

CONNEMARA PONY FACTS:

The Connemara pony originates from the West Coast of Ireland. The majority of ponies are grey and average between 12.2hh to 14.2hh.

The average family in Ireland could not afford more than one pony so a pony that could not earn his keep or be of good nature was a liability. Connemara ponies have exceptional temperaments were used to pull the cart to market, plough the fields, take the children to school and the family to church. The Connemara pony is hardy with good sturdy feet, sure-footedness and a good doer.

In 1963, Dr Fred Wilshire imported the first Connemara pony, Island King, into Australia and so began Australia's love of the Connemara pony.

Here are some facts that you will not find in the hand-book on the Connemara Pony.

Connemara ponies are friendly although a little hesitant when meeting strangers for the first time. Once they get to know you though it's a little like super glue – they just don't seem to know when they have worn out their welcome.

They are very people orientated and feel that they should be right in the middle of everything, they're not to be one to miss out on what's happening. Bit of a problem when there is a whole bunch of them, they all want to be first.

They have exceptional memories for people, places and other ponies. They never forget and they rarely forgive. They love their people and don't tend to share well with other ponies.

Connemara ponies are generally not broken-in until they are about 3 or 4 years old. They take a while to mature both in body and soul and will let you know when they are ready to start learning. Once started it is impossible to stop. They will seek you out and call to you, pace back and forth at the gate, go window to window around the house looking for you. They just enjoy showing you how quickly they can learn. It seems to raise their confidence and give them a sense of purpose. Also tends to make them feel self- important and a little bossy over the younger ponies still waiting for the day they will start training.

The Connemara pony has enormous courage only limited by the belief of his rider. If you believe he can do it, then he knows he can do it! Their jumping ability and stamina is well known.

Connemara ponies just love food and this may cause problems. To date there have been reportings of:

Connemara pony trapped in the hen house after someone forgot to latch the gate.

Hatchling chickens did not quite know what to make of that.

Connemara pony eating entire bowl of fruit through the kitchen window. Standing on a raised garden bed helps.

Connemara ponies cleaned up the entire crop of apples, apricots and plums in the family back yard and then backed up and ate all of the roses for dessert. Very tasty!

Connemara ponies love their people and will call out anywhere, anytime when they see them. They don't want to share you though and tend to warn the other ponies away as you approach so that they can have you to themselves.

Connemara ponies drop their top lip when in trouble and will grind their teeth when made to do things they really don't want to. They will even frown while they're doing it just so that the message is perfectly clear. Sulking is an art-form in the Connemara pony. They will even turn their back on you and keep looking away when you try to gain their attention. When someone tells you that the Connemara is like a member of the family they aren't joking. Very few families stop at one pony and many are never able to part with their pony even when the kids have grown up and moved away.

Connemara ponies are most sought by Mums seeking a pony that will be for them and eventually for that upcoming youngster to move on to when he or she has outgrown Sooty the Shetland or Benji the Welsh B. Unfortunately, after a while of riding the Connemara, Mum tends to forget about the youngster needing the pony and ends up keeping it for herself. This leads to the search for Connemara pony number two. Many Connemara owners are first time breeders of ponies. Some have found themselves the owner of a Connemara stallion and a few mares without intentionally setting out to start a stud but such is the temperament of this pony that all things seem possible. They have a willingness to teach us and a patience to wait for us to learn. Does not matter if they were worked 1 week, 1 month, 1 year ago they always seem to keep their friendly, willing, nature.

[as told by Annette Gardiner]