

Tips for Tattooing

by Mary Jarvis

Effective January 1, 2002, all Maremma dogs must be tattooed (or microchipped) before they can be accepted for registry in the Maremma Sheepdog Club of America.

Tattooing is intended primarily for identifying animals as individuals. The number to be used is the 4-digit number assigned when a litter is registered. These numbers are to be tattooed in the puppy's right ear. We also strongly recommend that you apply your 2-letter breeder identifier and the letter M or F, which indicates the sex of the pup. These letters can be tattooed in the left ear.

Success in applying a lasting tattoo will depend entirely on you. A few simple tips, if observed, will help to insure success.

Where to buy your tattoo outfit: [NASCO](#) (800-558-9595) sells a .3" digit small animal tattoo outfit for \$30.95. The alphabet letters can be purchased separately. Also available is a 5/16" five-digit tattoo outfit for \$32.05. (2002 catalog prices) They also sell ink. Or check the catalogs of your favorite vet supply company.

SUPPLIES:

Cotton balls or soft cloths

Rubbing alcohol

Tattoo Ink (I prefer the green Ketchum ink in a tube)

Toothbrush (old)

Tattoo outfit

Rubber gloves (I like the thin blue nitrile gloves)

1. Assemble your supplies; put the numbers into the tattoo pliers. Press the thin rubber sponge pad down very firmly over the needles. This pad helps to release the needles from the skin.
2. Check the correctness of the numbers by making the tattoo mark on a piece of paper.
3. Clean the puppy's right ear with rubbing alcohol on a cotton ball or soft cloth, to remove dirt, grease, and wax. It helps if you can have someone hold the pup for you.
4. Put your rubber gloves on, and smear ink on the skin of the ear, choosing an area free from pigment. Place the symbols parallel to and between the veins or cartilage of the ear. The accidental piercing of a vein may ruin the tattoo.
5. Make the imprint with a quick, firm movement and immediately apply more ink and rub vigorously and continuously for at least 15 seconds to insure penetration. Use the old toothbrush to work the ink into the tattoo area. This is very important.
6. Once all your pups are tattooed, remove the rubber pad and rinse it and the needles in water, then dry. The sponge rubber pad should be replaced when it begins to lose its elasticity.
7. Do not disturb the area of the tattoo until the healing process is complete; which may be from 5 to 21 days. Then you can clean it off with a soft cloth.