

How to Find a Basenji

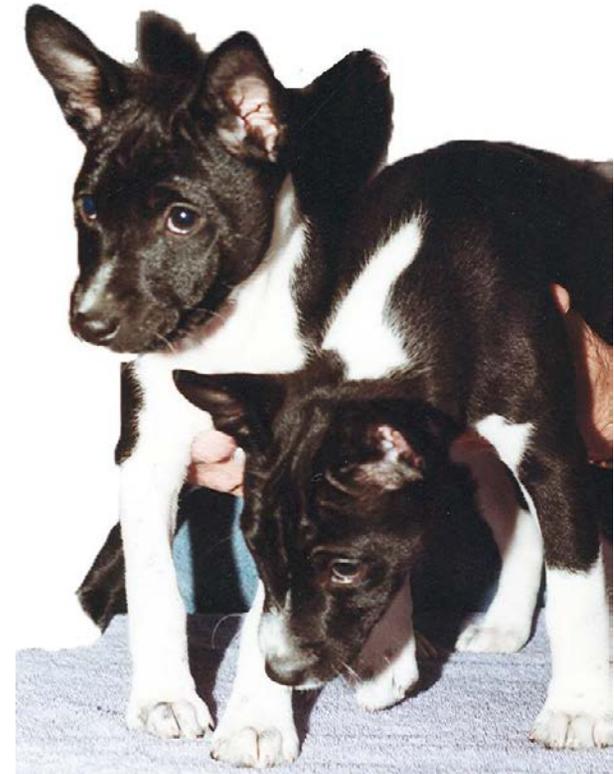
Once you have decided that the Basenji is the type of dog that will fit your needs, a number of topics must be addressed in helping you select the right dog.

This chapter discusses the following topics:

- ➔ How to find responsible breeders and distinguish them from backyard breeders.
- ➔ Questions to ask a breeder and questions that a breeder will ask you.
- ➔ Should you consider an adult or a puppy; a male or female?
- ➔ Companion pets versus show quality prospects.
- ➔ Adopting a pet from a Basenji rescue group.

The best place to obtain a well-bred Basenji is from a responsible breeder. The key here is "responsible". If you would like to adopt an older Basenji, you may want to work with one of the responsible rescue groups located across the country or in some cases breeders who have taken in an adult dog that was of their breeding.

At all costs, avoid backyard breeders, pet stores and puppy mills or farms, who work with poor quality bloodlines, which may be genetically prone to a host of health problems. Backyard breeders and puppy mills are only interested in making a quick buck, frequently advertising in local newspapers or selling entire litters to pet stores for resale. They are quite prolific on the internet now as well and are getting progressively more talented at hiding their true natures.



Never Buy a Basenji From a Pet Store!

1. Pet store Basenjjs come from backyard breeders and puppy mills or farms. You will not know who bred your dog, how they were raised or have anyone to contact if you have questions or a problem.
2. The health of pet store Basenjjs is always at risk because they are not bred by knowledgeable breeders devoted to improving the health and appearance of the Basenji. Pet store puppies are separated from their mothers at too early an age and usually do not have the chance to develop healthy bodies and temperaments. In fact, pet store Basenjjs often become seriously ill, costing their owners hundreds or thousands of dollars in veterinary expenses. Pet stores do not guarantee the health of their puppies beyond a few days.
3. Often pet store Basenjjs are not truly typical of the breed. In fact, they may look more like Chihuahuas or crossbreds than Basenjjs. The registration and purity of a pet store puppy may not be top notch or totally reliable. The registration for these pups often is not with the American Kennel Club but rather with less reliable registries.
4. Pet store Basenjjs are sitting in a shop or in shipment when they should be with someone, breeder or new owner, who is putting time into raising and socializing them correctly.
5. Pet stores usually charge as much or more than responsible breeders.



Responsible Breeders versus Backyard or Puppy Farm Breeders

The numbers of dogs kept by a breeder, the number of litters, whether they are housed in a kennel or in the house do not represent the real differences between responsible breeders and backyard breeders or puppy mills. The important differences have more to do with the ability the breeder has to give their dogs a decent life, to keep them happy and healthy and their commitment to the health and quality of the breed. Some clues you can consider in evaluating a breeder are listed on the next page:

Responsible Breeders Do The Following:

1. Are usually members of The Basenji Club of America and/or a regional Basenji club and/or all-breed club.
2. They work toward improving Basenji conformation, health and performance. BCOA members agree to BCOA's Code of Recommended Practices.
3. Their dogs are registered with the American Kennel Club.
4. Their dogs are tested for genetic health problems. They are knowledgeable and willing to discuss health issues in the breed with you. Results of testing are on the OFA website for verification or you can see actual official certificates.
5. Want you to come meet their dogs and see how they live. Their dogs are healthy and friendly. The dogs and facilities are clean.
6. May or may not advertise on the internet.
7. Ask many questions of prospective owners in order to ensure their puppy is going to a good and permanent home.
8. Most responsible breeders in a geographic area sell their puppies for about the same price.
9. Unless other arrangements are made, normally require a spay/neuter agreement or AKC non-breeding registrations for pets.
10. Never sell through puppy stores or other outlets.
11. Rarely have facilities for over-the-internet credit card or PayPal transactions.
12. Will rarely let a puppy leave before the age of eight or nine weeks.
13. Often compete regularly with their Basenjies in conformation, obedience, agility, or lure coursing. They are well known and respected in the dog community.
14. Wish to be contacted if for any reason a Basenji they bred must be placed in a different home.
15. Always want to know about the health of their puppies through the years.
16. Are happy to help you if you have any questions regarding the training or behavior of your puppy.

Backyard Breeders Do The Following:

1. Normally are not members of a Basenji or all-breed club.
2. Their primary motivation for breeding dogs is to make money.
3. Their dogs may be registered with the American Kennel Club or with another registry. AKC is the only U.S. canine registry that has breeder kennel inspections. AKC also requires DNA identification for dogs that are bred often.
4. Some have now started testing their Basenjies for Fanconi syndrome. The results of all testing can be verified at OFA website or they can show you official certificates.
5. Try to avoid having you visit their breeding establishment. The dogs may not be very well socialized. The facilities may not be clean. The dogs may not be healthy appearing.
6. Often advertise on the internet posing as responsible breeders. You should visit many websites to learn the differences in presentations.
7. Rarely ask the buyer questions about how the puppy will be cared for.
8. Often sell their puppies for more than responsible breeders but sometimes for less when they are over-stocked.
9. Rarely require spay/neuter agreements or use AKC non-breeding registrations.
10. Will sometimes sell entire litters to pet shops or large pet trade suppliers.
11. Often have their internet sites set up to encourage direct credit card or PayPal purchases.
12. Sometimes allow their puppies to leave at the early age of six or seven weeks old.
13. Sometimes compete in events just enough to have a few ribbons to show off. Are not generally well-known or respected in the area's dog community.
14. Ignore requests for help if you must give the puppy up as a puppy or adult.
15. Are uninterested if you have a health problem with your dog.
16. Lack time and interest if you have questions regarding the training or behavior of your puppy.

How Can You Find a Responsible Breeder?

- ➔ Contact the Basenji Club of America, the American Kennel Club or a local Basenji breed club, and request names of breeders in your area. The BCOA's website (<http://www.basenji.org>) has a listing of members who are breeders and rescue contacts.
- ➔ Attend dog shows or other dog events and talk to breeders, handlers and other owners who may be able to give you referrals on obtaining a puppy. Information on dog shows and other AKC events in your area is available by contacting the AKC or visiting their website (www.akc.org) in the dog events section. Be sure to look at AKC's information on finding a breeder as well. ASFA's lure coursing events can be found at their website (www.asfa.org.)
- ➔ Refer to Basenji breed publications like the official newsletter of the Basenji Club of America, "The Bulletin" and the privately produced magazine "The Basenji," a bi-monthly Basenji publication. Visit their websites for more information (<http://www.basenji.org> and www.thebasenji.com.)
- ➔ Ask your veterinarian or people in your local all-breed dog club if they know of responsible American Kennel Club Basenji breeders in your area. Basenjis are not a very common breed so you may need to travel a bit to find a Basenji. It is by far better to visit the breeder then to purchase without any personal knowledge of the establishment and without meeting the breeder and their dogs in person.

*Whether you choose to work with a responsible breeder
or rescue group it is well worth
taking the time to find the right Basenji for your family.*

Questions to ask a Breeder

It is up to **you** to do your homework to assure yourself that the breeder is in fact ethical and conscientious. **Don't be afraid to ask the following questions.**

1. *How long have you been breeding AKC Basenjis?*

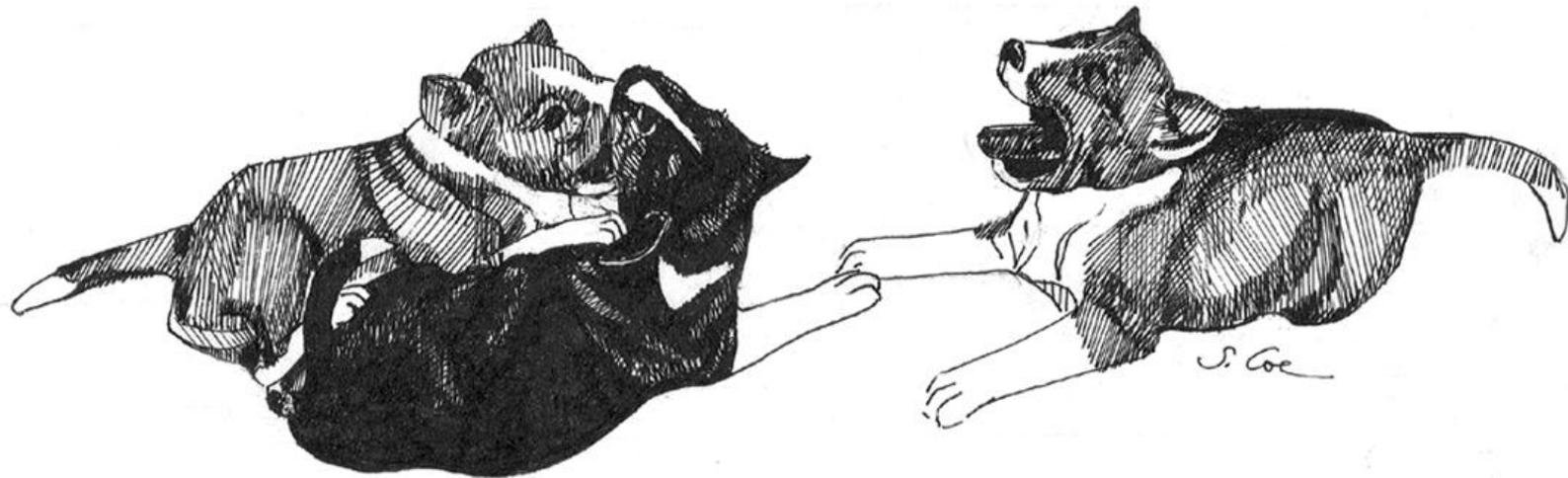
Good breeders have usually been breeding for a minimum of 3 or 4 years. If you are buying a puppy from a breeder's first or second litter, they should be able to tell you about their own mentors and advisors.

2. *Do you belong to the Basenji Club of America or a regional Basenji Club?*

Membership in these clubs involves working within a code of ethics that gives greater credibility to a breeder.

3. *In what type of activities do your dogs participate?*

Many responsible breeders are involved in conformation competition or in various performance events.



4. Do you have any puppies available, and if not, when do you plan to have another litter?

If they will have puppies available in the near future, the majority of breeders will put your name on a waiting list. Breeders whose lists are full are usually more than willing to refer you to reputable breeders in the area. In some parts of the country, there is frequently a shortage of Basenji puppies. Don't forget that Basenjis typically have puppies born in between October and December although there will be some exceptions.

5. What kind of warranty do you offer on your puppies?

Most breeders will guarantee the health of a puppy for a specific period of time and if something does go wrong during that period they will either offer to replace the puppy with another one or give a full refund.

6. What health testing do you do with your dogs?

The breeder should be able to show you certificates or refer you to OFA's website (www.offa.org) to prove the testing has been done for their dogs. Be sure to check BCOA's website health information.

7. What is the price of the puppy?

Pet puppies will generally be less expensive than a show prospect.

8. At what age do you place your puppies?

In contrast to puppy mills or backyard breeders, which will place puppies at 6 to 8 weeks, responsible breeders usually don't place puppies before 8 or 9 weeks of age and often a few weeks older than that.

9. What type of paperwork do you provide and does it include proof of vaccinations and worming?

Responsible breeders should provide a Bill of Sale, a contract detailing the conditions of sale, a pedigree and a copy of the puppy's health record. A pet puppy generally comes with a non-breeding American Kennel Club registration. In some cases, breeders may withhold AKC registration papers until they have received a spay or neuter certificate from your veterinarian.



10. Do you have any recommendations that I should follow when I bring my puppy home?

Most responsible breeders will provide some form of puppy packet that includes their own recommendations on care, diet and training of the puppy.

Questions a Breeder May Ask You

Responsible breeders will also have questions for you, which will help them assess whether they want to place one of their puppies in your home and which puppy will be the best fit with your family.

1. *Have you ever owned dogs before and specifically, a Basenji?*

Familiarity with owning dogs ensures a higher success rate in placing a puppy in a new home. It is a particular “plus” if a prospective buyer has had the experience of owning a unique breed like the Basenji.

2. *Why do you want a Basenji?*

It is important to determine if a Basenji is what you really want. An experienced breeder can help you decide based on your reasoning and situation. Basenjis are a rambunctious, curious, naughty breed that is not suitable for everyone.



3. *Do you have an enclosed or fenced in backyard?*

Being a hunting breed, Basenjis tend to roam and may become injured or lost. Chaining a Basenji (or any breed) to an outdoor doghouse or tree is both dangerous and inhumane.

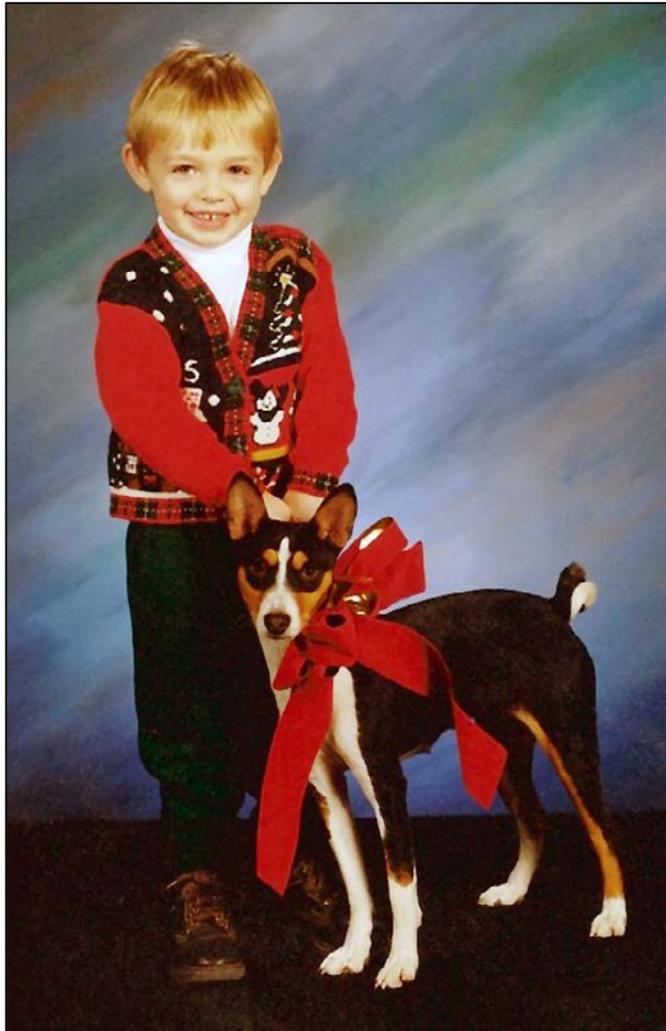
4. *Where will your new puppy live?*

All dogs are pack animals and want to associate with their families not live a lonely life confined in a kennel. It will be happiest in the house where it can be cared for by a loving family. Responsible breeders are fond of their puppies and want them to go into the best situation.



5. How long will the puppy be alone during the day?

Breeders are reluctant to place a Basenji puppy in a home where it will be alone for excessively long periods. The companionship of another dog or cat will go a long way in providing companionship for a unique breed like the Basenji.



6. Are you willing to spay or neuter your pet Basenji?

Spaying or neutering is usually required by breeders who wish to protect their valuable bloodlines.

7. Can you afford not only the purchase price of this pet but also its care and maintenance?

New owners need to be aware of how much it costs to keep their family pet healthy and well-taken care of.

8. Do you have children, and if so, what are their ages?

Many families want a puppy to “grow up with” their children. For some families with small children, the breeder may recommend an adult dog whose behavior is more settled and reliable around a child’s exuberant nature. The breeder may want to meet you and your children so they can better evaluate how the dogs relate to the family.

9. Is the decision to purchase a Basenji a unanimous one in your family?

Basenjis that go into a family situation where not everyone wants this unique breed may start out with a couple strikes against them. If you don’t have complete agreement within the family, do not purchase a new pet.

Should I Get an Adult or a Puppy?



A Basenji whether puppy or adult will bond with a new family. If you have babies or toddlers, or don't want a young puppy, it may be wise to consider bringing an adult Basenji into the home.

The first decision to ponder is what age Basenji you would like. There is no question that fans find Basenji puppies indescribably cute and very hard to resist. But consider your situation before leaping into a puppy. A puppy is a little wild thing without manners, requiring incredible amounts of time and patience. There is the option of an older puppy or young adult. Many breeders keep several pups from a litter longer to see how they are going to turn out and if they are what are needed in their breeding program. When the breeder decides to sell one of these pups at say 6 or 9 months, this is a pup that has been brought along by an

experienced person. Similarly a breeder sometimes has a young adult, perhaps already a champion available which has been well raised and is past the wildest periods of their life. Former brood bitches that are now spayed may also be placed permanently in pet homes. In both cases, this type of arrangement can work well for the person looking for a good pet Basenji. Finally there are rescue dogs which come in two types. Some are really excellent pets that a family is forced to give up. Others are special needs dogs that will take patience to bring past the problems they have developed in an unsatisfactory home.

Should I Choose a Male or a Female?

Both males and females make excellent companion pets. There is relatively little difference in temperament, activity or trainability between male and female Basenjis. Sometimes male Basenjis have a difficult transition to adulthood. This occurs at the time Basenji females come into season. If your male is neutered before then, the hormones do not flow in the same way so the dog is more tranquil. Females which are not spayed go into season (or heat) once a year, usually in the autumn. You should discuss the risks and benefits of spaying or neutering with your veterinarian. Your veterinarian can also help you decide what age your dog should be altered.

Male and female Basenjis are about the same size so there is little difference to choose from there. The choice seems to be based more on personal preference and availability.



A Puppy is a Gift for a Lifetime, not just for Christmas

Puppies are a much requested gift, particularly during the holiday season. However, the Christmas season is not the best time to bring a puppy or a more mature hound into your home. Many puppies of all breeds purchased during the holidays end up being returned, resold or abandoned in shelters

Because holidays tend to be busy with people coming and going, this is not a good time to bring a new puppy into your home. A new puppy (or older adopted dog) needs time to rest as well as a consistent, uninterrupted training schedule to be properly housebroken and acclimated to its new home and environment.

Purchasing a Companion Basenji



After you have decided that the Basenji is the breed for you it will be necessary to decide if you want a pet or show quality Basenji. The majority of prospective new owners want a companion/pet Basenji. Breeders usually sell as pets those Basenjies that do not come as close to the official breed Standard as other puppies in the litter. A pet may have cosmetic flaws which are not desirable in the show ring. In the eyes of the pet owner these features are rarely seen as flaws. A show puppy should also be a pet and be well treated and loved.

It is also important to understand that pet quality does not mean that a dog is in any way less healthy than a show prospect.

Purchasing a Show Prospect

Good Basenji breeders strive to produce dogs that meet the description of the Basenji in the official breed Standard (see Appendix A). When “show quality” Basenjies compete against other Basenjies at a dog show, a judge compares each Basenji against what the Standard defines as the ideal. The Basenji that comes closest to this ideal in the judges opinion is the one that wins.

Show prospects are usually sold for a higher price than a pet quality dog. Some breeders will sell a show prospect outright with no strings attached. Other breeders may sell one for less money but with certain requirements.

It is not uncommon for a breeder to want lifetime breeding rights to a particularly outstanding male or to want a puppy out of a good quality bitch, in addition to choosing the sire for her first breeding. If the new owners are novices, the breeder may wish to co-own the show prospect so that he or she has “control” over which bitches a male is bred to or which sire a bitch is bred to. It is not uncommon for a breeder who sells a show prospect to require that the dog be shown to its championship.

All details relative to the purchase of a show prospect ***should be clearly spelled out and written down in contract form in order to avoid any confusion which might arise down the line.***

It is also very important to specify expenses that the new owners will assume and those that the breeder will assume. Other things to put in writing may include how puppies will be chosen in a future litter, which will cover whelping costs, veterinary fees, show expenses and access to males for breeding.



Looking For a Show Prospect

To obtain a truly top quality show prospect it is safer to purchase an animal that is older (around 6-12 months) or has already been started to be shown and has a number of solid wins and points under its belt.

A positive relationship based on mutual respect between you and your puppy's breeders is essential. They will be your mentors as you learn about showing and breeding. You should be comfortable and confident with these key individuals!

The availability of Basenji show puppies is usually low, averaging one or two really good puppies in a litter. You may need to be patient to find a truly top show/breeding quality Basenji.

Adopting a Rescue Basenji

Basenji rescue groups are devoted to finding homes for Basenjis that have been abandoned or given up by their owners. Many of these Basenjis end up in local humane shelters and unless suitable homes are found for them, they are destroyed. Rescue groups are to be commended and supported as they do a great service for the breed.

Basenji rescue groups have been formed in almost every state in the country. Some are supported by or affiliated with local Basenji breed clubs. Others are made up of volunteers who work exclusively with rescued Basenjis. The Basenji Club of America has a list of members who are involved in Basenji rescue on their [website](#).



Basenji rescue groups typically assess the dog's temperament and health while the dog is awaiting adoption, and may be prepared to offer ongoing advice and support as your rescued Basenji makes the transition into your home.

Through rescue, it is possible to find a wonderful pet that deserves a loving family. Puppies are seldom available through rescue.

Advantages of Adopting a Rescue Basenji



- ➔ You may find joy and pleasure in giving a “new home” to a dog in need.
- ➔ Rescue dogs are often a more affordable option for a family who wants a Basenji.
- ➔ Most rescue Basenjies are adults, many are already housebroken as well as spayed or neutered.
- ➔ Reputable rescue groups don’t usually place a dog in a new home without having first placed it in one of their experienced foster homes. While in the foster home, the dog is evaluated in a number of different situations to determine the type of home for which it is best suited. As you work with a reputable rescue group, they will assess your experience with dogs and will match you with a Basenji that will best fit your family’s situation and needs.

Special Rescue Challenges

In some cases, rescue Basenjies have been neglected by their former owners or may require medical care. The adoptive family may need to spend more time helping their new friend fit into its home. Some rescue Basenjies may be timid or shy until they have had a chance to adapt to their new surroundings.

Most of these hounds with special needs blossom into endearing pets and loving companions. The rescue group you choose to work with should be as straightforward as they can about the dog’s history to enable you to better know how to work with your new Basenji. Conversely, you need to be totally honest about your past experience, family situation and time availability with the rescue contact.

Even with these safeguards, it is possible for adoptions to fail as some behaviors of the dog or unanticipated circumstance in the family may occur. In these cases, rescue groups will always take the dog back. Virtually all rescue groups require that you to return the Basenji to them, rather than attempting to place it in a new home yourself or dropping the dog off at a shelter.