

## = Giant Schnauzer =

The Giant Schnauzer is a working breed of dog developed in the 17th century in Germany . It is the largest of the three breeds of Schnauzer ? the other two breeds being the Standard Schnauzer and the Miniature Schnauzer . Numerous breeds were used in its development , including the black Great Dane , the Bouvier des Flandres , and the German Pinscher . Originally bred to assist on farms by driving livestock to market and guarding the farmer 's property , the breed eventually moved into the city , where it worked guarding breweries , butchers ' shops , stockyards and factories . It was unknown outside of Bavaria until it became popular as a military dog during World War I and World War II .

They have dense coarse coat that protects them from the weather and from vermin . Giant Schnauzers come in two color patterns : Solid black , and a color known as pepper and salt , with banded hairs of alternating white and black , appearing gray hairs at a distance . Where legal , they are shown with cropped ears and docked tails . Like other schnauzers , they have a distinct beard and eyebrows . Today , the Giant Schnauzer participates in numerous dog sports , including Schutzhund . It is also used as a police dog .

## = History =

The first Giant Schnauzers emerged from Swabia in the German state of Bavaria , and Württemberg in the 17th century . These original Giant Schnauzers were considered a rough @-@ coated version of the German pinscher breeds , and their hair was thought to help them withstand the harsh German winters and bites from vermin . The origins of the breed are unclear , but sources speculate it originated through some combination of black Great Danes , German Shepherds , Rottweilers , Dobermans , Boxers , Bouvier des Flandres , Thuringian Shepherds , and the Standard Schnauzer .

The Giant Schnauzer was originally bred as a multipurpose farm dog for guarding property and driving animals to market . By the turn of the 20th century the Giant Schnauzer was being used as a watchdog at factories , breweries , butcheries , and stockyards throughout Bavaria . It was unknown outside Bavaria until it was used as a military dog in World War I and World War II . The first Giant Schnauzers were imported to America in the 1930s , but they remained rare until the 1960s , when the breed became popular . In 1962 , there were 23 new Giant Schnauzers registered with the American Kennel Club ; in 1974 this number was 386 ; in 1984 it was over 800 and in 1987 it was around 1000 animals . In 2012 , there were 94 new dogs registered , down from 95 in 2011 .

In modern times , the Giant Schnauzer is used as a police dog ; is trained for obedience , dog agility , herding , search and rescue , and schutzhund ; and is shown in conformation shows . They are also used for carting . In Europe , the breed is considered to be more of a working dog than a show dog . The focus in many European Schnauzer clubs is not so much on conformation shows , but on the working ability of the breed . In several countries , including Germany , dogs must achieve a Schutzhund Champion title before they can qualify to be a conformation champion .

## = Description =

### = Appearance =

Although the Giant Schnauzer is called ' Giant ' , this is not in comparison to other large dog breeds such as the Great Dane or the Rottweiler , but instead in comparison to the Standard and Miniature Schnauzers . The AKC breed standard calls for males to stand from 25 @. @ 5 to 27 @. @ 5 inches ( 65 to 70 cm ) at the withers , and for females to stand from 23 @. @ 5 to 25 @. @ 5 inches ( 60 to 65 cm ) . Giant Schnauzers are square in shape , and should resemble a larger version of the Standard Schnauzer . The tail is long and the ears are small button ears carried high on the head . Where it is legal , it is possibly docked and the ears cropped .

The head is 1 / 2 the length of the dog 's back , when the back is measured from the withers to the base of the tail . The cheeks are flat , but well muscled . The coat is dense , wiry , and weather resistant . The fur on the Giant Schnauzer 's face forms a distinct " beard " and eyebrows . Its stride is long and crisp .

Giant Schnauzers come in two colors : solid black , and a pattern called pepper and salt , where banded hairs of black and white hairs cover the body , giving it the appearance of having been peppered and salted .

= = = Temperament = = =

Giant Schnauzers are usually a quiet breed . Due to its breeding , the Giant Schnauzer is inherently suspicious of strangers and can be very territorial . Once introduced , it is usually accepting of novel people or situations . It has the potential to be aggressive , but Giant Schnauzers are usually reserved - they are " amiable in repose , and a commanding figure when aroused "

Giant Schnauzers have been described as trustworthy with children . They are very intelligent , and can become bored easily . They are also very energetic and highly spirited , which , when coupled with boredom , can lead to unwanted and destructive behavior . They are easily trained , and deeply loyal to their owner . Some breeders believe that pepper and salt colored Giant Schnauzers are more docile than their black @-@ furred counterparts .

= = Health = =

Giant Schnauzers require regular grooming . Their beard can collect drool and food particles , making frequent cleanings essential . If being shown , their coat needs to be stripped every two to four weeks . If they are simply a companion animal , the coat can be clipped instead . Some Giant Schnauzers have an allergy to shampoo .

Hip and elbow dysplasia are common . Giant Schnauzers are also prone to eye problems such as keratoconjunctivitis sicca , glaucoma , cataracts , multifocal retinal dysplasia , and generalized progressive retinal atrophy . They are also prone to skin diseases , such as seasonal flank alopecia , vitiligo , and follicular cysts . Cancer of the skin is common in dark @-@ colored dogs , with the most frequently occurring varieties being melanoma of the limbs and digits , and squamous cell carcinoma of the digit . This susceptibility occurs because melanoma is caused by a defect in the melanocytes , the cells that darken the color of the skin . Noncancerous skin tumors are also common .

Some Giant Schnauzers develop central diabetes insipidus , autosomal recessive hypothyroidism , selective malabsorption of cobalamin , narcolepsy , cataplexy , and various seizure disorders . Some are also sensitive to sulphonamides and gold . Bone diseases and joint problems are also an issue . The most common causes of death in Giant Schnauzers are lymphoma and liver cancer , followed by heart attacks and heart failure .