion of a number of breeds, it cannot be trained in the same way as a Rottweiler or a German Shepherd. Training for those animals is intense, repetitious, and boring. Ridgebacks have been blessed with attributes of the many breeds that have gone into their making and by observing the above two rules, you can successfully train your Ridgeback and you can both have some fun in the bargain.

Decide early in your puppy's life what it is you want him to do and not to do. Under six months of age you are going to expect to get him fully housebroken, walk nicely on a leash, not jump up on people, and perhaps stay off of the furniture. If you accomplish all of that prior to six months of age, give yourself a gold star. If you expect to accomplish more, well, maybe you might just be pushing yourself and your dog too hard.

For novice owners, a beginner obedience class is highly recommended. Find out who the trainer is, what his/her principles are, training methods used, etc. Ask around to other people who have gone to obedience classes with their dogs and learn where they go, what they are taught, their observations and opinions of their particular trainers, etc. Usually, the best place is an all-breed kennel club or obedience club. The key word here is ALL-BREED. Stay away from places specializing in guard-, working-, Schutzhund-, attack-dog training.

Ridgebacks are not stubborn; they are not dumb. Rather, they are independent, and whip smart. The one thing that they have that you should nurture is their desire to please.

When training to do anything, always get your dog's attention first, even if it takes several minutes to get him calmed down. Once you have his attention, then you begin with whatever it is you want him to do or not do. Don't ever act out of anger. Always act, never react. Screaming and hitting and chasing will turn your dog into a psychotic and only make you more frustrated. Stern words are usually all that is necessary to get

your point across. It is best not to hit your dog either with your hand or an object, especially anywhere near the face or head. This seldom accomplishes anything but to provide an outlet for your own frustration. The damage done, however, can be irreparable.

As dogs are creatures of habit, you must always keep that in mind. Good habits are learned and so are bad habits. Detect the bad habits early before they become ingrained and work on perfecting the good habits.

The reward system is a very good way to train a puppy. The puppy goes outside and relieves himself. You praise him lavishly. I know it seems silly to gush all over a puppy just because he went "potty" outside instead of inside, but it works!

The use of a crate is strongly recommended while training your dog. Here is where you do not equate the dog's needs with human needs. A dog is a denning animal. Dogs seek out a private and safe spot. That is why they sleep under tables, beds, etc. A dog crate is your Ridgeback's safe haven. Get him used to it early in life. After all, babies are placed into playpens -- that's a lot crueller than allowing a puppy to develop his natural denning instinct.

When in doubt about a phase in training your Ridgeback, or any other problem, call your breeder. Also, there are a number of books available, hundreds in fact. Below are listed a few, any of which will give you the proper insight into the correct way of training your Ridgeback for a happy and comfortable life with his humans.

- The New Knowledge of Dog Behavior; Pfaffenberger; Howell.
- Handling Your Dog; Thorne; Doubleday.
- How to be Your Dog's Best Friend; Monks of New Skete; Little Brown.
- Good Dog, Bad Dog; Siegal and Margolis; Holt, Rinehard and Winston.
- How to Raise a Puppy You Can Live With; Rutherford and Neil; Alpine Publications. (This book must be ordered directly from the publisher: Alpine Publications, 2456 E 9th, Loveland CO 80537, Phone: 303-667-2017. Write or call for price.)