

Anyone who breeds a litter has a goal, whether it's to breed the top showdog in the country, to win Westminster, to own the number-one racing dog, to have a lasting influence on the breed as a whole, or to produce Hollywood's next Lassie. Some breeders want to make money (a goal that often backfires on them!), some to make a name for themselves in agility, flyball, dog shows, field trials...you name it. And some just want to create another dog "just like Muffy." Who's to say which of those goals is worthy or unworthy?

Our goal is to breed the best whippets in mind and body that we can and to match them with people who will treasure them. Winning shows matters a lot less to us than seeing to it that our puppies make good pets. We try to place them in lifelong homes where they will be loved and enjoyed and will improve people's lives. So our priorities in selecting dogs to breed are temperament, health, soundness, and type, in that order.

Temperament

The happiest life for a dog is as a cherished family pet. In making breeding decisions, we first look for the qualities that will make our puppies successful members of a household. This means breeding our females to males whose temperaments we know rather than those we don't. No matter how "famous" the dog or how much he has won, we won't use him in our breeding program unless we are convinced he has correct, sound whippet temperament.

It means choosing sometimes to breed animals with easygoing temperaments over those with more drive to win in the show or performance arenas. While we hope some of our owners will show or race our puppies, or work with them in agility, obedience, lure coursing, flyball, and other venues, we place puppies only in homes where they'll be pets first. And nothing is more important in a pet than temperament.

Health

In the long run, no breed can survive unless its future is protected by breeding only genetically healthy dogs. Whippets are an exceptionally problem-free breed and we would not knowingly breed any animal with a hereditary questionmark.

Eye problems are sometimes found, but are not common in whippets. We have ours checked annually by a certified opthamologist. Heart disease is becoming more common in whippets, so we've made a commitment to also have echocardiograms done before every breeding.

Deafness has been reported, again rarely, so we have our dogs BAER (brainstem auditory evoked response) tested. As additional problems crop up in the breed, we'll do our best to test and breed against them.

Type and soundness

After steady temperament and genetic health, we look for good structure, proper movement, and whippet "type"...that hard-to-define quality that makes a whippet a whippet, not, say, just a small greyhound or a large Italian Greyhound. Most fanciers would consider our whippets typey and sound. We do show our dogs occasionally, because we wouldn't want to breed dogs that hadn't been seen and approved by others with extensive experience in the breed (though the most valuable opinions we get are usually outside the ring from other breeders, not the judge!).

Something special!

Finally, we feel that having a good dog or even a champion isn't a reason to breed. We breed only when we believe that a particular whippet has qualities which should be part of the future of whippets -- that his or her genetic makeup is so good that it should not be lost. We had whippets for many years before we decided to breed, and it was several more years till we found whippets we felt really should be bred.

We don't kid ourselves that we are "improving the breed." We will never breed enough to have an impact on whippets as a whole. The best we can do is try to make every litter better than the last. We strive to improve our tiny corner of whippetdom, and above all, to do no harm to the future of whippets.