



# The Copper Satin

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Every Satin variety poses unique challenges for the breeder, and each variety has its own rewards, but none is more challenging or rewarding than the Copper. The brilliant ring color combined with Satin sheen is one of the most striking sights in the showroom.

A discussion of Coppers begins with the standard. Study it and believe it. We have seen far too many rabbits shown as Coppers that bear little resemblance to the standard - surface color that is too dark, blonde or mealy ring color, scattered white hairs, and poor sheen.

As with any Satin, the Copper breeder should focus first on body and fur structure. With 65 points on type and fur combined and only 15 points on color, this can't be stressed enough. Selecting for type, density, and sheen in your Copper breeding program will save time in the long run, as it is easier to improve color strains than to overcome basic structural defects. In short, cull for type and breed for color.

Ring color is the hallmark of the Copper variety. The standard calls for a "bright coppery orange." The ring is to be clearly defined. In other words, the color should be intense and the width of the band should be fairly consistent across the hair shaft. The standard does not prescribe the width, and it is really the clarity of the ring that is important. The ring should be evaluated by blowing or stroking the fur at several points on the top, sides, and haunches of the animal. A common fault is the fading of ring color on the sides and haunches, a problem made worse by molting or ragged fur. Note the point distribution on Copper color in the standard.

Even the most successful breeders of Copper Satins will have several variation of color in their herds, which is normal and even desirable, since these differences will complement each other. We recommend using a good clean Red every three generations to hold the ring color. This does require patience, as the first outcross usually produces off-colored animals, but it will payoff. Master Copper breeder Marvin Cole recommends breeding a Red buck to darker colored does for best results.

A critical factor is slate blue under color. Absence of slate on the back and sides of the Copper is, of course, a disqualification. This is important because strong under color tends to be genetically linked with black ticking on the surface. We also breed for good slate under color on the bellies, running unbroken from the chin to the crotch. This is preferred, though not required by the standard. Many judges seldom even check for it. However, you will discover that, the lighter the belly, the lighter the surface due to less ticking.

The standard calls for ticking to be "uniform and balanced," not so dark that it obscures the rufus body color but allows the brightness to literally shine through. Again, the strength of the red factor will determine balance in the surface color. Note what the standard says about muzzle, chest, and feet, which should be free of ticking.

Sometimes Coppers will show "shadow bars" on the feet. This is not a serious fault but should be avoided.

Unfinished Copper coats look especially bad, since smudges and patchy spots really stand out on Agouti fur. Coppers must show exceptional finish to compete against the other varieties. This just adds to the challenge.

It is a good idea to check your Coppers in full sunlight for stray white hairs, which do crop up occasionally, especially in first outcrosses. This is also the best way to check for sheen.

The Copper Satin is one of the triumphs of domestic rabbit breeding. As we admire the beauty and sheen of Copper fur, we might forget that it evolved from wild color Agouti strains mixed with Red and Black over countless

generations of selective breeding. Anything worth having is worth waiting for. Enjoy your Coppers and make the better best!