

Keeping Chickens Newsletter

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www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com



August 2012
Vol.2

Hi

Welcome to my Keeping Chickens Newsletter.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in their keeping chickens tips, stories and photos etc. as usual, if you have anything chicken related (tips, photos, stories, questions, coops etc.) you'd like to share in future issues of the newsletter or blog posts then just email news@self-sufficient-life.com and I will do my best to answer / include them.

Best Wishes
Gina

Subscriber Letters

Crista : Just wanted to share an experience that we recently had. I have chickens 20+ weeks old in a 10x10 dog pen inside a barn shed. For three consecutive mornings when I went to feed I had a dead chicken laying in a large water trough that we had in the pen, on its side, for them to have to get out of the weather/sun.

There was no apparent signs of stress the previous days and no markings on the dead birds. We immediately cleaned out all the water sources and added meds and let the birds out to free range. When we went to close up the pen that evening we found birds crowded into the trough and not using all the perches for sleeping and realized that they had actually smothered the three chickens that we had found. I knew this could happen to little peeps but never thought about full grown chickens smothering each other. Trough removed immediately and added another perch, so there was no excuse for anyone not to have a place to roost. Beware, so this doesn't happen to you. Crista Johnson of Chicken Lips Farm. Cuzzart, West Virginia

Sue : Hello from Australia. I have a public announcement!! On the 2nd August 2011 I was very proud to present my first egg layed by my black and white Anconca spotty chicken Madame De Cluck. I am glad to say that both mother and egg are doing well though I had to laugh as the egg was quite elongated in shape!! It was seriously such an education.

This particular chicken is young and her head comb has recently just grown, dropping as it does to one side of her face, she has always appeared wary of people. But as time has passed she has followed in her chickensisters claw prints and became trusting of me. The other chicken, a little reddish Isa Brown both sit trembling slightly as they wait for us to stroke and caress them, telling them what good girls they are. The younger of the two had not yet layed an egg and was making a real curfuffle as she strolled around the garden earlier in the day. I put her back into her coop and she took herself upstairs to the nesting quarters. The little red hen was most curious and followed her, standing with her tail feathers peeping out of the door. She stood there like a little chicken statue for 45 MINUTES not uttering a sound until the black chicken had layed her first egg, announced it to the world with a loud cluck and they both vacated "the premises" in search of hidden delights in the garden.

These creatures bring so much delight to an otherwise very ordinary suburban garden here in Melbourne, Australia. They are so worth having, not just for the lovely brown eggs the ISA lays daily but for their most delightful personalities. Strolling around the garden as if they own the place, often sharing food with the rabbit who also lives freely out there..their only problem is the forever wagging tail of my cocker spaniel!!!! Best wishes, Sue Ostroff



Turkeys chillin on the back deck

David Luke : This is our second year raising turkeys. The first year we bought three turkeys from the local farm store and raised them for the freezer. I built them a coop and a pen area, but never free ranged them. I felt really bad for them, all the did is eat and roost all day and the coop got very smelly. I did not free range them because I thought it would be hard to coop them each night and they got a very scary looking with their big feet and beaks. It did not take much to train them to coop. They have the run of the backyard, which is fenced in. Having four turkeys in the yard also help with the hawk problem and they co-habitat well with our flock of chickens. They are so fun to watch and we enjoy having them. All four turkeys puppy dog us around the yard, and beg for treats right along with the rest of the flock. We had several days of one hundred deg heat, they loved drinking from the garden hose and eating water Melon. It will be much harder to bring them to the processor.



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Chicken camper coop

David Luke : This was my spring project, A 1950 style tear drop trailer chicken coop. It holds 9-12 chickens, and was built for resale. I build a few chicken coops each year to help paid for chicken feed. I also enjoy helping others get started with the backyard flocks.

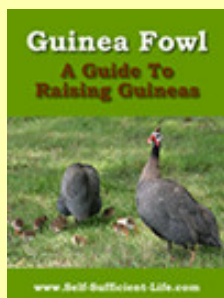




Leann : I have a suggestion for Renea who is having trouble with cracked eggs because her chickens keep kicking the straw out of the box. I was having the same problem keeping straw in our laying boxes. I now use a product called rubberized horsehair to line my laying boxes. Years ago furniture makers used to use horsehair in the cushions of chairs etc. for cushioning. Rubberized horsehair was created to take the place of the real thing in more recent times. I had some of it laying around, left over from a project I had done years ago. I cut it to the size of the laying box and then put straw in over it. It held up very well. I believe that it will need to be replaced every 6 months to a year. It is not easy to find, I checked with local upholstery suppliers but finally Googled it and ordered it on line. I hope this helps! Leann Lolli, Downers Grove, Illinois



Evelyn : Just wanted to show you my new coop built following photos from other members. I have 2 bantam hens and 4 chicks. One trick I used which I have done before with rabbit hutches is that I build two opposite walls inside out with the uprights on the outside and then use build the other wall on the outside, this way I don't have any ledges to clean on the inside. The floor goes right up to the wall with a clean interface. Oh, I build the floor before adding the walls. I used a piece of branch we pruned off my plum tree for a roost. Will see how it works. Cheers, Evelyn



Guinea Fowl

A Guide To Raising Guineaas

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

Kelly : Hi Gina, I love reading your newsletter.. My husband and I are new with chickens and your newsletter has been a great source. I love seeing pics so I wanted to share a few of my own. We got 12 red pullets from Tractor Supply on April 3rd of this year. They have brought so much enjoyment for us.



I am attaching a photo of the back of the coop that my husband, Jay, designed. Two wide doors that house removeable nesting boxes for easy cleaning and hopefully for easy egg removal when the chicks begin egg laying.



I am also attaching a picture of the chicks (as of today at 17 weeks old) side by side coming towards (the camera) the door ready to roam in the yard. I love this picture.



They are 'jumping' chickens.. they love grapes and they jump pretty high to get them..kind of like doggies would.. hahaha. ([click for video](#))

We have a nice size fully enclosed pen to keep the chicks safe as we have coyote, fox and bear in our area (Spotsylvania, Virginia). We allow them to roam while we supervise with our dog Rosie on 'watch'. Their roaming area includes our garden. We have a fire pit nearby that Jay and I will sit by while the 'girls' wander for bug treats.

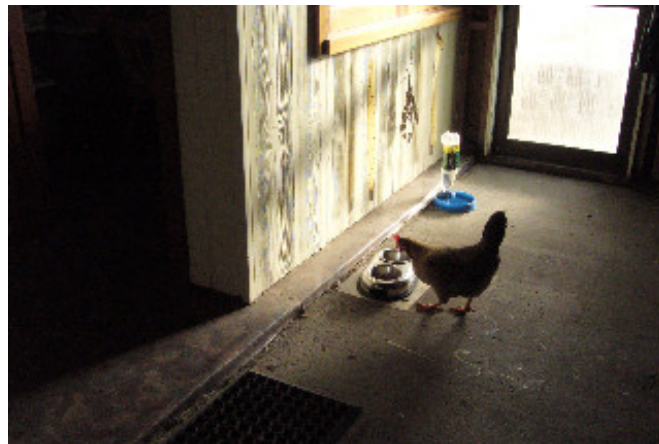


As with other letters I have read in your emails, my husband has grown fond of the chicks too... he was very involved in the coop and pen construction, basically giving me the boot. He has become very protective of the chicks. He even routinely sets up his game cam on the chicks to see if anything is nearby stalking the chicks. He has caught pictures of fox coming up to the pen in the early morning hours. But luckily the girls are very safe thanks to Jay. Thanks for letting me share Gina! Kelly and Jay Faulconer

Karin : I enjoy your newsletter immensely and read it as soon as it arrives. A few days ago our Leghorn/cross Goldie was in the shed, frantically looking for a hiding place. I had seen her before entering and exiting the coop several times, it was time to lay her egg. I decided to provide her with something and here it is:

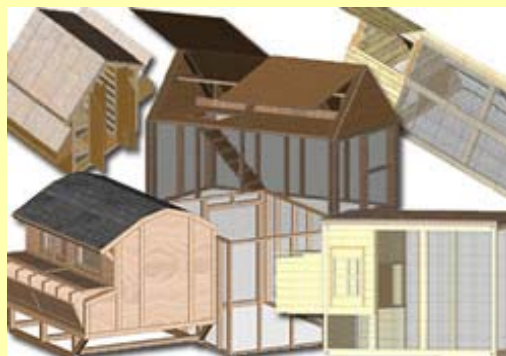


She took to the cat carry case immediately and has not looked back. I suppose it is close to her source of protein, the cat food. She checks the bowls every morning for leftovers.



Chicken Coop Plans

A Collection Of 7 Printable Chicken Coop Plans



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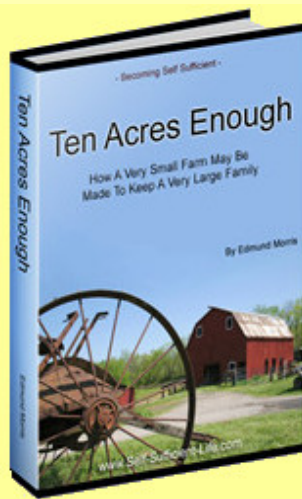
Ann & Wayne : We love this newsletter! It is so helpful for our "chicken business" as our 6 year old grandson calls it. It is not a business, but provides us and our daughter's family with fresh, organic eggs every day and we love it! We started last year with what we thought was 10 day-old females, but one was a 'roo. We had given her the name Betty, but when she began crowing, he became Mr. B! He does not care for males in particular or if anyone is carrying anything in their hand - he takes it upon himself to attack. So no one goes outside the yard into his free range area without a broom for protection. People have said to make him into chicken soup, but we feel it is God's design to have a rooster. We see him protect his ladies, warn them of danger, call them to special treats and just generally be on guard on their behalf. We live on 40 acres with possible danger to chickies, so we appreciate his efforts! We do not want to kill him just to make it more convenient for us.



We wanted to respond to Renea that was having trouble with her eggs cracking when the hen layed on hard wood because the bedding was pushed out. Ours push their fresh straw out all the time, so we cut squares of thick cardboard and put into each nest box. This softens the fall of the egg and if a mess is ever made from a broken egg, we just toss it out and replace with a fresh piece of cardboard. And, we wanted to respond to Mari, with her chicks all wanting the same nest box. We also had that problem until we went to the craft store and bought wooden eggs. We marked them with a marker to easily identify them when gathering eggs and put one in each nest box. Now the girls look to see if there is an egg in the box and when there is - they go right in and lay theirs. Now all our eggs are divided equally between the nest boxes!



One of our Buff Orpingtons went broody this last spring and she hatched 2 babies (Ginger and Abby) and they are being raised by Priscilla, their Mom. Thanks for a great newsletter! Ann & Wayne



Ten Acres Enough

How A Very Small Farm May Be Made To
Keep A Very Large Family

Ten Acres Enough is a self-sufficiency classic written by Edmund Morris, and is his personal story of his journey from city businessman to farmer. In this book Edmund details the first 3 years of his 'back to the land' experience and explains honestly what worked for him and what did not.

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