

Keeping Chickens Newsletter

If you know anyone who may enjoy this newsletter please let them know that they can subscribe at:

www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com



November 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

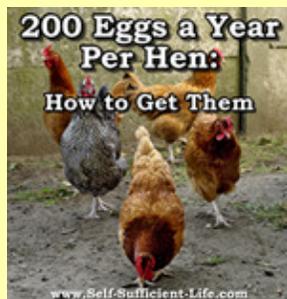


Jared : My chickens guarding the property from three rogue deer....



Pauline : Hello Gina I would just like to thank u and all your readers for answering my question. They all turned out to be boys so they went off to Brigg farmers market.

Thank you again look forward to the next newsletter. Regards
Pauline



200 Eggs a Year

Chicken Care Guide

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)



Christy and Patrick : Saying of the day. “Hey Ma.....SEE it SAYS 30 on the invoice, do ya think they sent 5 roosters for warmth or as freebies?”

Brenna : Question for you - my very naughty dog caught one of my almost year old barred rock hens this weekend. She has a wound above her left shoulder. She is doing fine otherwise, I treated her with some homeopathics for Trauma/Stress and she bounced right back. She is eating, grazing with the others and still laying and egg a day. As far as the wound her feathers are covering it so none of the others know it is there, so they are not pecking at her. I remember as a kid my mom had a deep blue/purple spray she would put on the chickens when they got injured. This is was maybe an antibiotic of some kind. Mom can't remember what it was or where she got it. Any ideas or suggestions would be GREAT. Yes, the dog is grounded and is no longer allowed outside her fenced in back yard. Thanks, I appreciate any assistance you may be able to provide.

My Reply : *I'm not sure if it would be the same product your mum used but there is an antiseptic/anti peck spray called blue kote which is blue and for healing wounds and preventing pecking (the blue colour disguises any red/blood which would normally attract pecking). It (and similar products) can often be found stocked in feed stores etc. but you may also be able to purchase it online.*



Jodie : I am Jodie from Australia. I was reading your November 2011 Vol 1 newsletter and saw the photos from *Pam Rampmaier*. I am so jealous. I would love to have a coop as big and gorgeous. I have a small back yard. We have a pool and small grassed area about the same size as the pool. With a Great Dane in the yard whose urine kills the grass and a very house proud husband something had to give.....so the grass had to go and we got imitation grass. His heart is in the suburbs and mine the land. With Marriage there is compromise. I got my chooks (the Dane is mine too) I get a small area of the back yard I can do as I please. The area would be 5 metres by 1 metre (very small indeed). Pam you are a very lucky lady 1. to have a husband who would make it for you and 2. to have such a fabulous coop. This is a photo of my dane and Penny the braver chicken. They free range on the retaining wall as it is the only garden in the yard. They are happy there as they are the same height as the dog.



How To Make A Poultry House and Run

Traditional Poultry Ark and Run design.

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

Chicken Rearing 101

Your Complete Guide to How Not to Raise Chickens

By Nola Kelsey

Capon: A castrated male used for meat. [How much could that yield?]

Pullet: A female chicken under one year old.

Hen: A female chicken over one year of age

Rooster: A male chicken over one year of age.

Raising Chickens for the first time can be intimidating. When I first called the Feed Shop, I was trying to sound like a pro. I asked, "Do you sell pullets?" "Yes", the man replied. "Are they all females?" It's been an uphill battle ever since.

Pullet parenthood is as much of an adventure as child rearing, only with more feces per pound of body weight. However, I've been reading quite a bit on poultry matters. [Yes, my coolness just turned over in its grave.] So if I am correct and I am quite certain I am not, here is how chicken rearin' goes.

Go to your local feed store and purchase \$10 worth of chicks and \$50 worth of food and supplies. Don't forget the water dispensers. Buying the metal ones, never plastic is always advised. Must be country humor. I have yet to see a metal one.



Next, place the chicks somewhere sheltered, like a bedroom closet. Toss in some highly flammable straw or wood shavings and promptly dangle a glowing heat lamp just above them.

Note to self: Update homeowner's policy.

For the next several weeks feed them 3 lbs of food per day and remove 4 lbs of sh*t per day from the closet. Despite all logic the birds get bigger. As the adult feathers grow in be sure to clip one of their wings. That is one per bird, not just one wing total. If clipping is done late chicks will nest in your toilet. This is a bad thing.

Clipping can be accomplished by tossing your scissors and your body into the heaping mound of chicks, feces and straw. Grab a wiggling screeching bird from

the bile pile. Restrain it with one hand. Stretch the wing out with your second hand. Clip off 50% of the wings outer ten feathers with your third hand.

As the birds grow adjust the heat light temperature down by one degree per day. No, this is not actually possible. That's not my point. You start at 100 degrees for hatchlings then continue down by one degree per day until your bedroom is a minimum of three degrees cooler than the spring blizzard outside your window.

Once you have frozen your ear to your semi-cannibalistic down pillow and the chicks have grown their adult feathers, they can be moved outside to the coop. I estimate the initial closet rearing stage to have taken five years.

Before the move, experience the Joy of Wing Clipping one more time. Feather clipping never works the first time. No one knows why. Still, after all the hassle you probably don't want them to fly the coop in under sixty seconds. Of course, if you're like me, by this time you may be inclined to pack them each a lunch and leave a stack of Greyhound tickets by the open coop gate.



Regarding habitat construction: Hen houses and chicken coops are a competitive art form. There are a myriad of websites showing off architectural designs from Chicken Chateaus to Bird Bordellos. The meticulous craftsmanship makes my own home look like - well - like a chicken coop.

Always fashionable, I went with a shabby chic motif for my coop. The nesting boxes are an eclectic mix of stolen milk crates affixed to the wall by anything in arms reach. As for the coop itself, there is a gift for tight chicken wire which

eludes me. Quite frankly, my first attempt at a coop looks like Dr. Seuss dropped a hit of acid, blasted some Jefferson Starship and rolled around on the wire with every Who in Whoville. I think I'll keep it.

Inferior design aside, I ultimately learned a thing or two. The nesting boxes are supposed to be up off the ground. That is correct. For those of you keeping score you just spent two weeks cutting back the birds flight feathers only to hang their houses in the sky. It's just sick.

Higher than the nest boxes, you are to build a roost. This is where the birds crap at night so they do not crap on your breakfast eggs. Of course the roost is usually OVER the nesting boxes, so whatever you do, don't use those perforated plastic milk crates.

For young birds maintain a heat light in the hen house. Then on cooler nights an animal with a brain the size of a bulimic toe nail clipping will make the conscious decision to forgo your nest boxes, bypass the instinctual roost and leap into a tanning bed.

And finally there is the feed regime. I asked several experts and read up on feeding as well. Make sure to give your chickens starter formula, mash, growth formula, start & grow, brood formula, grit, no grit, scraps, no scraps, goat placenta, nothing suggested on the internet, tetramycin, no antibiotics, medicated starter, non-medicated starter and never, ever switch in-between.



I may not be Queen of the Coop yet, but I'm working on it. Though I am a zoologist and I still know Birds 101. Here are two myths I can help with. First, you do not need a rooster to get eggs. Most folk, especially those who have never owned chickens, will advise you on chickens. Each will insist you need a rooster for a while to do his manly duties. Then you can slip him in the pot. As appealing as this concept is, your pot is a separate issue.

Roosters are only needed to make fertile eggs. Hens are all that is needed to make breakfast eggs. Fertile eggs are just peachy if raising chicks was such a joy the first time you want to repeat the whole freakin' process. In addition there is always the risk of breaking a fertilized egg open and finding a 50% formed chick fetus hitting your hot skillet. Yum! Years of therapy will follow.

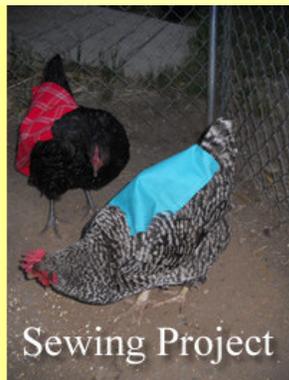
To keep it straight in your mind consider this: You are going about your life. Suddenly massive balls of calcium start stacking up inside your abdomen. Are you going to hold on to them just because you have not had sex lately?



The second bird myth is totally unrelated so I thought I would mention it. Penguins occur in nature from the Equator on Southward. That is down to the Antarctica, not the Arctic! No, they do not hang out with Polar Bears who live in the Arctic. No, you did not see them when you worked in Alaska, in the Arctic. Those were puffins. No, I am not sorry you look stupid to all those folks you told penguin tales to.

Yes, some penguin species even reside on the Galapagos Islands at the equator (Cold weather would kill them), not floating around on icebergs - and not in the Arctic! Yes, I realize my eggs are not all in one basket. Delusional, close-minded people who insist you need a rooster to fertilize your penguin eggs so polar bears won't lose their food supply drove me crazy!

Satirist Nola L. Kelsey is the author of Bitch Unleashed: The Harsh Realities of Goin' Country & coauthor of the wicked political/self-help, satire Keeping the Masses Down. Both are available everywhere fun books are sold. More of Nola's work may be read at: www.NolaKelsey.com



How To Make A Hen Saddle

Simple Sewing Project

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS](#)

Sewing Project



~~ Free To A Good Home ~~

Hello from Lin in Lancaster/Millersville area in Pennsylvania.

I've hatched too many Seramas and space is limited....I would like to give away at least one. Here's a pic of "Peggy" (thought he was a hen, name stuck!) He's 5 mo. old. Free ONLY to a good home. Pickup only...Would consider adding hen, too, if I'm assured they will be loved. Thank you much!

Sally Bailey : We've been keeping chickens which we rescue as ex-bats for years in sunny Sussex. Just recently someone told us we should not throw our lawn grass clippings into the large area that they roam in as it will stick in their gullets and kill them!!! Whilst this has never happened in all the years we've been doing it..... (we know they just love scratching through the grass when we chuck it in) – I just wonder if there is any truth in this comment. I will really appreciate your advice please. Keep up the great newsletter. Sally.

My Reply : Unless you use some kind of chemicals on your lawn then grass clippings should be fine. Generally becoming crop bound is a risk with chickens but I don't think it happens that often (egg bound seems to occur more often) and sometimes when it does happen it is because of a malfunction or infection of the crop which can't really be helped. When crop bound does occur because of a manual blockage the most common causes are from things that are long, absorbant, or hard to process such as hay, long grasses, lumps of dry bread and feathers etc. Crop bound is also more likely to happen if there is not enough grit available for them to process their feed. Grass is usually considered a good thing to give nutritionally - especially if they are not in a position to be able to safely free range and pick up their own grass / bugs etc. I don't think it is a particularly risky thing for them to do as enjoying scratching through grass is what they would naturally do if they lived 'wild', but even if it was slightly risky I personally think it may still be worth that risk as I believe giving them things like that which they naturally enjoy as chickens is something that improves their quality of life (especially as ex-bats who may not have previously had the chance to do 'chickeny' things).

Chickens Versus Poultry

By Kate Perkinson Howard

When Jack and Betty first were wed
And settled down in life,
He bought a pretty bungalow
For his pretty little wife.

When they were fairly settled
Down in this cozy spot,
Says Betty, "Let's raise poultry,
There's room in our back lot."

"All right," said Jack, "I'm in for it,
Your idea is charming,
I always felt that I could win
Success at poultry farming.

The poultry show is on this week,
Let's take it in and find
What breed of poultry is the best,
And then we'll buy that kind."

That evening found them at the show;
They were in search of knowledge,
For poultry lore was not a part
Of what they learned in college.

There were Leghorns, brown and white,
And big Rhode Island Reds,
Speckled and Golden Polands
With pompons on their heads.

And Plymouth Rocks, both barred and white
To add to their confusion,
Black Spanish and Wyandottes,
And the Blue Andalusian.

Langshans, Buff Orpingtons and
Dainty Bantams small,
Black Minorcas and Buff Cochins
Were ranged around the hall.

White Brahmas, Blue and Indian Game,
Known to the poultry world;
And fanciers talked of pedigrees,
While glibly they unfurled

The virtues of their favorite breed;
Each told them with a zest,
It mattered not what others said,
His surely was the best.

"O dear! they're all so beautiful,"
Said Betty with a sigh,
"I fear we never can decide
The kind we want to buy."

Jack was sorely puzzled too,
Then he said: "O, the Dickens!
Let's build a chicken coop
And buy a bunch of chickens."



Step by Step chicken coop plans for four different coop designs and sizes - including this midsize chicken coop for up to 4 chickens.

Build Your Own Chicken Coop
[Click Here To Learn More](#)