

Amalie Labradoodles – Care of a breeding bitch

Our breeding dogs have been carefully selected for their temperament and physical characteristics. We hope that they will develop into all that you would want in a wonderful Labradoodle and be able to pass these characteristics on to the next generation. Caring for a breeding bitch is not difficult but does require you to have a watchful eye. A bitch can mature and have her first season as early as 6 months of age but we do not breed our girls until their second or third season.



How do I care for a bitch and what happens when she comes into season?

The reproductive cycle in dogs is different to that in humans. When the bitch comes into season (or on heat) her vulva (external genitalia) becomes swollen and she will have a blood stained discharge (Day 1 of the season). Between days 7-10 this discharge changes to a pink colour, she ovulates and can be impregnated. Usually it is not until this time that she will be receptive to a male dog. Now is the time you will need to keep her separated from any unwanted male "visitors". If no mating occurs the discharge and the swelling of her vulva will decline (approx days 14-21) and the season ends.



What are the signs that she is coming into season?

Sometimes you don't get a lot of warning – you may notice her marking her territory more when you take her out for a walk but this can last a long time before (and after) the season. The day before the discharge starts her vulva will start to enlarge. Her mood can change slightly too.



How often does she come into season and how long does each season last?

Usually a bitch will have two seasons per year (ie every 6 months) but the interval can be as long as 10 months between seasons and it can change from one season to the next.



How do I keep her safe from an un-wanted mating during this time?

The middle part of her season is when you need to ensure that she is kept securely and has no access to an entire male (ie one that has not been de-sexed). Ensure she remains in a secure yard with adequate fencing as where there's a will there's a way – under, over ... or through the fence.



Can I take her for a walk?

You can walk her either side of ovulation but take her at a time when you know there are very few dogs around. Do not let her mark (urinate) near your home so she's not "advertising". However, as ovulation can be difficult to pinpoint, it may be best not to. Instead, she will get enough exercise from chasing a ball and mental stimulation from obedience training in the back yard. **Never** let her free run when in season, even if she is exceptionally obedient.



At what age will she have her first litter?

She will need to have passed her health tests at 1 year of age - how soon she comes into season after that time will determine when she can have her first litter. However, I often wait until her third season when she is a little more mature before planning to have a litter.



What do I have to do if she isn't to be mated this time?

Let me know when she first starts to bleed (day 1) and then again if you notice her discharge change colour (between days 7-14). Keep her secure in your yard and don't allow her to mix with any un-desexed males. You may prefer she sleeps inside or in the garage at night.



What do I have to do if she is to be mated this time?

Let me know when she first starts to bleed (day 1) and we'll make arrangements for the mating. She may need to travel interstate to another accredited breeder so travel details and possibly some pathology tests will need to be arranged – I look after all of these things for her.



How long is pregnancy? Can we see her puppies when they're born?

Pregnancy is nine weeks. She will come to stay with us from about Day 56 after 1st mating and we will monitor her last week of pregnancy. Once puppies are born we can arrange a time for you to visit to see her puppies. Even though she knows us well, she'll look forward to seeing you too!