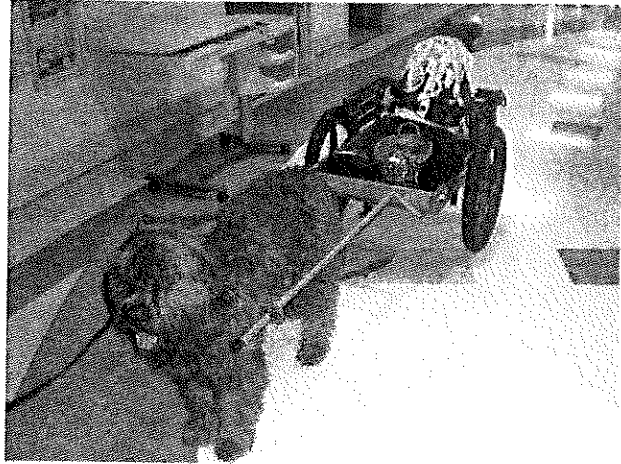


# INTRODUCTION TO CARTING



ANN SCHALLERT

## DEDICATED TO

**Magnhildi Wikim Van Aachen CD, HIC, CGC, TT**  
Hildi was our first Bouvier des Flandres and the first dog I've trained with in obedience, carting, and herding. We have learned a lot together and I have learned so much more from her.

Thanks to my sister, Kate Schallert, for her support and encouragement with all the dog activities and throughout life.

Special thanks to Beth Ostrander from Dog Works, Inc. for teaching the Carting Instructor Certification Program at Wiz Kid Dog Camp in 1996. It was a great learning experience and a lot of fun.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Draft work is one of the many fun activities you can do with your dog. The Bouvier, like most other breeds, is happiest when working with you as a team. Working with your dog builds better understanding and bonding. It gives your dog more meaning and purpose, making you both happier.

After you and your dog learn to cart there are so many things you can do together. Draft work can be very helpful in the yard and garden. You can enter parades, give children rides, pull your equipment into dog shows, carry your cooler to a picnic, etc. It is now Izzy's job to pull the ducks to the set out spot at our herding club's trials.

One of our favorite things is pulling a decorated cart in the hospital. I decorate the cart according to the season. The patients really love it.

## **BEFORE YOU BEGIN**

There are several things you should take into consideration when training a dog to cart: age, structure, conditioning, basic obedience, and most importantly safety.

You should not pull any weight with a dog that is not fully developed, usually about 2 years old. You can get him used to the equipment and do basic training while he is growing. The Dog Works makes an adjustable puppy harness. It is good to start obedience training at an early age.

The dog's structure should be sound. Ideally the topline should be level. A dog whose back sways or arches will not be able to transfer the force to pull a heavy load. If a dog has structural problems he can still pull a cart but he should not pull as much weight and may not have as much stamina due to compensations made for the poor structure. Always

be careful not to let your dog pull more weight than he can handle. Draft work can even be good therapy for some dogs.

Your dogs physical condition is important. You should gradually increase his strength and endurance. Brisk walking is one of the best ways to do this. Remember to start slowly and gradually increase speed and distance. Be sure to include hills. In the summer be careful of the heat, humidity, and hot pavement. Swimming is a good alternative. Consider your dogs age. Never jog or run with a puppy under one year old. It is too much stress on his growing bones. A puppy will get enough running during his own play.

Your dog should know basic obedience, controlled walking, a sit or down stay, stand, and a recall. He should also be able to back up on command. You can teach him this by using an existing chute such as a wall and a row of chairs or sofa, a wall or fence and a car. You can also use two rows of the temporary garden fence that just sticks in the ground. The chute has to be narrow enough so the dog cannot turn around in it. Start by walking forward through it until the dog is comfortable. Then stop half way through and turn around and slowly walk into the dog so he has no choice but to go backward. Give the command, "Back". If he sits down, tell him to stand and repeat the back command. You can gently bump into his nose or push him on his chest with your hand while telling him to back up. Try a treat at chest level. Go slowly and use lots of praise.

**Safety** should be a major concern through all phases of training. Occasionally a dog may panic and cause injury to himself, the handler, the helper, and observers. Be aware of your dogs body language and give him 100% of your attention. Use common sense.

Always work on lead and in a fenced area . Work with a helper, especially when introducing something new. The helper should usually be on the opposite side of the dog from the handler.

This manual is not a substitute for hands on instruction.

Check you dog for signs of stress. Our dogs are food motivated so I use food as an indicator. If they do not take their usual treat they are stressed or thinking very hard. We work carefully, giving lots of praise. When they take the treats readily, I know they are comfortable with this step.

Watch your own stress level. Only train when you are in a good mood.

Introduce each step slowly. Let him smell the equipment. Make sure he understands and feels comfortable with each step before moving to the next. If a dog is worried about the equipment, I do not baby him but continue to go forward, giving praise and confidence. However, if the dog is afraid of the equipment and starts to panic, stop. Let him smell it again and go back a step or two.

End each training session on a happy, up note with something your dog really enjoys and does well, even if it is not related to carting.

Be consistent.

Keep it fun and enjoy.

## DEFINITIONS

**Draft Work** is the dog pulling something, a cart or wagon with or without a person, a travois, a sled, a log, etc.

**Carting** is the dog pulling a wheeled apparatus, with or without a person.

**Driving** is the dog pulling a person, including carting, skjoring, mushing.

## THE HARNESS

The most important piece of equipment is the harness. The siwash style is the best type. It has a chest piece instead of a band across the shoulders allowing full range of motion which is important for hauling weight and going up hill. It should be well padded for comfort.

The fit is very important and a good outfitter will help you with it. If possible, it's helpful to examine a properly fitted harness on a dog.

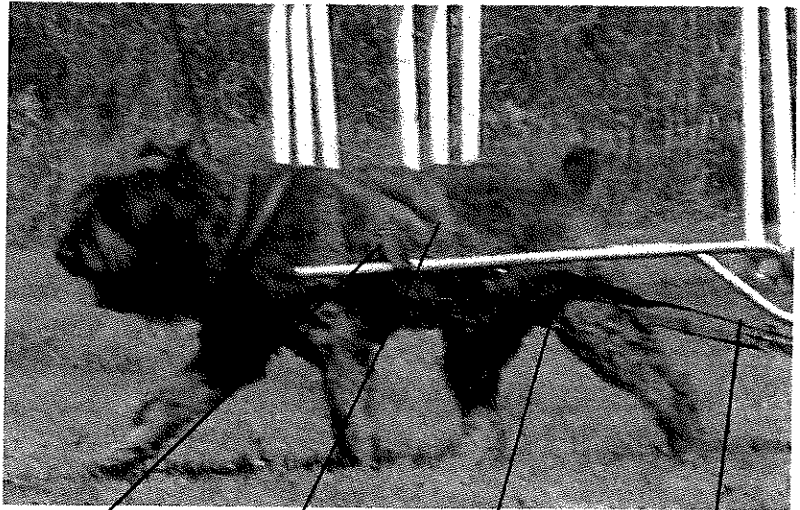
The harness should fit snug but not tight. The inside edges of the neck piece should be at the front of the withers and the top of the sternum. The girth strap, with the shaft loops, goes on top of the withers and under the side pieces of the harness. It should not be tight and the buckles should not be on pressure points.

There are two main types of siwash harnesses. The carting harness and the freight harness.

The carting harness has a girth strap with loops for the shafts. The traces attach to the two points of pull on the harness and a single tree on the cart.

The freight harness has the "traces built in " with a spreader bar near the end with one point of pull. You can add a girth strap with shaft loops to pull a cart. The spreader bar takes the place of the single tree. Make sure the spreader bar is back far enough not to interfere with hind leg movement. The traces hook to the cart for pulling. The shaft loops hold the shafts in place for steering and breaking.

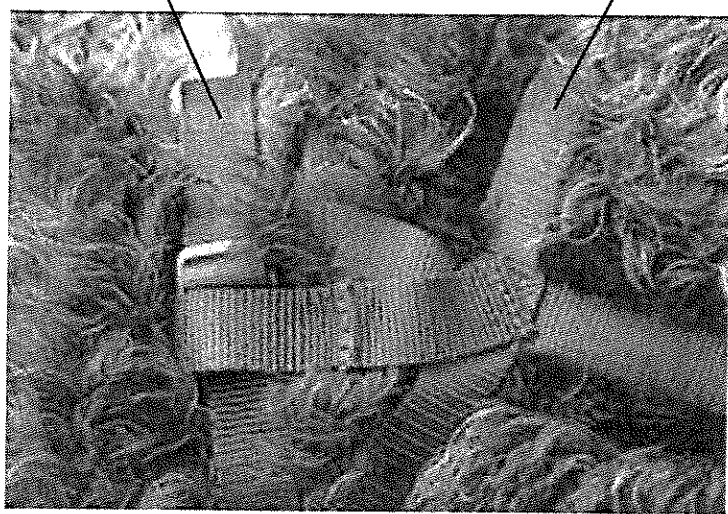
Introduce the harness slowly to your dog. Never let him play with it. Make it a very happy time with lots of praise. At first only put it on for a few seconds. Gradually work up to letting him wear it while he does supervised activities, go for walks. It should become like a second skin. Hopefully he will get excited when you get the harness, just like he does when you get the leash.

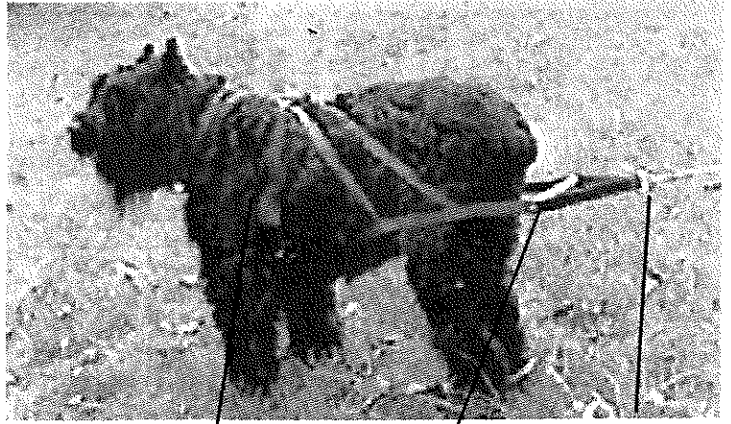


girth strap with shaft loops      girth strap      point of pull      traces

### SIWASH CARTING HARNESS

Top View  
girth strap with shaft loops      neck piece



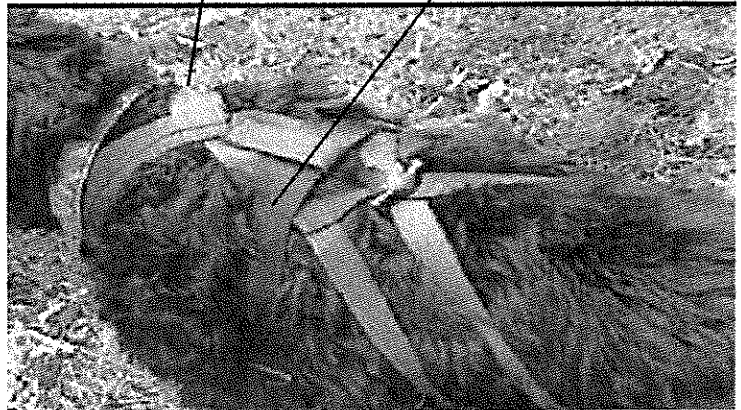


girth strap with shaft loops      spreader bar      point of pull

### SIWASH FREIGHT HARNESS

Top View

neck piece      girth strap with shaft loops





## CARTS AND WAGONS

A cart is a two wheel vehicle. It is very maneuverable and backs up easily. The load has to stay balanced so the shafts do not pull up or push down on the harness. This would put stress on the dog.

A wagon is a four wheel vehicle. It is harder to make tight turns and tends to jackknife when backing up. A wagon is good for pulling children and shifting or uneven loads.

The shafts are two poles that are attached to the cart or wagon. They go through the shaft loops of the harness to steer the vehicle. The end of the shafts should be at the dogs point of shoulder.

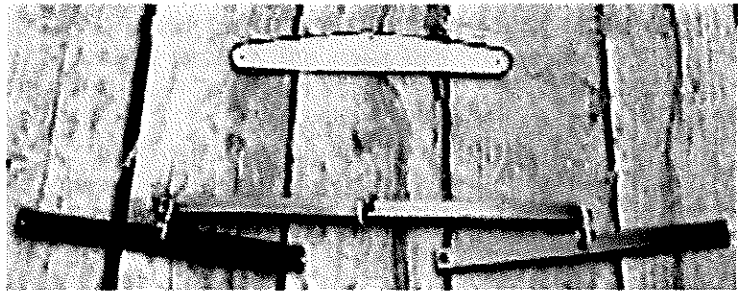
The brakes are an attachment on the shafts to keep them from sliding all the way through the the shaft loops on the harness. This prevents the cart from running into the dog.

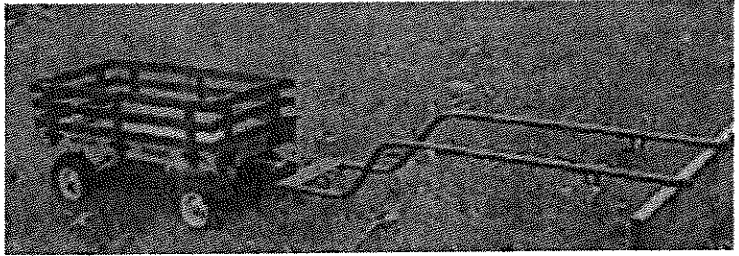
A single tree adjusts to keeps the pull on the harness even when the dog turns. It should be a little wider than the dog.

A double tree is two single trees attached to a third larger single tree. This allows two dogs to pull the same vehicle and helps even the load.

double tree

single tree

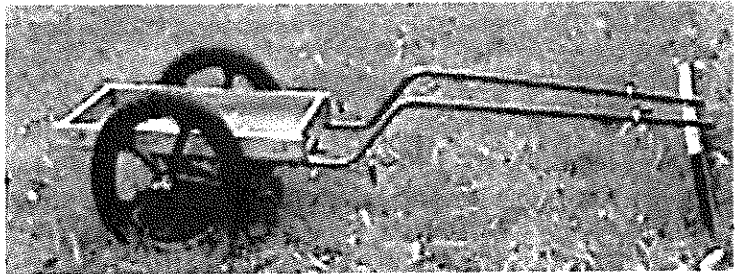




shafts

fixed breaks

adjustable breaks



Many wagons and carts have removable sides.

## TRAINING TO PULL

After your dog is used to the harness you can start putting a little weight on the traces. Have your helper walk behind the dog holding the traces and putting slight tension on them.

During the next phase of training your traces will drag on the ground a lot. To save on their wear and tear you may want to substitute rope.

Remember to have your helper walk on the other side of your dog for safety.

Hook two plastic jugs on the traces. Have the dog pull them empty to get used to something behind him. As he gets used to them add water or rocks for weight. Go over different surfaces so they make different noise. As your dog progresses he should get used to distractions. You can also use a log or 4x4 for a drag with an eyebolt near each end. Keep the traces parallel so they do not hinder the dog's rear legs.

Now that your dog is used to pulling something you can introduce the shafts. You can use practice shafts made out of metal conduit bent in a U. Wheels may or may not be added. Have your helper walk on the opposite side of the dog and pull one shaft next to the dog. Gradually move the shaft closer to the dog and gently bump him with it.

Next hold the shafts on each side of the dog while you walk, occasionally and gently tapping him on each side. Then put the shafts through the shaft loops and let him pull them. When your dog is extremely comfortable with this you can introduce the cart or wagon.

Start by having your helper pull the cart next to the dog. When he is used to the noise and movement of the cart gently bump him with the shaft. Put the shafts on both sides of the dog gently tapping him as you walk.

Next put the shafts through the loops and let him get used to the weight change in the harness. Give lots of praise. Watch his body language, don't let him panic.

Now your ready to hook the cart to the harness. The helper should be ready to grab the shafts if your dog starts to panic so you can calm your dog. Remember go slow and easy. Be prepared to go back a step or two. That is better than going too fast and risking problems.

Have your dog pull the cart in a straight line for a short distance. Walk at a normal pace. Don't let him run. Give lots of praise. Tell him what a good job he did. Unhitch the cart and take a break.

When you've done this several times and your dog is very comfortable with it you can go for a longer time. Start making very wide turns. Gradually tighten up on the turns and introduce commands.

Each dog is individual. Some may go through all these steps in one or two sessions. Others may take weeks or more. Be patient and consistent.

You're on your way to having a lot of fun with carting.

## COMMANDS

**Paw:** lift a front paw to put it through the harness.

**Pull:** to move forward with the cart.

**Wait, whoa, stop:** to stop.

**Gee, right:** to turn right. Usually you walk on the right side of the dog so you can think "gee to me" to help remember.

**Haw, left:** to turn left.

If you have any questions about your dogs physical structure or condition check with your veterinarian before carting.

Remember to think **safety**. Use a lead at all times. Go slowly. Improper training can cause serious injury to dog and person. This manual is not a substitute for hands on instruction.

Praise your dog a lot, give treats, be consistent, be enthusiastic, **have fun**.



Izzy crossing over for a tight turn

## Carting web sites, books and DVDs

[www.wilczekwoodworks.com](http://www.wilczekwoodworks.com)

[www.dogworks.com](http://www.dogworks.com)

[www.nordkvn.com](http://www.nordkvn.com)

<http://www.amrottclub.org/carting.htm>

<http://staff.petech.ac.za/cartingcorner/> from South Africa

<http://www.bernerpaw.com/>

<http://users.erols.com/gr8rswis/IntroCarting.htm>

<http://www.rott-n-chatter.com/oldcarting.html> old picture of carting dogs

[www.ncanewfs.org/working/draft/pages/dtvideo.html](http://www.ncanewfs.org/working/draft/pages/dtvideo.html) 7 part draft dog video seminar

Join the list serve called "Carting-I" for discussions of draft work and training.

To subscribe, send an e-mail to [Carting-I-subscribe@yahogroups.com](mailto:Carting-I-subscribe@yahogroups.com). The Message and Subject can be left blank.

The Bernese Mountain Dog Club of Southeastern Wisconsin has 2 Instructional DVD's 'Training your Draft Dog' & 'Showing your Draft Dog' at:

[http://bmdcsew.org/Resources/Carting\\_Dog\\_DVD.php](http://bmdcsew.org/Resources/Carting_Dog_DVD.php)

Video/DVD: An Introduction to Canine Carting with Beth Osterlander available from Dog Works and Wilczek Woodworks

Manual: "Fun with Draft-Canine Training Workbook" available from Wilczek Woodworks

Manual: "Newfound Draft Work - A Guide For Training" by Consie Powell available from Wilczek Woodworks and Dog Works

"Notebook on Cart Training" by Linda Franklin  
This is geared toward driving.

"Carting With Your Dog—Positive Draft Training for Fun and Competition" by Laura Waldbaum, published by DogWise Publishing