



VERSATILITY IN POODLES REGARDING MERLE

Merle is not a coat color recognized as historically occurring in Poodles as well as most other breeds. The breeds in which merle animals naturally occur are the Australian Shepherd, Beauceron, Bergamasco, Border Collie, Cardigan Welsh Corgi, Dachshund (color known as dapple), Great Dane, Long Haired Pyrenean Sheepdog, Rough Collie, Shetland Sheepdog and Smooth Collie.

Merle patterning – patches of lighter color appearing in the coat – is the result of the *M* gene in the dog. There are two variants of this gene: *M* (merle) and *m* (non-merle), with merle (*M*) being dominant to non-merle (*m*). In some breeds, the effect of the merle allele (*M*) is termed 'dapple'. Unfortunately, the effects of the merle allele (*M*) are not confined to coat patterning and it is known that there can be an increased risk of impaired hearing and sight associated with it, particularly in dogs that are homozygous for *M* (dogs that carry two copies of the *M* allele).

Breed ancestry DNA tests are not 100% accurate in testing the breed of animals. Some of the labs quote 95% accuracy and some 93% and others much less. Anecdotally, it is known that by the 4th generation, any dog with a single great grandparent who is not a poodle and all other ancestors as poodles may test as 100% poodle.

Versatility in Poodles, Inc does not accept "poodles" with Merle coat color as being purebred poodles and as such they are not eligible for any VIP Poodle awards.