

## Dogs



### Training Your Mule To Accept Dogs By Tim Doud Diamond Creek Mules

Do you own a dog? I guess that is a pretty random question, but probably an important one for most mule owners. If you own a dog and a mule I am sure you have discovered, more often than not, mules and dogs generally do not mix. It can be an unfortunate experience for dogs when they are hoping to be friendly with your mule and they get chased or kicked by a mule who is trying to protect himself. More often than not, the mule wins. But we can have a world where mules and dogs co-exist harmoniously. I have heard from many mule owners who say they would love to ride down the trail on their mule with their dog walking alongside.

So, where does this mule behavior come from? Donkeys, a mule's sire, is generally known to be very good at guarding their space. Whatever it may be, donkeys are known to be strong, individual equines and can "handle their own." Here in the western United States many sheep ranchers will turn a "guard" donkey out with their sheep to protect them from wild predators.



Tim asks Diamond Creek Monty to change direction when he reacts to Blackie.

The donkey will chase any coyote or wild dog away from the herd of sheep, protecting them from danger. This is the natural instinct of a donkey, and thus is bred into the mule. This instinct is not the same in every mule. Some will have a strong instinct towards dogs, while others may not. If a mule is raised around dogs they will often become more accepting of dogs and understand their canine friends are not going to hurt them or their fellow mules. My