

# Sphynx

Short-hair

Early in 1966, in Ontario, Canada, a litter of kittens was born to a black and white house cat and amongst these kittens was a hairless male. A young general-science university student heard about the kitten, and, with his mother-a Siamese breeder at that time-obtained the kitten, plus the black and white mother, Elizabeth. It was not known at this time if this was a recessive gene, and if the hairless characteristics would be reproduced in subsequent generations.

In time, the hairless male was bred back to his "furry" mother and she produced both hairless and furry kittens. Later, hairless-to-hairless breedings from these kittens were attempted without success, and it was realized that out-crosses were needed: A programme was developed in which American Short-hair females were bred to existing hairless males. The furry female offspring from these litters were bred to hairless males from other hairless American Short-hair breedings. From this programme a strong start was made on a scientifically sound plan to produce good, sturdy stock. Contrary to some early beliefs, these cats are not more sensitive to cold than their furry cousins with normal coats.

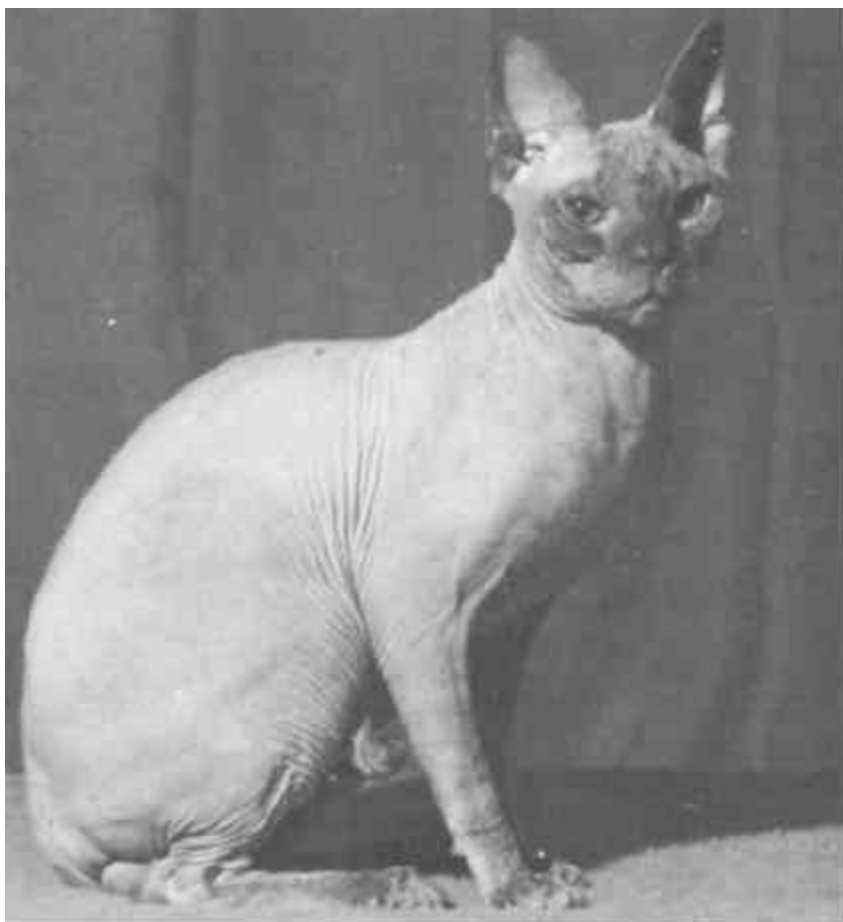
Given the name "Sphynx", the cat is also known as the "Canadian Hairless". A hairless cat shows completely different type from the furry kittens born in the same litter, particularly in regard to the head.

Unlike other breeds, the Sphynx sweats and, because of the lack of hair, normal follicular secretions may accumulate on the skin and may turn a brownish colour. This may easily be removed by bathing or wiping off with a wash-cloth and mild soap, and is no problem. Believed at first to be the answer to the problems of "allergic-to-cats" cat lovers, the Sphynx unfortunately has proved not to be so in all cases, as the dander on the skin can produce allergic reactions.

The Sphynx is currently recognised by Crown Cat Fanciers Association and the Canadian Cat Association. (Provisional recognition by C.F.A. was withdrawn early in 1971.)

According to the Standard, the face is covered with a short, plush pile which should "look like velvet and feel like moss". The hair is longer on the backs of the ears, and plush around the lobes. Mask plush should be heaviest around the nose and sides of the mouth, distinctly breaking above the nose. There are no whiskers. Paws have fine down up to the "wrist" or "ankle". The testicles are encased in fine, long, fairly closely-packed hair, the longest on the cat's body. The tail-tip carries fine, flat-lying hair covering about an inch of the extremity. Kittens, on the other hand, are covered with fine, soft, short hair, which later restricts itself to the points. The back of the body should carry microscopic hair rather like that found on the mask-the finer the better. Absence of it suggests shaving and can lead to show disqualification!

Sphynx cats come in all colours, solid-coloured cats may carry a small pink neck locket; their colour should be uniform



**A red hairless male Dutchie's Ceza, bred and owned by Mrs Kees Tenhove of Ontario, Canada.**

across the outer surfaces of the body, graded lighter over the inside parts. Breast points and the umbilical area are the only white spots acceptable on a solid, together with that part on the head covered by the ears folded down before the cat's birth. Parti-colour markings should be perfectly symmetrical.

The skin of the adult should be taut and wrinkle-free everywhere but on the head, although kittens "look lost, as if in a sweater far too large for them". Neither round nor wedge-shaped, the skull from the eyes back is oblong, flat between the eyes with a centre ridge. There is a slight break before the nosebreak, and due to the mask, the nose appears to taper slightly. The eyes tend to be set back into the face, and the snout is short in relation to the whole, tapering slightly. The jowls must not sag, and the chin should be square, giving an impression of firmness. A rounded or horse-like head is a fault. The round eyes have a slight slant, and are golden in colour, the deeper the better, and there should be no green around the pupil. The ear-set is large with a wide base, the ear sweep breaking at the lobes before meeting the head.

The body should be fine-boned but powerful, the chest short and barrel-shaped, Burmese-like but appearing smaller because of the lack of hair. The front of the cat is compared to a Boston Bull Terrier, a more pronounced likeness in kittens, which are bow-legged. Front legs are long and fine-boned, with small round paws. Hind legs are slightly longer, firm with soled haunches—they appear to curve in slightly under the cat, reminiscent of the kitten stage. When standing, the body stands slightly higher on the back legs, with a slight tuck. The tail should be long, thin and hard, and without kinks.