

Keeping Chickens Newsletter

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www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com



June 2011
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

Robert : Creep feeder for chicks - Starter crumbles are too high in protein for layers and layer pellets are too high in calcium for chicks. A milk carton or 2X4 welded wire work fine when the chicks are small enough but they soon outgrow both. A creep feeder made with 8 X 8 X 16 cement blocks with a waterproof lid will work until the chicks are weaned if the hens are large enough to find the holes in the blocks impassable. The layer pellets can be hung out of reach of the chicks. This sounds too simple to deserve this space but I wish someone had shared this with me way back when. Robert Bradford. SW MO, USA

Christina : As usual, thanks for the entertaining and informative newsletter. We had four hybrids 2+ something years ago and have enjoyed them immensely. We lost two to illness in the last two weeks (unrelated, thankfully). So today, we went to the Staffordshire County Show (in the UK) and bought four more from the same breeder from whom we had our first ones. The breeders were quick to reassure us about our recent losses and said the warren had lived over a year longer than expected, so we were a little comforted. The speckledy had a heart problem and in both cases the end came quickly. Some sad days, but outweighed by the happy lives they'd led and the enormous pleasure we'd had from them. Our new girls are settling in well and will hopefully join Bluebelle and Nesta in a couple of days. We got two light sussex cross, and two more warrens (brown, everyday-but-beautiful hens). So far we've named the warrens Beryl and Brenda and one of the sussex's, Priscilla (as she's already Queen of the desert!). Luckily our new neighbours are keen on hens so six will be manageable in urban Stafford! Thanks again for all the info, Best wishes, Christina

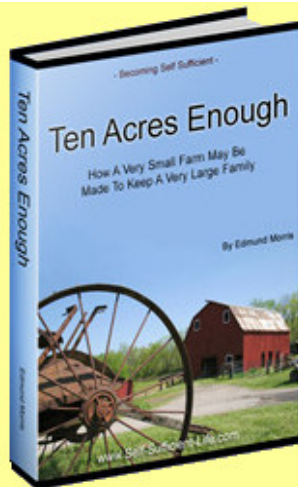
Ren : Recently one of our 3 girls was mauled by a raccoon, a sad experience for all of us. Her body was lying in the next door neighbor's yard. The reason for her death was one of the most preventable causes: the coop door was shut, but not locked. Just a reminder to all of you to close chickens in at night!

Graham : We get our hens food in strong paper bags which ideal for storage of veg and fruit. After a little simple research found that shop bought pots and veg and fruit last up to 2 weeks when taken from the plastic bags bought in and put in the paper bags that the hen corn come in. They are reusable just shake out any dry soil and ready to be used again. I use the plastic bags to buy the non packed item either in the shops or farmers market and the farmers are always happy for the saving. It may be one bag each time but it's a start From little acorns mighty oak tree grow. As always great read and help from all yours Graham



Pam : Perhaps a reminder about the heat. We lost sweet Etta Fay this week. The heat was intense and we discovered her egg bound, trying to lay her egg. Sweet girl actually moved the other eggs out of the nesting area so she wouldn't break them while she struggled. The heat added to her demise I'm sure. We've increased the amount of water and turned the coop to maximize the shade from the tarps we added. Squirted everyone down with a shower from the hose too. Thanks so much for your newsletter. Pam from Moyock, NC

~~ *I have a few tips for keeping cool in hot weather here:*
<http://successwithpoultry.blogspot.com/2008/06/tips-to-keep-your-chickens-cool.html>
If anyone has any other good tips we'd love to hear them ☺ ~~



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; how he selected the land, what he chose to grow, the animals he raised, planning and managing his fully stocked kitchen garden and the layout of his fields. He also passes along many tips for planting and growing his selection of fruits and vegetables as well as sharing his experiences with cows, pigs and chickens. He explains honestly what worked for him and what did not.

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Keith : Just a quick note to say thanks for the news letters, you are doing a great job. I have enclosed a picture of a rooster, who came to me as a pullet. I don't think he was a pullet. Any idea what type of rooster he is? Thanks again.

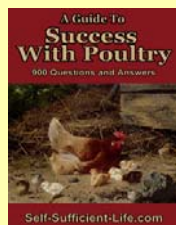


Dionne : after seeing how well Collies and chickens seem to get on in your recent newsletter, I thought I'd send in this pic of my collie 'guarding' my pekings and silkie bantams. Aren't they adorable? Hardy Ha Ha, and the bottoms of Iris, Tubbs and Chloe.

Dionne, Gloucestershire, UK.



Christina : I too am grateful for and enjoy your newsletter. I have learned a lot and have used many tips from you and your readers. I never thought I'd be a chicken rancher, but here I am! We are still in our first year of owning a small flock of city chickens and this spring our littlest bantam went broody. It was wildly exciting for our whole family and what a learning experience. By the looks of things, another girl has just gotten the bug to sit on eggs. I didn't know owning chickens was like owning bunnies – one turns into twenty very quickly! Attached are two photos of one of our new chicks taken by my daughter. I thought they were just too cute not to share. Cheers! Christina Kline



Success With Poultry

Practical Advice on Eggs, Feeding, Chicks, Housing, Diseases, Incubators and Brooders, Turkeys Ducks and Geese

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Sunnie : Hi, Gina, I'd like to show you my chickens and coop that my husband built. My chicks are two months old here and come a runnin' when I call "Here chicky chicky chicky!" We have a cat and a dog and they all get along. My dog will even help me herd them; it's hilarious. Thank you for your newsletter. Sunnie, Santa Cruz, CA





Sooz : I live in Burbank, middle of the city. I got my 1st hen as a rescue (from becoming lunch for a python) then got another 3. Unfortunately, 1 turned out to be a rooster and had to find him a new home. Made the coop almost all from recycled wood, only had to buy the top beam (2x8x12) and to keep it mobile, bought the 4 wheels (at \$12 ea but they're quality and hold the weight). A guy I knew did the carpentry.

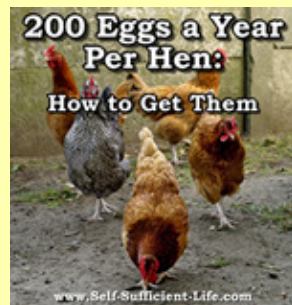


My 3 hens love it. I put down a 3"-4" layer of wood shavings and I lay newspaper over where they perch at night. Change the newspaper daily and this keeps the coop very clean. All 3 have chosen only 1 nest box to lay in although there are 3 and take turns every day. We usually get an egg from each of

them. We let them out at 6AM, they roam the backyard all day and return to the coop when the sun starts to set all by themselves. Even tho' we're right in the city, there are a lot of opossums so we make sure to shut the coop with a locking spring latch (opossums are almost as smart as raccoons - and I've seen raccoons around too). The coop has vents at the top that open on each side, each side below the vents opens and the entire back opens. Plus I can move it if I want them in another place at a future time. Only problem is....we're about out of bugs and they really get excited when I let them out to look for new ones in the front yard - but only supervised bug hunting and only for as long as mom can keep busy too.



Rob : A friend told me about your newsletter. Wow, it's great. I'm busy reading all the back issues. One of our hens (a Buff Orpington named Lucy) hatched a couple of Chicks for the first time. I think the first Chick is a Light Sussex from our other hen. She has a second (Buff Orpington?) and we are waiting to see do any more hatch.



200 Eggs a Year

Chicken Care Guide

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Irene : Hi Gina, This is the first time I've written to you. I got my girls round about the beginning of March. We live in North East England. I got them from a farm that had several different breeds. Henrietta is a French Maran, Harriette is a cream leghorn and Claudia is a Light Sussex. Two of the girls have been laying eggs regularly for me but Harriette hasn't laid an egg yet. All the girls are very cheerful and healthy looking. I feed them on layers pellets and fresh greens when I can get them, they also get a slice of bread between them as a treat morning and evening. They have a small run and I'm enclosing a picture. I'm very happy with my ladies. They are very entertaining. They have free ranged around the garden before I put in my vegetables and once they've been harvested they will be free ranging again. Also, any ideas how I can get them to accept me a little more. They come over as soon as they see me, but I'm not really allowed to touch and I'd love to be able to pick them up and give them a cuddle. Many thanks for the newsletter. Best wishes. Irene

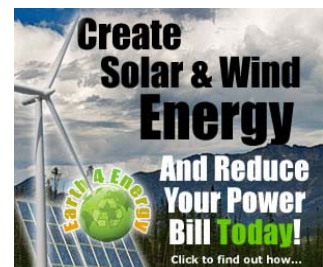


My Reply : *Food is usually the best way to tame your chickens ☺ Some breeds are naturally more friendly than others so it can take a bit of time to build up the trust. Just gently be near them, no sudden movements and throw a few treats to them. Then over a few days (or however long it takes for them to feel comfortable) the treats can be closer to where you are and eventually you may find some (or all) will happily eat out of your hand and allow you to stroke and handle them. Sitting on the floor while you do this can be helpful as it allows them to come to you when they are ready rather than you having to reach down to stroke them or pick them up.*

Carol : Thank-you again for your newsletter. I really enjoy reading all of the articles. I have to admit I'm hooked on my chickens. We've had them for 3 years now and haven't had any problems so far with predators. Our coop is a small 8 X 8 foot coop which we can walk into and it has 2 doors, one on each end of the coop for ventilation and so they can go to our 3 runs we built. Our first run was built with ½" hardware cloth and we buried the fence into the ground about a foot. I read a lot of books and am glad we spent the extra money and took the extra time and effort to secure our babies. Our coop is surrounded by fence and a single gate leading into the main run, and most of our runs are also capped on the top with wire, so hawks can't get them. I love our little rooster. He is so smart and such a good little fellow. It is so wonderful to watch him interact with the hens. He has all different sounds and they know what his sounds mean. He has a short cackle which means...come here, I found food, and he lets them eat as he stands watching them. They even take food right out of his mouth at times. I can't pick up many of my birds as they are rather shy, but if they think I have some food for them they'll follow me all around the yard! They have been trained to know the sound of a plastic bag and that means treats! Yesterday we let our hens out in the yard to explore and one hen was left in the coop and she was cackling up a storm. Our little rooster took off towards her and circled around her with a low growl as if to tell her that she needed to be by him! There is such great dynamics with chickens and anyone who doesn't have them or who doesn't take the time to watch them is missing out on a wonderful creation. Below is a picture of my little rooster and a few of his hens



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Dawn: Last week I lost 3 hens to a large predator. Unfortunately I was unable to contact the Department of Game and Fish until Monday morning and that meant I had to get through the next night on my own. Sure enough the "menace" returned on Sunday night. I had placed my trash out (as normal) hoping that it would provide a distraction and a warning. It worked! The neighbor's dogs went nuts when they heard the ruckus and one ran to just under my bedroom window to alert me. I plugged in the spotlight I had rigged and yelled and grunted at the intruder I spotted. A very large black bear. The game warden came and set a trap and a few days later we captured this picture.



I am also including a pic of my guardian... she doesn't look so intimidating here but helped me scare off a BIG bear! (and we now call the bear Yogi because he has outsmarted the trap and escaped twice) Hopefully he will be relocated soon.
Dawn Tijeras, New Mexico





Christy : I finally got some photos taken of our new coop. We have 4 hens and 1 rooster right now; a Welsummer, a Salmon Faverolle, a Silkie, and a little white bantam of some kind...the Frizzle is the Rooster. My husband and I spent 5 weekends building it.



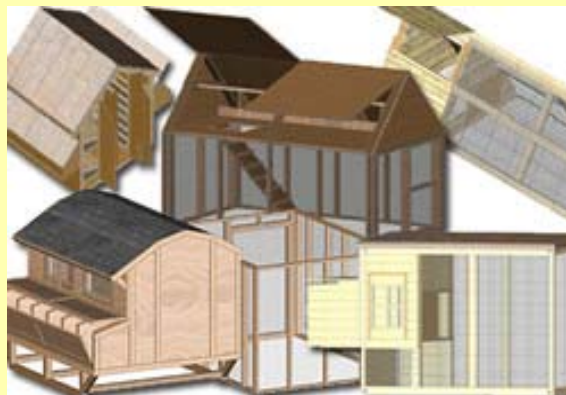
We spent about \$500 on the whole venture. We intended on painting it a dark vineyard green, but ended up with the grassy green you see on it now. It was

certainly not the color we had hoped for but it is growing on us. I started collecting junk to decorate it. Enjoy! Christy & Trent Lochridge



Chicken Coop Plans

A Collection Of 7 Printable Chicken Coop Plans



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