

THE GREAT TONGUE DEBATE

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References: Vicki DeGruy of the Chow Chow Club, Inc.'s Welfare Committee

There is a myth that Chows are the only breed with black tongues, and that if the tongue has black spots it must have Chow heritage. This is not true.

Breeders of Chows know the standard comment--if the dog has a black tongue, then it is a Chow. We also hear the comment that if it has pink spots, then it is a mix. If it were only this simple! Black spots on the tongue in no way indicate whether the dog is a Chow or a Chow mix unless that tongue is attached to a dog that looks like a Chow. There are many, many breeds that can have black pigment on the tongue. Some can have large spots of pigment, and sometimes they may have almost solid pigmentation on their tongues. So, if a pigmented tongue is attached to a dog that does not look like a Chow, then it is probably not a Chow. Also true, not all purebred Chows will have solid pigment on their tongues. Even the pups of best-of-show matches can produce Chows with incomplete pigment, so we certainly should not discount a rescued Chow with a spot or two of pink.

The following is a list of breeds known to have purebred individuals appear with black pigmentation on their tongues. The list was compiled by Vicki DeGruy of the Chow Chow Club, Inc.'s Welfare Committee.

Airedale
Akita
Australian Shepherd
Australian Cattle Dog
Belgian Sheepdog, Tervuren, Malinois
Bouvier de Flandres
Cairn Terrier
Chinese Shar-Pei
Cocker Spaniel
Collie
Dalmatian
Doberman Pinscher
Fila Brasileiro
Flat-coated Retriever
German Shepherd
Golden Retriever
Great Pyrenees
Keeshond
Labrador Retriever
Newfoundland
Pug
Rhodesian Ridgeback
Rottweiler
Setter breeds: Gordon, Irish, and English
Siberian Husky
Shiba Inu