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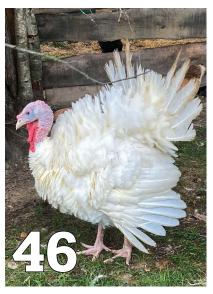
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On The Cover

2025 Coolest Coops winner: Jennifer McClure's "Downhen Abbey" coop.

# Can You Find the Roo?

He looks just like this Roo.



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# Coolest Coops of 2025

Coolest Coops of 2025 issue! We had several submissions, and the race for the top three spots was a tight one. Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to everyone who contributed! I'll be contacting the honorable mention coop owners for your chance to be featured in an upcoming issue in the "Coop Inspiration" section. Until then, you can enjoy reading about the coops included in this issue.

If you're thinking about getting into ducks, remember that ducks need shelter, too. Building a duck coop will give your ducks a safe and comfortable space. Wren Everett shares seven guidelines for building a duck coop, including size, accessibility (for the ducks and people), location, ventilation, and more.

Ducks come in a variety of sizes, ranging from 2 pounds to 15 pounds. Are you looking for a heavy duck breed? Erin Snyder discusses six heavy duck breeds on page 50. Included are Appleyard, Aylesbury, Muscovy, Pekin, Rouen, and Saxony. She focuses on the history, personalities, egg production, and life expectancy, as well as other key details for each breed.

Crop impactions in chickens can cause serious health problems if not treated quickly. An impaction happens when the crop, which stores food, gets blocked by indigestible materials. Spotting the symptoms early is crucial for the well-being of your flock. Erin Snyder discusses the symptoms, prevention, treatment, and more.

Have you ever heard the word "chalazae"? Chalazae are the twisted strands of protein in eggs that hold the yolk in place in the egg white (albumen). Each egg usually has two chalazae, one on each side of the yolk. They help keep the yolk centered and stable, especially when the egg moves. You can easily see chalazae in fresh eggs; they look like white, spiraled strands. They're completely safe to eat and don't change the taste or quality of the egg. To learn more about this essential part of an egg, look for Mark Hall's article on page 24.

If you're going to build or remodel a poultry coop soon, don't forget to snap some pics and jot down building tips so you're prepared for our Coolest Coops 2026 contest!



Ann Tom, Editor

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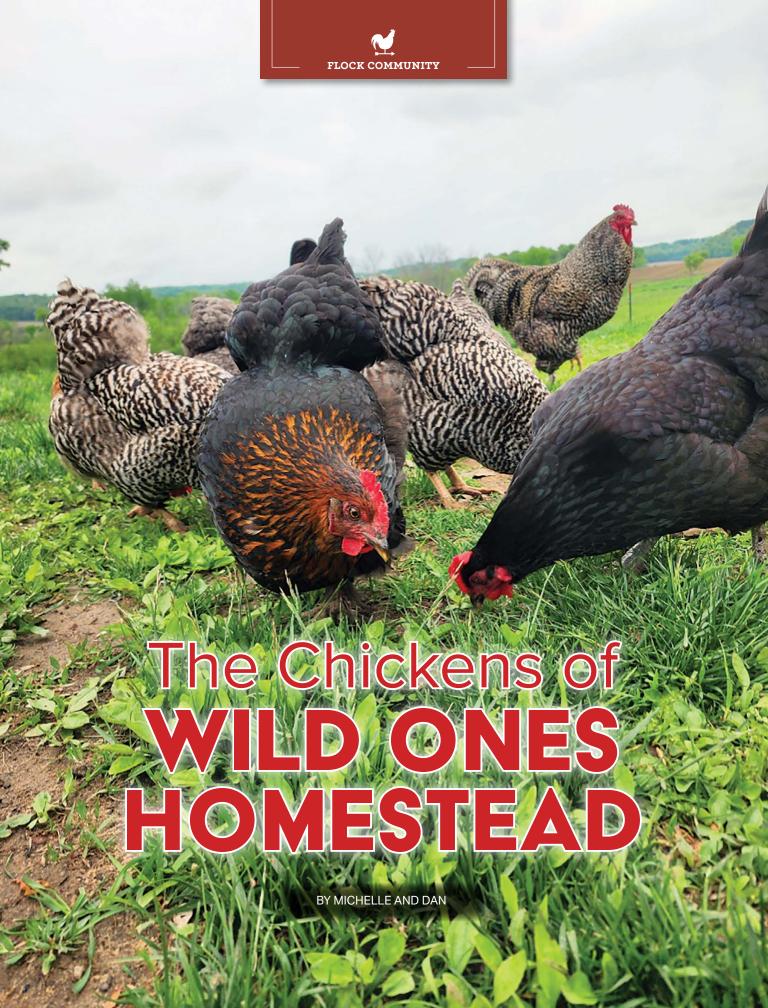
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I'm OFTEN ASKED HOW TO get started with chickens, how to set up a coop, what breeds to choose, etc. I realized the answers depend on the situation. This led to my blog and that quickly turned into a guidebook titled *Getting Started with Chickens:* A No-Nonsense Guide for New and Potential Chicken Owners. The guide covers everything that needs to be considered before jumping into chicken ownership.

Our flock consists of laying hens (several of which are over 5 years old and part of our 'chicken retirement home'), and three roosters. We love keeping good roosters around, as they do a great job of protecting the hens and breaking up any squabbles that they may get into.

We've found that as long as there are plenty of hens for each rooster, and enough space for them to all spread out into their own areas during the day, the roosters get along great. The only time we have issues with them is occasionally for a few weeks in spring when hormones are high, or when there's been an addition or loss to the flock and they need to re-establish the dominance order.

Our breed of choice is the Cochin, not only for their adorable, feathered legs and feet, but because their heavyset bodies prevent them from flying high enough to get into undesirable areas. The hens tend to go broody in the summer, which we enjoy, because they do a great job of hatching out and raising chicks.

All three of our roosters are either Cochin or Cochin-cross. They're very mild-mannered and are easy to be around and work with.

We also keep a few other breeds on hand, mostly for some color variety in the egg basket and for higher egg production rates.

For production, we have Barred Rocks and Golden Comets, as they're great layers and hardy chickens that do well in our climate.

For a fun pop of color, we have Easter Eggers, Olive Eggers, and Welsumers. They give us blue, green, and darker brown eggs with speckles.

Easter Eggers are notorious for getting into everything and seem to enjoy hiding their eggs in the most random places. They're lightweight and can manage to fly. We've had to trim feathers on several of them to keep them out of our barn rafters.

We also have a few barnyard mixes that we've hatched out here, some intentionally and others that the hens have snuck off and hatched on their own. (I'm looking at you, Easter Eggers.)

Daily care of our flock is easy, as they free-range on 60 plus acres. During the warmer months, they forage for most of their food on their own. We supplement their diet with kitchen scraps, and extra produce



from the garden, as well as healthy chicken snacks, such as black soldier fly larvae.

Last year, we installed an automatic solar door on the chicken coop, which has been an excellent improvement, letting them out and locking them up daily. All we need to do is look out the window and make sure it opened in the morning or closed at night. It takes the pressure off from 'I need to get home to lock the chickens up' at night, or worrying about it first thing in the morning, especially when we have farm sitters here.

Free-ranging has benefits beyond reducing the feed bill. Chickens are an excellent tick and pest control, and do a great job trimming the grass in the backyard, cutting down how often we have to mow. They also help break down the manure piles in the cow and horse pastures.

We keep a Great Pyrenees livestock guardian dog that helps guard the chickens from predators. Because of this, we've had very little loss due to predators, which is always a concern with chickens, free-ranging or not.

We've trained the chickens to come when we call them by always having treats for them. They can be anywhere on the property, and when I call, they come running.

The biggest downside we've noticed to free-ranging, other than the very rare predator loss, is that some of the chickens really enjoy hiding their eggs all over the property. We have a daily egg hunt to make sure all of them are gathered so that none go to waste.

Also, being free-range, they're around wild birds, which occasionally ends up with exposure to lice and mites. We make sure to regularly check the whole flock and treat them as necessary. Luckily, there are many products on the market to help with that, some not even requiring an egg withdrawal period.

Chickens are an important part of our homestead, and we're looking forward to many years of fresh eggs, daily egg hunts, and the occasional batch of surprise chicks. ●

Visit Wild Ones Homestead on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok.

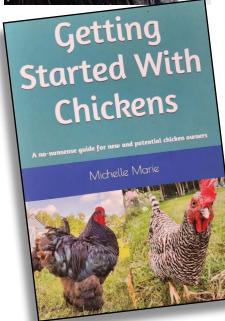
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# POULTRY NEWS

BY KENNY COOGAN

In "Poultry News" we share poultry stories of the current, odd, fun, and important.

If there are stories that you'd like us to cover, or want to share with us, please email editor@backyardpoultrymag.com.

#### Quail Egg-Based Supplements in Allergic Rhinitis: A Systematic Review of Clinical Studies

In the journal *Nutrients*, a recent paper on quail egg-based supplements and their use in allergic rhinitis was published. Lead researcher, Dr. Michele Antonelli, from Private Practice for Evidence-Based Integrative and Preventive Medicine, in Cavriago, Italy, spoke to *Backyard Poultry*.

"Our recent paper, 'Quail Egg-Based Supplements in Allergic Rhinitis: A Systematic Review of Clinical Studies,' looked at specialized supplements made from homogenized quail eggs (and zinc), processed in a specific way to preserve their active components. These aren't your average breakfast eggs; simply eating quail eggs from the homestead, especially if cooked, is unlikely to produce the same effects we observed in clinical trials with these supplements."

That said, it's fascinating to see how ingredients derived from smallscale poultry can have potential health applications.

"For your readers with a few birds, it isn't necessarily a call to start downing more eggs, but it does highlight the hidden value and versatility of what they're already raising. Just a reminder: When it comes to health, it's essential that individuals seek proper medical advice before making changes based on supplements or dietary trends,

especially those involving allergies or immune responses," Dr. Antonelli says.

"Our literature review analyzed five clinical studies investigating quail egg-based supplements (QES), combined with zinc, as an integrative treatment for allergic rhinitis. Results showed that QES can improve nasal airflow, reduce common allergy symptoms like congestion and sneezing, and may even decrease the need for standard allergy medications. The supplement works by modulating immune responses and inflammation, and was generally well-tolerated with only mild, rare side effects; however, QES should be avoided in patients with egg allergies."

In their introduction, the researchers write, "Seasonal respiratory allergies, most commonly manifesting as allergic rhinitis, affect millions of individuals worldwide, causing a range of symptoms that can significantly diminish these individuals' quality of life."

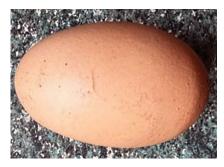
To read the full study, visit https://PubMed.ncbi.nlm.nih. gov/40005039

#### Clues and cues in a Japanese quail egg: What individual variable parameters can be used to identify the hen that laid it?

In a recent study published in *Biosystems Engineering*, researchers from the United Kingdom, Ukraine, and Russia discuss the relationship

between the hen and her eggs. Below is their correspondence to *Backyard Poultry*:

"The relationship between a laying hen and the egg she's laid sometimes conceals a simply mystical correlation.







It seems that the mother bird can impart to the egg a "personal signature" of parameters that'll provide the best conditions for the developing embryo. Apparently, with such 'foresight,' she compensates for the possible adjustment that mammals provide to the embryos developing inside their bodies during gestation, through nutrition, behavioral characteristics, and/or pregnancy conditions.

"Our research was conceived as a kind of detective investigation, the purpose of which would be to identify the presence of morphological features of the quail egg that would allow us to establish that it belongs to its mother. As a result, we concluded that such a parameter is the ratio of the surface area to the volume of the egg. This index is extremely important for development of the future chick, including the timing of its incubation, and can serve as an indirect indicator of the level of embryonic metabolism.

"That is, the quail, through some manipulations, manages to give the egg a shape that would ensure evenness of this criterion, regardless of its size.

"What can farmers take from this finding? If you have more than one bird in your backyard and have several eggs laid by them, some of which are supposed to be eaten and the rest



Darren K. Griffin with his backyard hen. The chicken is called "Pogba" after the footballer Paul Pogba. Darren's son named her because he thought she could say her own name.



Rick Kleyn visiting a small-scale broiler producer in Zimbabwe (note the bed in the chicken shed, where the woman sleeps to better look after her charges).

put into the incubator, select the ones similar in size for incubation, thereby ensuring the evenness of their embryonic metabolism levels. Or, if the differences in egg sizes are extremely large, perform the mathematical calculations described in the article and, in accordance with them, select eggs of different sizes, but having similar values of this index. We can provide a small program for you to input some simple measurements like egg length or maximum breadth to get your answer and a brief description of what to do with the data you obtain."

By Valeriy G. Narushin, Michael N. Romanov, and Darren K. Griffin

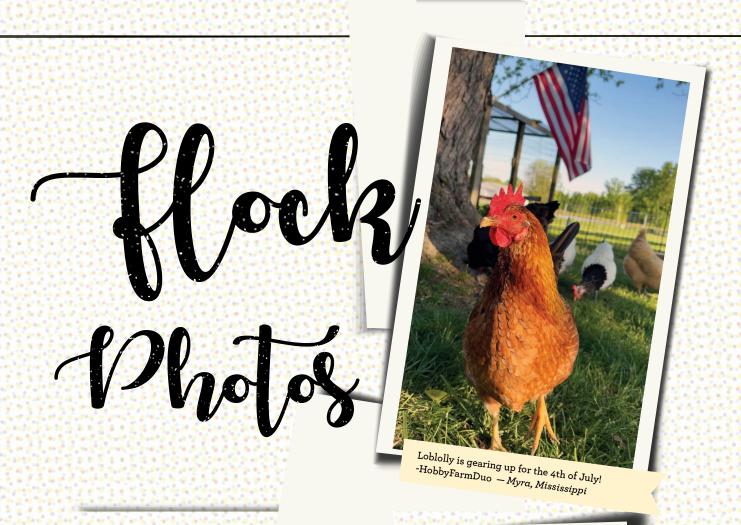
#### **Putting Sustainable Poultry Production Into Perspective**

Rick Kleyn, a researcher in South Africa, published a paper in

World's Poultry Science Journal, on the potential relationship between sustainability and poultry production. Here's his note to Backyard Poultry readers:

"Small-scale poultry farmers can potentially be the most sustainable poultry producers of all. Most of the criteria for sustainability are met. The birds enjoy an environment where welfare is good, while their owners benefit from the nutrient-dense animal products produced. The environmental footprint of small farmers is low by comparison, and they're able to use locally sourced feed and even alternative ingredients (such as fly larvae), which further reduces the CO2 demand. Lastly, small-scale poultry producers are, at worst, cost-neutral, but most even make a small profit." ●

**KENNY COOGAN** earned a master's degree in Global Sustainability and co-hosts the Mother Earth News and Friends podcast, which can be enjoyed at *MotherEarthNews.com/Podcast*. He also hosts and created the television show *Florida's Flora and Fauna with Conservationist Kenny Coogan*. To learn more about that program, visit www.FloridasFloraAndFauna.com.





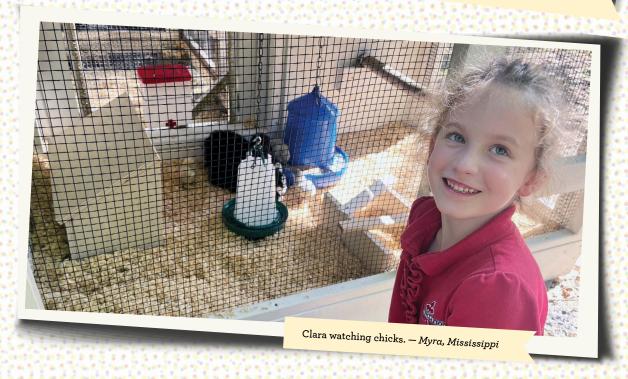
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Clara (age 7) watching over the chicks. — Myra, Mississippi



# Do You Have Something to Crow About?

#### We want to hear from you.

Send questions, comments, opinions, advice, upcoming events, etc. to: *Backyard Poultry Editor*, 1503 SW 42nd St, Topeka, KS 66609 or email editor@backyardpoultrymag.com.



#### In Response to "Is it Folly to Save Late-Hatched, Weak Chicks? (April/ May 2025 issue)

Thank you for your recent article. It's refreshing to hear someone with the same views about trying to save every egg and chick. Some of the well-intentioned people's stories of saving a weak or crippled bird and what a wonderful quality of life it has makes me cringe. Nature isn't for the weak and I wish more people understood that.

from another one, and *that* one is about eight yards from another three.

They crow incessantly all day long. One starts and, like you said, they all go off. They're outside, no shelter, and almost no human contact, although people do walk by them daily.

There are no hens around, and they're never let out of their cages. Can you tell me why they crow all day long (and yes, they start about 4 a.m.).

Thank you for your time,

Kerry,

Thanks for your email. My first thought is why would your neighbor be so cruel to treat animals that way? Excess roosters should be either humanely killed and eaten or rehomed ... not be put in cages. I'd call your local government and report this individual. Hopefully there are some ordinances of some sort ... animal cruelty or noise nuisance? As to why those roosters crow all day, my only thought is, what else is there to do?

Good luck.

Kerry F.

Bruce

David

# Why Do Roosters Crow All Day?

Hi Bruce and Elaine (Ingram), I searched "why would caged roosters crow all day long" and your article came up: www.Grit.com/Crowing-Rooster. I read it with interest and saw that you had an email, so I thought I'd ask you directly.

My neighbor has eight roosters, and they're all in their individual cages. Two are about 25 yards away

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# Experts



Audra Trosper

Ana Skemp



#### **DEAD CHICKEN**

I found a dead chicken in our chicken run today. There doesn't seem to be any sign of injury. Predators don't have access to the run unless something is squeezing through the narrow areas between posts. I suppose it could be a mink; we do have them in our area. But I'm not noticing any bite marks or injuries. I'm guessing that she might have flown off in a startled panic and knocked herself out or broken her neck on a roosting bar in the run or one of the walls or the coop itself.

I'm just wondering if you might have any ideas. I'm noticing a lot of scruffiness to all my chickens. They seem to be molting again. They just molted in the fall. So, I'm wondering if there's some illness going around, but I'm too new to chicken tending to have any idea what that might be.

Sally Robison

Good morning, Sally.

If they're scruffy, you need to check for mites and lice. These can cause feathers to be damaged and anemia in your birds. As far as the one that dropped dead, you might take a fecal sample to your vet (or learn to do fecals) to check for internal parasites. Your vet can also perform a necropsy to determine the cause of death in your hen, which can be important to the future health of your flock. Given that their feathers have a scruffy look, I would think you're looking at a parasite issue.

I hope this helps,

Audra

#### **KNEE PROBLEMS**

I have a baby chicken who walks on his knees.

T.W.

First, isolate the chick so the others don't trample it. Since chickens are social creatures, it'll be happiest if it can see other chickens, if that's possible. Very gently, examine the leg and foot for any sign of a break, such as a rough bone or toe that's pointing the wrong direction, for example.

If you find an injury, euthanasia might be the most humane option. If there's not an obvious injury, you could try a brace to straighten the leg and encourage walking on its entirety instead of the knee. Make sure the brace is well-padded, not rubbing, and not too bulky. Monitor closely to make sure the chick can access food and water.

You'd want to see some improvement within a week to 10 days or so, such as quicker movement, a straighter leg, or some willingness to move when you remove the brace to check to make sure it's not rubbing.

It's worth giving it a try, but keep in mind that euthanasia may be the kindest option for this chick.

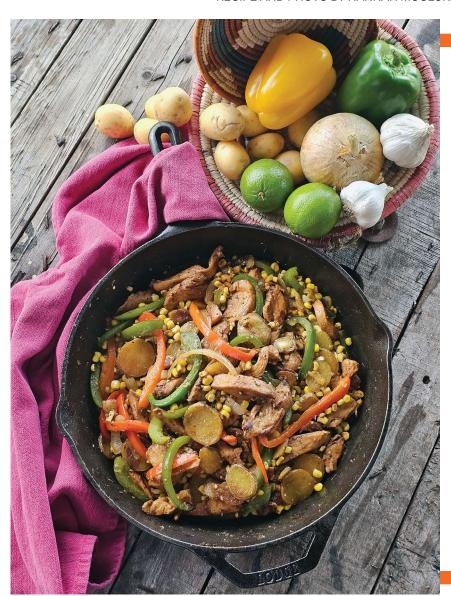
Hope this helps!

Ana



# Southwest Chicken Skillet Dinner

RECIPE AND PHOTO BY HANNAH MCCLURE



GREW UP IN CALIFORNIA with much of my family, who we visited often, in Arkansas. While Southern cooking isn't strictly what I grew up on, it's something I learned from my granny and ate a lot of while growing up.

To this day, I'm not sure if Southern cooking at Granny's made me picky or if I was picky to begin with and her cooking is just what I remember most from the nostalgia of my childhood. Either way, as an adult, Granny has inspired much of my style of cooking and baking. I remember her once telling me that any woman who cooks in cast iron daily will never be anemic. She told me that while I was expecting one of my three boys. Between that comment, the love of a good Southern dish, and my palate for seasoning, this Southwest chicken skillet dinner was born.

My family and I find this dish to be a year-round win, with summer's fresh produce making the dish top-notch. If you love flavorful foods and cooking in cast iron, then this one's for you! No worries if you aren't into cooking with cast iron; you can still make this delicious meal in a skillet of your choice. Seasoning may be adjusted for personal preference as well.

**HANNAH MCCLURE** is an old soul homemaker and mother of four from Ohio. Gardening, keeping bees, sewing, raising chickens and seasonal hogs, and baking and cooking from scratch are a few things she enjoys in her homemaking. She's always learning and always chasing her littles. Find Hannah on Instagram @MuddyOakHennHouse.

#### **INGREDIENTS**

2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast and thighs (if you prefer one over the other, you may use only one) thinly sliced

21/2 tablespoons bacon grease, melted

1½ tablespoons southwest spice blend, divided (see below for recipe)

½ yellow onion, thinly sliced

1 large red bell pepper, thinly sliced

1 small green bell pepper, thinly sliced

2 cups fresh sweet corn, off the cob

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 large Yukon gold potato, diced or round, thinly sliced (about 1/8 inch thick)

3 tablespoons cilantro, freshly-chopped

½ cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded

1 cup Gouda cheese, shredded

Fresh pico de gallo, optional

Juice of 2 limes

In the now-empty skillet, melt the remaining bacon grease. Fry potatoes till cooked through. If needed, add additional bacon grease to prevent sticking. In well-seasoned cast iron, you shouldn't experience any sticking.

Add bell pepper, corn, garlic, and onion and season with ½ tablespoon southwest spice blend. Cook on medium-high heat. Stir frequently until peppers are softened, about 6 to 8 minutes.

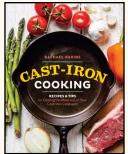
Return chicken to the skillet. Squeeze fresh lime juice over the chicken and veggie mixture. Stir till all is well-mixed.

Remove from heat and top with cilantro and cheese.

Serve alone or paired with cilantro lime rice or brown rice, with pico de gallo on the side. •

# ■ MUST READ!

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#### **Southwest Spice blend**

2 tablespoons chili powder

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper

2 teaspoons smoked paprika

11/2 tablespoons cumin

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1/4 teaspoon onion powder

2 teaspoons sea salt

2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper

½ tablespoon dried rosemary

#### **INSTRUCTIONS**

In a medium bowl, drizzle chicken with ½ tablespoon melted bacon grease and season with 1 tablespoon Southwest spice blend.

In a large skillet, melt 1 tablespoon of bacon grease on medium-high heat.

Cook seasoned chicken until browned and cooked through. Transfer chicken to a plate. Cover with foil to keep hot.



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# NATURAL WAYS TO BOOST EGG PRODUCTION

BY HEATHER LEVIN

over the place this year, it's become even more important to get every last egg we can from our hens. But what if your flock's production has slowed — or seems to have stalled altogether?

Before you start panicking or switching your feed, it's helpful to understand that egg production is a natural rhythm, not an on-demand system. So, we need to look at what affects laying, and how you can support your hens naturally — without adding stress or pushing them beyond what's healthy.

#### What Impacts Egg Production?

If you're new to chicken keeping, you might be surprised to learn that chickens don't lay an egg a day, indefinitely. Throughout the year, several factors can slow or entirely stop egg production.

For example, hens naturally lay less as they get older. Most chickens lay their best during their first 2 to 3 years, with peak production usually happening in the first year. After that, the number of eggs gradually declines, although many hens will continue to lay occasionally for years. Older hens may lay fewer eggs, but they're often larger and just as nutritious.

### Other factors that will impact egg production include:

- ✔ Fewer daylight hours
- ✓ Molting
- ✔ Brooding and raising chicks
- ✓ Stress (from heat, predator attacks, dramatic temperature swings, flock drama, etc.)
- ✓ Illness or parasites
- ✔ Poor nutrition

#### **Naturally Boosting Egg Production**

It's important to point out that there's no "magic bullet" when it comes to getting dramatically more eggs from your hens. We have to work with the ebb and flow of their natural cycles!

That said, there are plenty of things you can do to support your hens' overall health, improve their environment, and limit stress so they can lay to their natural potential, consistently and comfortably.

#### Herbs and Nutrition

One of the best ways to support your hens is to make sure they start out with a solid foundation of good nutrition. And this means purchasing the best quality feed you can afford.

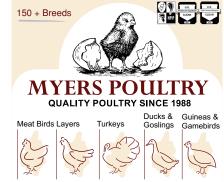
Quality layer feed has the right balance of protein, calcium, and essential vitamins and minerals your hens need to stay healthy and lay consistently. Look for feeds with at least 16% protein and added calcium to support strong eggshells. Ingredients like omega 3 fatty acids, probiotics, and natural herbs are also great bonuses if they're within your budget, as are high-protein treats like mealworms or black soldier fly larvae.

You can also use herbs to add vitamins and minerals to your hen's diet, and gently support egg production.

These include:

- ✓ Parsley (may indirectly support laying)
- ✓ Nettle (rich in minerals and protein)
- ✓ Dandelion (detox + mineral support)
- ✓ Red clover (may help with hormonal balance)
- ✓ Oregano (immune support, especially using the oil)
- ✓ Chickweed (find fresh in spring only, nutritional powerhouse)
- ✓ Calendula (anti-inflammatory, turns yolk a deep orange color)





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Hens can slow or stop laying entirely when they're under stress. So, anything we can do to limit stress will help.

Herbs. Nervine herbs such as lemon balm, chamomile, catnip, and lavender are gentle stress relievers, and can be given fresh, dried, or as a tea. You can also sprinkle these herbs in nesting boxes and around the coop to further create a calm atmosphere for your hens.

**Environmental factors** such as heat can also cause hens to quit laying. Adding herbs like mint and lemon verbena (fresh or dried) to their water during the summer can help mitigate the physical effects of heat stress. On my homestead in Tennessee, I grow a ton of mint just for this purpose. It's blazing hot here half the year, so we use mint constantly to keep our hens cool and laying somewhat consistently during the summer. Adding ice to the water, or freezing water in bottles, can also help lower body temperature during the hottest months.

Another way to reduce stress is to make sure your hens have a safe and enjoyable run to spend time if they aren't able to free-range. Add enrichment to the run with branches and stumps, create hiding places for them to tuck under if they're bullied, put out a kiddie pool filled with leaves for them to scratch through ... think like a chicken and try to make things fun for them!





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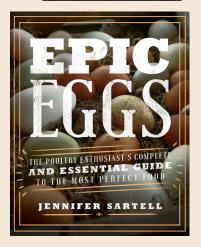
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# MUST READ!



### **EPIC EGGS**

This isn't a typical egg cookbook or guide to raising chickens; *Epic Eggs* takes a deep dive into the eggs themselves and tells you how to raise birds that will produce the best eggs you've ever seen. Illustrated with fantastic color photography of eggs and their birds, *Epic Eggs* goes on to address how to optimize living conditions and diet for the

healthiest and most-flavorful eggs, the process of grading and storing eggs, and the eternal washing debate. There's also discussion of nutrition, baking, cooking, preserving, pickling, and dehydrating. The book ends with advice for homesteaders looking to create business plans and a section on troubleshooting. **Item #8612, \$21.99** 

This title is available by calling: 970-392-4419 or by visiting: *Shop.IAmCountryside.com* 

Use code AUGSEP20 for a 20% discount. (Expires on 9/16/25)

#### **Ease Into Molting**

Hens stop laying entirely once they enter their fall molt, which can take 4 to 6 weeks, or even a few months.

Upping their protein during molt can help them regrow feathers faster, since feathers are made up to 90% protein. Some high-protein snacks that are great to give in the fall include:

- ✓ Canned sardines or tuna
- ✓ Scrambled eggs
- ✔ Black soldier fly larvae, crickets, or mealworms
- ✓ Sunflower or pumpkin seeds

During molt, you can also temporarily switch to a high-protein chick starter, and keep oyster shells out for your flock members that have finished their molt, or haven't yet started.

At the end of the day, there's no quick fix for egg production — and that's okay. Our hens aren't machines, but living animals with changing needs throughout the seasons. By offering good nutrition, reducing stress, and using herbs and natural remedies with care, we help them lay well not just in the short term, but over the course of their entire lives.

Remember, chickens really don't like change. So, whatever you try, introduce it slowly and give your flock time to adjust. With a little patience and care, your hens will reward you with strong, beautiful eggs — and a whole lot of joy along the way.

HEATHER LEVIN is an educator, herbalist, and chicken wrangler of 30+ chickens. She's also the founder of The Backyard Chickens Summit and Chicken Health Academy, a pioneering online learning academy that teaches natural and emergency chicken care strategies. Find out more about her program at www. ChickenHealthAcademy.com.





# The Amazing Chalazae

# A Twisted Tale of Suspense

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY MARK HALL

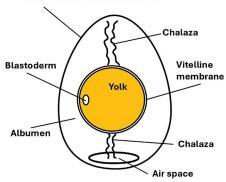
T'S EARLY ON A QUIET Saturday morning, and you're hungry for breakfast. Everyone in the house is still sleeping, so you sneak downstairs to the kitchen. You open the refrigerator door and pull out a carton of farm-fresh eggs. While a pad of butter melts in the skillet, you crack open an egg. Directing its contents onto the sizzling hot surface, you suddenly stop and stare at the raw egg intently. Strangely, peeking out from underneath the dark yellow yolk is something you've never noticed before. It's small (just a few millimeters in length), white, and swirled.

"What's that?" you wonder, making a face. Your stomach begins to turn as your imagination rapidly shifts into high gear. Like some people, you worry that perhaps the egg is fertile and that this twisted little thing is an embryo beginning to incubate. A gag reflex develops as your mind is carried away with common concerns expressed by other hungry egg-lovers observing this enigma for the first time. Maybe this odd little thing is some foreign material or even a wee bit of sperm from the rooster. Highly disturbed, you turn off the burner, dump the egg in the trash, and settle for toast instead.



#### **Egg Anatomy**

Shell and Inner & Outer shell membranes



Don't let this sad ending come to your tasty breakfast when you experience such a close encounter someday, for this often-unnoticed spiral speck is an important part of every poultry egg. It's a chalaza, one of two tiny rope-like structures found on either side of the yolk. Known together as chalazae, the pair tightly hold the lightweight fatty orb in the middle of the egg.

This unique function is critical for the viability of fertilized eggs, because it keeps the embryo, which is developing rapidly on the yolk's surface, securely within the nutrient-rich egg white, or albumen. Here, the tiny new lifeform, also known as a blastoderm, is allowed constant contact with dozens of proteins that are essential for its growth. If not for the strong securing power of the chalazae, the yolk would float away and adhere to the shell. This would result in the death of the blastoderm due to contaminant exposure at the shell's surface.

Although the two individual chalazae appear on opposite sides of the yolk, they do make contact with each other. At the egg's center, both completely encase the yolk's clear, protective tissue, called the vitelline membrane. From there, the two strands extend in different directions—always toward the ends of the egg. Made of thick, gelatinous fibers, one

of them is firmly attached to the large end of the egg. Called the infundibular chalaza, this strand is twisted clockwise, as observed from the yolk, intricately woven together with similar fibers derived from the albumen. The other one, called the clocal chalaza, is fastened to the small end of the egg. It too is interwoven with fibers from the albumen, but the clocal chalaza is longer and bulkier than its counterpart.

Another difference between chalazae is the direction of their twist. When viewed from the yolk, the clocal has a counterclockwise orientation, opposite that of the infundibular. (Weird concept? Attach anything to two opposite sides of a ball and then spin the ball. Both objects will rotate in opposite directions when viewed from each side of the ball individually. One side will rotate in a clockwise direction, and the other side will do so in a counterclockwise direction.) So, in the same way, the opposite directions of twist by the chalazae allow the yolk to spin, stopping when its densest part is at the bottom.

It's significant that the yolk can turn and reposition itself when moved. Consider the setting hen in her nest. Many times per day, she moves all her eggs around. As a result, the yolk spins inside each one, but the lightweight blastoderm always ends up on the top side, near the life-sustaining warmth of her body.

Truly, the chalazae have admirable abilities to nurture and protect the helpless little embryo. Understanding this, you're now likely to see chalazae in a whole new way. It could be that the next time you crack open an egg and notice one of these whirled wonders hanging out with the yolk, you may find yourself becoming perfectly willing to eat it. It is, as I mentioned, made of nutritious protein fibers found in the albumen, after all. Of course, you may still be completely repulsed by it, and that's okay. In any case, whether you nonchalantly whisk it in with the rest of the egg, or you carefully remove it with tweezers and throw it away, you'll have newfound respect for the amazing chalazae, and that's no twisted logic.

#### RESOURCES

Baker, R.C., and Stadelman, W.J. "Chicken Egg Chalazae-Strain and Individual Hen Variations and Their Relation to Internal Quality." *Poultry Science*, May 1958, www.researchgate. net/publication/274659443\_ Chicken\_Egg\_Chalazae-Strain\_ and\_Individual\_Hen\_Variations\_ and\_Their\_Relation\_to\_Internal\_ Quality. Accessed 1 April 2025.

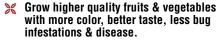
MARK M. HALL lives with his wife, their three daughters, and numerous pets on a four-acre slice of paradise in rural Ohio. Mark is a veteran small-scale chicken farmer and an avid observer of nature. As a freelance writer, he endeavors to share his life experiences in a manner that is both informative and entertaining. You can find him at ThePoultryChronicles.com





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# JAPANESE KINTSUGI

Using Eggshells Instead of Pottery

BY CAPPY TOSETTI PHOTOS BY ELISA SHEEHAN (ELISA SHEEHAN FINE ART)

OR CENTURIES, CHEFS and culinary enthusiasts have prepared delicious dishes made with eggs. Whether it's a savory soufflé or a simple omelet, the humble egg brings great delight to the table.

One wonders who first looked at the broken shards of those eggshells and decided to move them from the kitchen to the studio to form delicate works of art that speak volumes about creativity. There are no barriers to one's imagination when conceiving designs for carvings, lacquer paintings, sculptures, jewelry, mosaics, and more.

Elisa Sheehan, a fine-art botanical painter and illustrator in Saratoga Springs, New York, pondered the question one day when she accidentally spilled a container of eggshells bound for the compost pile. Instead of immediately sweeping them up, she gazed at the different shapes scattered on the floor with curiosity.

One expressive medium that intrigues Elisa is kintsugi, the traditional Japanese art form of repairing broken pottery with lacquer made from tree sap to bond the break, followed by filling the cracks with liquid gold and other precious metals. Instead of abandoning a piece or concealing the break, artists celebrate the idea of highlighting the cracks. The word

kintsugi literally means "join with gold."

*Kintsugi* is a symbol of resilience, healing, and embracing one's imperfections. It's a lesson in life for

discovering strength in one's own brokenness. Like the wisdom of aging, kintsugi reminds us to embrace the willingness of acceptance, no matter how we change along the way.

"I've always loved this Japanese art form," says Elisa, "It calls us to celebrate age, history, and the scars of life. I embrace this as a way in thinking about ourselves, others, and our relationships. It honors the inevitable imperfections of everything we see and might aspire to be, and represents the duality of fragility and strength, beauty and brokenness."

Cradling the broken shards in her hands, Elisa envisioned ways to bring them to life. Before reaching for her paint brush, she knew it was crucial to peel away the inner membrane that lines the shell. She does this by cracking the eggs in half and then soaking



the halves in water. Then she gently separates the two layers. If she doesn't do this, adhesives will stick to the membrane rather than the eggshell.





After soaking, the membrane will have the texture of wet tissue paper. It usually comes apart easily by pulling with one's fingers or rubbing it with one's thumb.

Soaking can take anywhere from an hour to overnight. The longer the soaking time, the easier the task. Some artists prefer to hold the eggshell under the cold tap of water while gently rolling it between their palms. Like anything, the more one does something, the more efficient one gets. Practice makes perfect!

Once the membrane is removed, it's essential to allow the broken pieces to dry thoroughly. This is important because the remaining moisture in the eggshell can interfere with gluing, making the pieces difficult to adhere to a surface. Drying is also advised because wet shells can often warp or curl, and there's the possibility of mold or mildew growth.

Many artists simply lay the shells on paper towels to dry naturally. For a faster drying time, they can be placed on a baking sheet in the oven set at 150 degrees Fahrenheit for 5 to 10 minutes. Once dry, it's time to let the imagination blossom.

Elisa paints each eggshell piece individually and then applies gold metal leaf to represent the repairs that are typically made to pottery by *kintsugi* artists. She then ponders imaginative ways to display them in her art, arranging each piece delicately in a frame or shadow box, using topnotch museum glass that's nearly invisible and low-glare.

She sells both original art and fine art prints of her eggshell creations. The prints are photographed at the highest quality to an extremely fine detail and printed on luxuriously thick etching paper with archival inks. Each print is a limited edition of only 20.











SIX RETAIL locations



Once those are sold, the print will be retired and never printed again. Each print is hand-signed and numbered.

An ongoing collection of exquisite installations of Elisa's art grace the walls of galleries, homes, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, retirement communities, and other commercial establishments.

Like many artists, Elisa has expanded her horizons with fresh new ideas that spark creativity with inspiration by working with porcelain. While eggshells are sturdy and strong, especially when packed and shipped internationally, Elisa decided to venture onto something different. Without the limits of a frame, the porcelain shells can be affixed to painted wooden panels or directly to a client's wall, taking into consideration scale, light, shadows, and drama.

She creates individual molds and casts them by hand, painstakingly firing and forming these organic eggshell-like sculptures and adding her signature splashes of color. Each design is created and installed by commission, which gives her an opportunity to discuss each client's vision.

This creative journey reminds Elisa that like the fundamentals of *kintsugi*, life experiences are ever-changing. She could easily have swept those scattered eggshells on the kitchen floor and tossed them in the compost pile, but instead she saw potential in a mishap of the moment. When something breaks, it's not the end. There's new purpose and opportunities for originality.

Keeping up with the demand for her work, Elisa is especially grateful to neighbors in the area who routinely supply her with farm-fresh chicken eggs and broken shells. She marvels at the colors Mother Nature paints with, delicate shades of creamy white, blues, greens, brown, and speckled varieties. They blend beautifully with her palette of paints and gold.

When Elisa isn't busy in her studio or designing a new installation, she enjoys homeschooling her two children, and tending to the garden and the family's cashmere goats. When interviewing her for this article, we discovered a bit of serendipity. Elisa's daughters participate in a wonderful 4-H program with cashmere goats at St. Mary's on-the-Hill, a community of Catholic sisters in the nearby village of Greenwich. Years ago, we had the pleasure of writing an article for our magazine, Goat Journal, featuring Sister Mary Elizabeth, coordinator and instructor at the 100-acre farm. We asked if she still rounds up the goats each day by singing to them in the pasture. Indeed, she does. What a small world!

Inspiration comes to those with an open mind. Follow Elisa's lead by embracing newfound ideas. Instead of fretting over a mishap or setback, look at things differently. There's beauty in the broken! ●

For more information about Elisa's eggshell artistry, follow her on Facebook and her website: www.ElisaSheehan.com.

CAPPY TOSETTI lives in Asheville, North Carolina with her three rescue dogs that help her with Happy with Cappy Pet Sitting. She's putting things in motion to someday crisscross the country in a vintage travel trailer visiting draft horse and goat farms. cappyt@att.net









UR CHICKEN COOP WAS several years in the making. Before we purchased our house, I knew I wanted chickens. So, I researched all the chicken groups, followed all the chicken pros on Instagram, and read all the chicken books and magazines, taking notes along the way. After building a small barn for our cows and rabbits, we decided we wanted someone else to build the coop. I found an amazing family-owned company called East Tennessee Coops. I chose the church design from their options and gave them the details we wanted to change and add to make it ours.

It took about six weeks to build, and they delivered it and put it on our prepared site. The coop is 13-feet-long and 6-feet-wide, and the run is 6-feet by-11 feet.

A solar lantern on either side of the door lights the way and wind chimes hang in the bell tower above the entrance. To the left of the door is a custom metal sign that bears the name of our coop, Downhen Abbey.

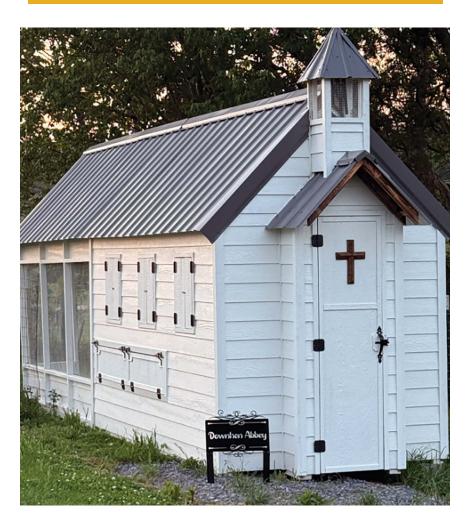
Inside, the vinyl flooring provides easy cleaning, and a 4-foot shelf holds tools, first aid, and treats. An airtight container next to the shelf keeps their feed clean and safe.

A screen door opens into the rest of the coop, where the nesting boxes are located on the left and an extra-large brooding box for chicks transitioning to the coop is situated on the right. Above those are trays filled with sand to catch the droppings from the two 11-foot roosting bars where our chickens, Mrs. Cluckmore, Mrs. Hughes, Lady Mary, and many more enjoy sleeping at night.

We've had our coop for only a short while and are still finishing some bits of the build, such as the skirting on the front part of it. Although it's lovely just the way it is, I'm excited to add a few touches, such as a faux stained-

#### **2025 GRAND PRIZE WINNER**

Downhen Abbey — By Jennifer McClure

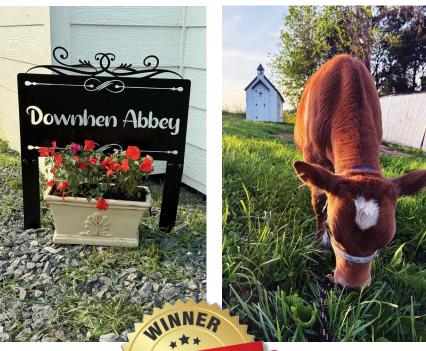


glass window on the high portion of the coop walls. We've also been working on adding some miniature pews for the chickens to roost on in the run. Who says a coop can't be cute and functional? •

#### Grand Prize Winners Prizes Retail Value Prize: \$596

- 65-pound Silo Feeder, 12-gallon Fountain, and 30 ounces of Mealworm Frenzy from Happy Hen
- \$100 gift certificate from Valley Farms Hatchery
- Coopsecure Plus Coop Door from Stromberg's Chicks & Gamebirds
- EcoGlow 600 Brooder from Brinsea









E MOVED TO OUR 5 acres in the country in 2021, in the middle Georgia area. We started building our little farm pretty much right away. What started as six hens and a pre-built 8-by-4-foot enclosed coop/shed, quickly grew into what we have today, with 24 hens and two roosters. We turned the purchased coop into a storage shed and have built onto that structure multiple times ... chicken math is real, ya'll!

Having three coop/run spaces connected allows us the flexibility to combine them all or close them off from one another to brood chicks, introduce new birds to the flock, etc.

Since chickens only sleep and lay eggs in the coop, we decided to build our coops smaller and off the ground, to allow more space in the runs and under the coops. We have three coops: an 8-by-4-foot, a 4-by-4-foot, and a 3-by-4-foot.

Automatic doors on each coop, hardware cloth around the coops and runs, and hardware cloth skirting on the ground around the entire structure ensures the safety of the chickens.

For water, we installed a bucket/ float system tied directly into a water line. This system flows through PVC that extends through all three runs, with both nipple drinkers and cup drinkers attached. For feed, we use 25-pound feeders in each coop, along with a PVC feeder that's ground level, for a couple of bantams that can't reach the larger feeders. We also have PVC feeders for our oystershell.

We have six fans throughout our coops: one in each coop that also blows into the nest boxes, and one in each run, to help with our hot Georgia summers. Our fans originally ran off solar panels installed on the roof, but we've since had electricity run to our coops.

This spring, we completely revamped the outside look of our coop, moving away from the more rustic, unpainted look to a beautiful green with black trim.

#### **2025 RUNNER-UP WINNER**

Jilly's Backyard Bliss — By Jill Barrs



We added new siding and built new nest boxes as well. We find that chickens prefer to all pile up in one or two nest boxes, so we reduced the number of boxes to two, each split into two laying spaces. We find that even with four laying spaces, they only lay in two. I'll catch three birds at a time in one box. *Why*?

We choose not to free-range our chickens on a regular basis. We lost

seven to coyotes in one day a couple of years ago, and have since enclosed a large chicken yard area, complete with plenty of shade and space for them to scratch and roam. While we know they're still in danger of hawks, coyotes, etc., having them enclosed and not roaming through the woods has helped.

When we're in and out at home, we allow them out to forage some. ●

#### Runner-Up Prizes Retail Value Prize: \$450

- \$100 gift certificate from Metzer Farms
- \$100 off 10 chicks or more or 12 free hatching eggs from NJ Bresse Farms
- Chicken Coops: 45 Building Plans for Housing Your Flock book
- How to Build Chicken Coops book
- Starter Coops: For Your Chickens' First Home book
- Backyard Poultry Campfire Mug
- Coopsecure Plus Coop Door from Stromberg's Chicks & Gamebirds





HE NAME OF OUR COOP is Toola's Coop, a name my daughter picked out many years ago as a preschooler.

#### **CONSTRUCTION**

In 2022, my husband Mike built the coop, and the run was completed in 2023. Our coop is 10 by 12 feet with a 12-by-16-foot enclosed run. Inside, the coop is divided into two sections: a 5½-foot-by-11½-foot coop and a 3½-foot-by-11½-foot storage area. As we live in central British Columbia, Canada, our coop had to be built to withstand our cold winters and both large and small predators.

It has a steel outswing door with a deadbolt, and a small front porch. The coop has 2-by-6-foot walls, with R20 insulation in both the walls and the attic. There's access to the attic from the storage area inside.

The floor has rigid foam insulation board between the floor joists, for added warmth. There are four vinyl, dual-pane windows that open and are built to withstand harsh Canadian climates, with advanced weatherstripping and reinforced corners. The outside is finished with white metal siding, and a black metal roof on both the coop and the run for snow load. The coop has power and water.

#### THE COVERED RUN

The run was constructed with 6-by-6-foot posts. Each section is connected with a framed-in, galvanized 4-gauge cattle panel, that's covered with ½-inch hardware cloth.

It has many enrichment features, such as tunnels, an herb garden, "chick-nic table," roost bars, low stump perch, and different heights of logs containing the dust bath for perching on. It also has a removable hook to hang fruit or cabbage, and feed and water stations during the warmer months.

#### THE INTERIOR FEATURES

~ Linoleum floor.

### **2025 2ND RUNNER-UP WINNER**

Toola's Coop — By Alisa Watts



- ~ Stained glass rooster on the steel door window.
- ~ Walls that've been finished with painted wainscotting on the top and faux tin tiles, 2-by-4-feet, on the bottom. The vinyl tiles are great, because they're water-, impact-, and stain-resistant, so no chicken poop permanently sticks to it.
- ~ Storage cabinet and counter (feed storage underneath the counter).
- ~ Roost bars with a cement tile backsplash and dropping board underneath help keep the coop clean.
- ~ Access to the feed and water station is available from the storage side via drop-down access panel.
- ~ The rollaway nesting boxes are built so that the eggs roll into the storage side.
- ~ The storage area also contains a brooder box/infirmary with its own separate door to outside.

- ~ All the curtains in the coop were made by my mom from fun, chicken-themed patterns. Both chicken doors have double fleece-lined curtains to keep out flies in the summer and cold in the winter. The windows have lined curtains and, if it's really cold, I close them.
- ~ There's also a ceiling fan with a light for air circulation in the storage side.
- ~ The wall heater is strategically placed in the storage area, directly across from the feed and water station on the coop side, to keep the water from freezing in the winter.
- ~ We had a really hard time finding automatic chicken doors that were made for cold climates. The coldest rating we could find was for minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit). It's been colder than that and the doors haven't let us down.
- ~ Hemp bedding on the floor for an easy coop cleanout. ●

#### 2nd Runner-Up Prizes Retail Value Prize: \$321

- Value Roost 'N Roll Nestbox, 5-count Plush Nest Pads, and 30 ounces of Mealworm Frenzy from Happy Hen
- \$100 gift certificate from Valley Farms Hatchery
- Coopsecure Plus Coop Door from Stromberg's Chicks & Gamebirds
- Large X-Tuff egg basket from Premier 1 Supplies

















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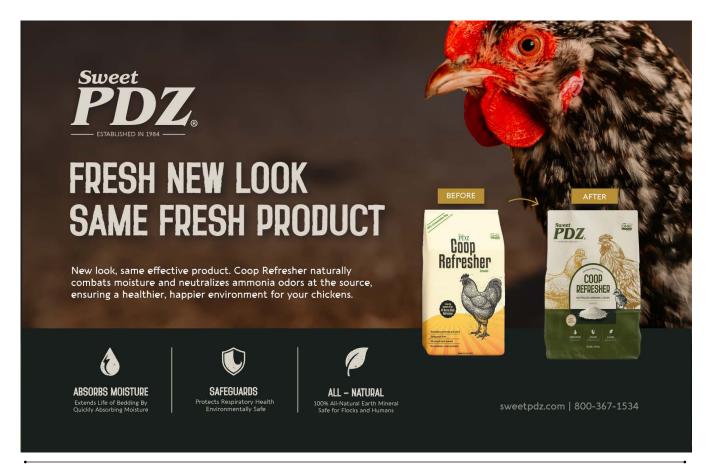


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## CLAN MATING

#### The Permanent Chicken Solution

BY BETH GREENWOOD

RE YOU ONE OF THOSE people who gets chicks every spring? You go down to the local feed store or order from a hatchery, winding up with a box of cheeping fluff balls. While this delights the small children in the family, it's expensive. And every year the cycle repeats itself. What if there were another way? Let's talk about clan mating.

#### **A Different Path**

What is clan mating? In a nutshell, it's a form of linebreeding with at least three separate flocks. The hens in each flock remain there permanently, while roosters rotate from one pen to another. With a permanent chicken solution driven by clan mating:

- You raise your own chickens year after year.
- Done correctly, you'll maintain genetic diversity in your flock.
- As long as you cull properly, your chickens will improve.
- You'll be independent of the feed store or hatchery.
- You'll have a steady supply of eggs year-round, plus chickens to eat or sell.
- The risk of bringing in disease with new birds will drop significantly.

#### The Basics

Clan mating is a breeding system to concentrate positive qualities in your flock while minimizing undesirable traits. We prefer clans of about 10 to 12 hens, but eight hens are acceptable. Maintain at least three clans,

each in its own coop with a run, plus a small coop to raise the chicks. We have another coop to raise butcher roosters (pullets are easy to sell or give away). It's well out of sight and scent of the hen clans, to minimize fighting. We try to allow 10 square feet per rooster for the same reason. We butcher aggressive roosters as soon as the trait appears, and have very little trouble with fighting.

Unbreakable rule #1: All chicks are assigned to and banded in the clan of the mother. We use red, blue, and green plastic zip ties because they're cheap and easier to see than standard chicken leg bands.

**Unbreakable rule #2:** Roosters only breed the next clan over; after the first year, a red rooster never breeds a red hen. This prevents close inbreeding (father/daughter, mother/son, full siblings).

#### **Choosing Chickens**

Choose a dual-purpose breed, as you'll have excess roosters. Roosters from egg-laying breeds simply don't have enough meat. I'd choose one of the following breeds: Plymouth Rock, Delaware (my favorite), Wyandotte, Sussex, Dominique, Orpington, Buckeve, or Java. Don't mix breeds and don't get hybrid sex-links. It's too hard to select the best replacements. Older hens and roosters (about three years old) produce better babies. They've demonstrated hardiness and disease resistance — qualities you want in your flock. Although each clan will start with same-age hens and roosters, eventually some of your hens will be older even if the rooster is young. This is the second-best combination if you don't have all older birds.

#### **Raising Replacements**

Most modern chickens have had broodiness bred out of them, even if the catalog says they'll set. You must raise chickens on your schedule to en-



Each clan needs a roomy coop and large run.

sure you always have a young group coming up to replace the older hens. You'll raise replacements every year; the incubator is a necessity. I like to do a batch — each from a different clan — every four months. That way we always have some pullets starting to lay no matter what time of year it is. Even in off times, we usually get 10 or more eggs daily. It also means we need only one small coop to raise each batch of chicks in until they go in their lifetime pens.

#### **Select Only the Best!**

Use the American Poultry Association breed standards to guide your selections. Select only the best from each



Foghorn, our first Delaware rooster!

clan; a mediocre parent means mediocre offspring. With 12 hens per clan, I'd keep no more than three or four pullets and one cockerel per clan, per hatch. Butcher, sell, or give away all the pullets and cockerels you won't be using.

#### **Clan Mating Schedule in Detail**

**Year One** — Buy your chicks (preferably early in the year) and sort them into clans. If you can, get them from small breeders and multiple sources, to increase genetic diversity. Mix them among clans since each source will probably have related chicks. Chicks from the biggest hatcheries are usually not closely related; it doesn't matter which goes where. Most sources have 25-chick minimums, which is fine. You'll be culling them down to the size flock you want.

**Year Two** — Raise up to a dozen new pullets and four cockerels from each clan. Choose the best three or four pullets (no more than four), leave them with their mothers, and get rid of the other pullets. Save the best cockerel from each clan; get rid of the others. You'll need to put each cockerel in his own pen once he's sexually mature — you don't want him breeding his sisters or his mother. Get rid of any older hens that aren't laying.



Australorp and Barred Rock hens.



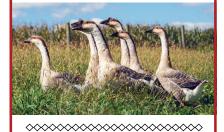
#### **OFFERING:**

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Year Three — In December, move each original rooster to the next clan over. Roosters always move red to blue, blue to green, green to red. Wait one month before collecting eggs to

incubate, so eggs are fertilized by new roosters. Raise up to a dozen pullets and four cockerels from each clan. Save the best cockerel and three or four pullets from each clan; get rid of the others.

**Year Four** — Same as Year Three, except red rooster to green clan, blue rooster to red clan, green rooster to blue clan.

Year Five — Same as Year Four except butcher current roosters. Place Year Two roosters in pens as follows: red to blue, blue to green, green to red.

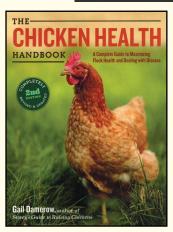
Succeeding Years — Same as Year Four except you will replace with Year Three roosters: red to blue, blue to green, green to red. Continue indefinitely, replacing roosters every year. This ensures you'll never breed closely related individuals, and maintains genetic diversity.

#### New Stock

Once you get up to 20 generations, you might consider bringing in some outside roosters to refresh the bloodlines. Always quarantine new stock for 60 days to prevent disease. The least expensive way to refresh your entire stock is to bring in three new roosters. They must be at least as good as your current roosters. Otherwise, just bring in one new rooster to avoid dilution of your good bloodlines. Choose the very best one you can find and replace your weakest rooster with the new one. Or, if you can afford it and can find some excellent hens, get two hens for each clan. There you have it — a permanent chicken solution.

BETH GREENWOOD is an RN who has also been a ranch wife for over 50 years. She raised Quarter Horses for many years, and has also raised/managed cows, sheep, pigs, and poultry. She lives with her extended family on a large ranch in far northern California. You'll usually find her in the garden, ignoring the housework!

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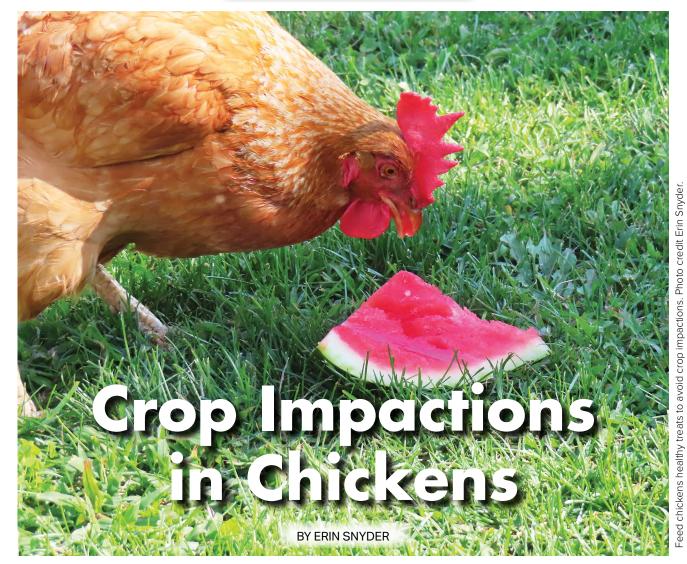


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ROP IMPACTIONS ARE a common occurrence in backyard flocks for various reasons. Identifying the root of the problem and treating a crop impaction can be challenging, so prevention is your flock's best defense against this potentially fatal health condition.

#### What's a Crop Impaction?

A crop impaction, also called crop binding, is when a chicken's crop (the holding sack at the base of the esophagus) is blocked by something stopping up the crop or by another problem farther along in the digestive tract. The blockage prevents food from entering the gizzard, which results in the

chicken's body being unable to digest the food.

#### How Do I Know if My Chicken's Crop is Blocked?

The good news is that diagnosing a crop impaction in chickens is fairly easy. If you suspect that one or more of your flock members is suffering from an impacted crop, here's how to tell:

After the chickens have eaten their fill for the night and fly up to the perch to roost, run your hand gently over each chicken's chest area (on the right side of the breast). The crop should feel firm like a softball and have substance

to it. The size of the crop may vary due to breed, age, whether or not the chicken is laying, etc.

In the morning, check again. A healthy chicken's crop should completely empty overnight and feel flat again in the morning. If the crop hasn't emptied, chances are you have a crop impaction on your hands and it's time to take action. Before taking action, it's helpful to know why the blockage occurred in the first place.

#### Foreign Objects

Foreign objects are frequently the cause of a crop impaction. Consuming long grasses, bedding (i.e., wood shavings, sand, hay, etc.) baling

twine, feathers, string, and metal objects such as staples, wire, or even a penny can lead to crop problems.

#### **Secondary Problem**

Crop impactions can be a symptom of a secondary problem such as a tumor or cancer somewhere in the body. These masses can push the intestines, compact the stomach, and wreak havoc throughout a chicken's body. A radiograph (x-ray) performed by a qualified veterinarian is the only way to rule out a tumor as the possible cause of the crop impaction.

Other conditions that cause crop impactions include:

- Heavy metal poisoning
- Internal parasites
- Marek's disease
- Prolonged use or overuse of antibiotics

#### **Symptoms**

Symptoms of crop impactions in chickens vary depending on the individual. Some may act quite sick, while others act only a little off. Common signs to look for include:

- Crop not emptying (definite sign of crop impaction)
- Foul odor coming from mouth (sign of an impacted crop beginning to
- Little to no droppings
- Lack of appetite
- Refusing to move
- Standing in penguin stance (head tucked in, tail bent severely toward ground)
- Pasted (messy) vent area

#### Fluid Build-Up

If the crop impaction is a secondary problem caused by a condition such as a tumor, fluid may begin to build up in the abdomen and other areas of the body. Always feel the abdomen of a chicken that's suffering from an impacted crop to ensure that it isn't filling up with fluid. If fluid is present, contact a veterinarian immediately.

#### **Prevention**

Prevention is key to avoiding a crop impaction. Keeping a tidy coop and run are the first steps to help prevent your flock from consuming foreign objects and long grasses.

Avoid feeding chickens harmful treats such as long grasses, grass clippings, and large quantities of tomatoes. Don't allow chickens to



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Keep the run clean and the grass short to avoid crop impactions. Photo by Erin Snyder.

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roam through long grasses and be mindful when they scratch through the compost, as both activities may result in chickens consuming hazardous materials — leading to a crop impaction.

Feeding chickens a healthy, well-balanced feed, supplemented with grit, probiotics, prebiotics, and herbs, will help keep your flock's immune and digestive systems healthy and prevent a crop impaction from occurring.

#### **How to Treat a Crop Impaction**

Treating a crop problem at home may be possible, depending on the situation and why the hen became stopped up in the first place.

To treat a hen with an impacted crop, start by isolating her from the rest of the flock or, even better, with her best chicken friend, in a small area where they can still see the other flock members, but can't be bullied.

Provide the sick hen with fresh water mixed with two tablespoons of apple cider vinegar with the mother in it. The apple cider vinegar will encourage the hen to drink, which is crucial for moving the blockage along. Replace the water mixture with clean, fresh water after about 10 hours. Encourage the sick hen to drink by placing dried black soldier fly larvae in the water fount dish.

Feed soft foods such as layer feed moistened to a mash. It's important to feed only soft, easy-to-digest food, to avoid further complications. Limit feeding times to 20 to 30 minutes two or three times a day.

Shortly before feeding your hen, massage her crop softly, moving in the direction of the abdomen. Do this 2 to 3 times daily to encourage the crop to empty and start working again. Feel the crop before each feeding to see if it's emptied.

#### When to Call a Vet

If a crop impaction doesn't clear up in 48 hours, if the sick hen suddenly



Keep free-ranging hens away from long grasses to prevent crop impactions. Photo Erin Snyder.

takes a turn for the worse and stops eating entirely, or if the abdomen is filling with fluid, it's time to call in a professional.

Be aware that most vets may not be able to see your chicken the same day you call, so don't hesitate to make the call sooner, if you think it's necessary. This is especially critical when fluid in the abdomen is present, because the fluid may continue to spread throughout the body, eventually filling the lungs and causing the hen to suffocate.

Never attempt to remove a crop impaction by doing home surgery. If a vet isn't a possibility, the best option is to humanely dispatch the bird.

#### **Avoid Crop Problems**

With proper care and nutrition, crop impactions can often be avoided. However, knowing the symptoms, prevention tips, and how to diagnose and treat this condition is critical when dealing with crop problems.

#### **RESOURCES**

- https://extension.umd.edu/resource/common-crop-issues-backyard-chickens-ebr-60/
- www.thepoultrysite.com/articles/crop-disorders-of-chickens-ii ingluvitis
- $•\ https://grubblyfarms.com/blogs/the-flyer/crop-impaction-in-chickens-causes-treatment\\$
- https://poultrydvm.com/condition/impacted-crop

**ERIN SNYDER** and her family have raised chickens and ducks f or nearly two decades. She is passionate about all things poultry, but is especially interested in poultry nutrition, predator protection, egg-laying disorders, and helping chickens live their best lives well into their golden years. You can follow her chicken adventures on her newly hatched Instagram page: www.Instagram.com/TheHenHouseHygge/.

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### HYBRID VS. HERITAGE

#### Differences in Turkey Breeds

BY SHERRI TALBOT

ild turkeys are native only to the Americas, and from them come all the domestic breeds we associate with holiday dinners. The first domestication attempts led to heritage breeds, and then later to the broad-breasted production breeds that most modern grocery stores stock today. On average, heritage breeds have longer lifespans, can naturally reproduce, and have slower growth than hybrids.

#### **Heritage Breeds**

More directly related to wild turkeys, heritage breeds have larger legs and thighs than the broad-breasted varieties. There are 12 recognized breeds, with eight classified as "Watch" or "Threatened" by the American Livestock Conservancy (ALC). The Royal Palm and Beltsville Small White are the smallest, weighing as little as 10 pounds — not much more than a broiler chicken. For those looking for a bigger bird, the Standard Bronze can mature as hefty as 38 pounds.

To be classified as a heritage breed, birds must have been fertilized naturally, and the eggs are required to average a fertility rate of 70 to 80%. The poults will mature in around 26 to 28 weeks. Hens retain their reproductive capabilities for about seven years and toms for about five years. Breeders have to deal with the fact that heritage breeds also remain capable of flight. They can be more expensive for breeders to raise, especially when fed commercial feed, since they're slower growers than a hy-

brid turkey. However, higher prices and a renewed interest in heritage breeds for meat has increased interest in raising these varieties, and even pulled some breeds back from the brink of extinction.

Raising heritage breeds can be more efficient for breeders in some ways, thanks to their ability to gain weight on natural foods as efficiently as on commercial feed. They mate naturally and brood their own young. This allows farmers the option of not purchasing new stock each year or running an incubator. When brooding, two hens may share a nest for further protection, and toms will even watch over nests for short periods of time. Their parenting skills are excellent, and both males and females will watch over the young.



Photo credit Angie's Art.



Photo credit Sherri Talbot.

However, the longer time to reach maturity, dark feather coloring, and smaller breast portion means that broad-breasted production birds remain the more commonly raised and sold.

#### **Production Breeds**

Production turkeys are the large-breasted, fast-growing birds that one finds in a grocery store cooler around the holidays. These birds have been bred to reach slaughter weight extremely quickly. Females are processed at about 14 weeks and will average around 15 pounds, for those looking for a smaller carcass. Those looking to feed a bigger crowd will have to wait about 18 weeks for a tom to reach around 38 pounds. Toms may also be processed into parts for sale.

The White Broad Breasted turkey is the most common domesticated turkey in the United States. While the Broad Breasted Bronze also makes for

a quick-growing, meaty carcass, white birds leave no marks on the meat when their pin feathers are removed. This is seen as making for a more aesthetic dinner and therefore is more sought after.

While most of these turkeys are butchered between 14 and 18 weeks, breeding White Broad Breasted turkeys are kept until about 28 weeks when the hens begin to lay and the males reach sexual maturity. Like chickens, a turkey hen is born containing a lifetime's worth of eggs, and a turkey's egg-laying period is limited. Because of this, light is restricted to prevent egg production before they've been fertilized.

Breeding turkeys are segregated by sex and raised without seeing the opposite sex. Since their size prevents natural mating, toms chosen for breeding must have their semen collected, and hens must be artificially inseminated every seven days. The hen will lay for about 26 weeks and





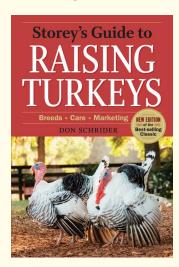
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Photo credit Angie's Art.



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produce 100 to 130 eggs. These will be collected, incubated, and, once hatched, sent to a separate facility to put on weight until they're ready for slaughter. The breeding hen is also processed once she has completed a single cycle of egg-laying.

On the grow-out farms, buildings are environmentally controlled, and biosecurity is vital to keeping the birds healthy. All poults raised in production facilities are vaccinated, and given antibiotics — with the advice of a veterinarian — when birds get sick.

To help promote rapid growth while providing needed nutrition, the birds are fed a mix of soybeans, corn, and supplemental vitamins and minerals. Depending on the source, it's estimated to take anywhere from 75 to 90 pounds of feed to raise a tom up to 38 pounds. This kind of quick feed intake and growth rate mean that production turkeys have a far shorter lifespan and — much like broiler chickens — can be prone to issues with their legs, broken bones, and other health issues if not butchered in a timely manner.

#### **Choosing a Breed**

Choosing a breed of turkey will depend on the homesteaders' needs.

For those not interested in wintering lines over from year to year, and just looking to raise large, docile birds for the holiday season, production birds will grow larger, more quickly, and reach slaughter weight around 14 to 18 weeks. They're most commonly white, leaving a clean-looking carcass, though Broad Breasted Bronze are available.

However, these large production breeds are prone to health issues that result from their weight, and without strict biosecurity can be prone to other illnesses as well. They'll require more hands-on care, which can be problematic for a small homestead.

For those who want a hardier breed with the ability to reproduce and forage, heritage breeds are a better

option. Different heritage breeds provide different carcass sizes, depending on one's needs, and they also come in a variety of colors. These

breeds aren't specialized, though, and produce a less fatty meat with a stronger flavor than their more commercially adapted cousins. •

**SHERRI TALBOT** is the co-owner and operator of Saffron and Honey Homestead in Windsor, Maine. She raises endangered, heritage-breed livestock and hopes someday to make education and writing on conservation breeding her full-time job. Details can be found at SaffronandHoneyHomestead.com or on Facebook at https://www.facebook.com/SaffronandHoneyHomestead.

#### **REFERENCES**

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# A Guide to HEAVY DUCK BREEDS

BY ERIN SNYDER



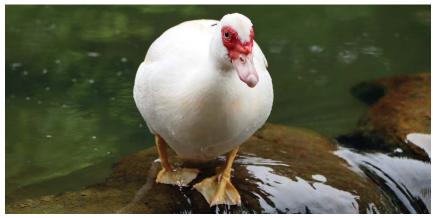
Silver Appleyard. Photo by Cengiz Özarpat on Unsplash.

ucks come in a variety of sizes from 2-pound Call Ducks to 15-pound Muscovy drakes. These six heavy-weight ducks recognized by the American Poultry Association (APA) are hard to beat when producing eggs and meat — and even hatching and raising ducklings.

#### 1. APPLEYARD

Also known as the Silver Appleyard, the Appleyard sports eye-catching feathers, has a loud, boisterous quack, and is one of the few breeds to be raised solely for ornamental purposes.

Silver Appleyards were first developed in England in the 1930s by Reginald Appleyard, who was



Muscovy Female. Photo by Nora Hill on Unsplash.

looking to breed a beautiful duck. The breed was imported to the United States in the late 1960s, but wasn't accepted into the APA Standard of Perfection until October 1998.

Silver Appleyards resemble large, washed-out Mallards, with hens a soft fawn color instead of the chocolate-brown feathers of a female Mallard.

Hens are excellent layers, averaging from 100 to over 250 large white eggs a year. Both hens and drakes mature quickly, making them an ideal breed to raise for meat.

Appleyards are friendly and active, but, due to their loud quacks, they may not be the best choice if you have nearby neighbors.

Average Lifespan: 8 to 10 years.

#### 2. AYLESBURY

The Aylesbury is the least popular of the heavy-weight breeds, and is often mistaken for the Pekin. However, if you look closely at the bill, you can see that while Pekin ducks sport orange, green, or even black bills, Aylesburys' bills are a peachy-pink color.

Bred in the early 18th century in England, this once-popular breed was known for walking over 40 miles to London to be sold for meat. (Yes, the ducks walked over 40 miles!) Even though the breed was one of the first to arrive in America, it quickly lost popularity with the introduction of the Pekin in the 1870s, and has never gained the popularity of other heavy-weight breeds. Aylesbury females are moderate layers, averaging 30 to 100 large white eggs per year.

The Aylesbury is a calm and placid breed. They love to eat and quickly convert feed to weight. While this is ideal for meat birds, if you're keeping Aylesbury ducks for exhibition or pets, feed intake and weight gain should be monitored closely to ensure the duck maintains a healthy weight.

Average Lifespan: 10 to 15 years.

#### 3. MUSCOVY

Muscovy ducks are truly unique. They're not really ducks, but South American waterfowl. They perch like chickens and sport red, fleshy skin on their faces, like a turkey vulture. Muscovies are also the only domestic ducks that don't quack.

Muscovy hens are the best broody ducks and make excellent mothers. Hens are good layers, averaging 45 to 80 large white eggs annually, although some claim higher numbers. Hens and drakes make excellent table birds.

A Muscovy duck's personality can vary from sweet and gentle to attacking its owners and killing small mammals and chickens.

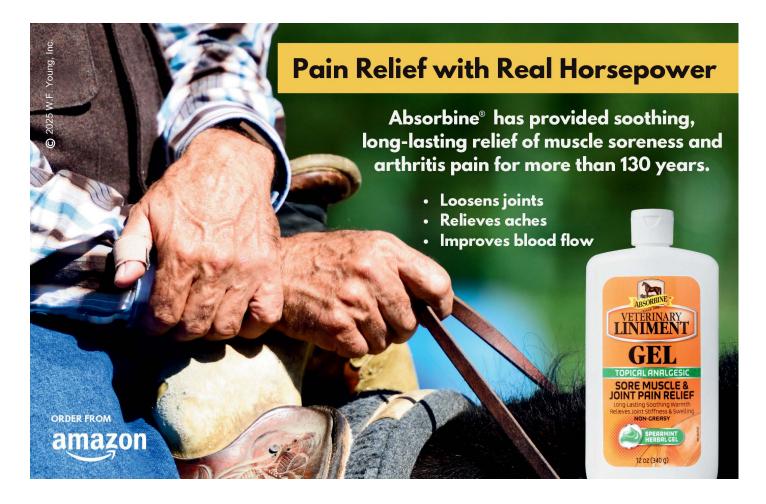
Muscovy ducks are an invasive species, so be sure to check with your local fish and wildlife authorities to see if owning Muscovies is legal in your state. Also, be sure to ask about necessary permits to own, breed, and hatch these exotic ducks.

Average Lifespan: 7 to 10 years.

#### 4. PEKIN

The world's most popular domestic duck breed, the Pekin, gained popularity as soon as it hit American soil in 1873. The breed soon became the

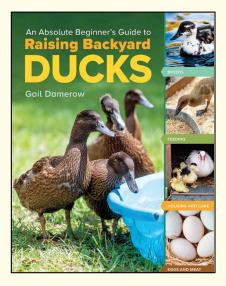








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top table bird in the country, as duck raisers turned to Pekins instead of the native Cayuga.

Pekin ducks make excellent table birds due to their white feathers and fast-maturing bodies. The ducklings grow quickly and can be ready to butcher at 7 weeks old.

Hens are excellent layers, producing an average of 50 to 300 large white, cream, or tinted eggs (depending on the strain of bird). While most Pekin hens rarely go broody, some occasionally hatch and raise young. Pekin hens also make excellent surrogate mothers, helping to raise ducklings they haven't hatched.

Pekins can be exceptional family pets with their calm, people-loving personalities. Intelligent, talkative, and fun, these ducks are gregarious and love interacting with other Pekins and their human family.

The breed is generally considered healthy, but is prone to having more leg problems than other breeds.

Average Lifespan: 5 to 10 years.

#### 5. ROUEN

The Rouen is the only duck to have two distinct breeds in one: the Rouen and the Rouen Clair, both hailing from France. These ducks were originally bred for meat, but due to their slow growth, they're no longer bred for that purpose. The difference between the two is the size, as Rouens are extremely fat and don't serve any other purpose than exhibition or showing.



Pekin female. Photo credit: Erin Snyder.

The Rouen Clair, however, is a typical barnyard bird. These ducks are slightly smaller in size and weight, resulting in a more active breed, with a better ability to breed and lay eggs. Rouen Clair females can produce almost twice the eggs as the exhibition Rouen, with each hen producing one 100 to 200 large, white or pale blue-green eggs annually.

Both strains of the Rouen are extremely placid and calm, and don't spook easily.

Average Lifespan: 7 to 10 years (Rouen) 8 to 12 years (Rouen Clair).

#### 6. SAXONY

One of the rarest of the domestic ducks, the Saxony sports soft, eye-catching feathers and a sweet face.

The breed was first developed in the 1930s in East Germany by Albert Franz. Mr. Franz crossed Pekin, Rouen, and Blue Pomeranian to develop a better utility breed, but his efforts were soon stopped due to WWII.

In 1952, Mr. Franz salvaged what he could of the breed from local stock, developing the Saxony.

The Saxony is a gentle, active breed that requires a large enclosure in which to spend its days, versus a small coop and run. Hens and drakes make good pets due to their calm and gentle nature. Drakes are also considered to be less aggressive and quieter than other breeds.

Saxony hens are good layers, with conflicting accounts of egg numbers from 80 to 100 to 190 to 240 large, white eggs annually. These ducks are also known to go broody and make exceptional mothers.

Average Lifespan: 9 to 12 years.

These six breeds recognized by the APA have a lot to offer both backyard enthusiasts and hobby farmers, with their sweet personalities and excellent egg and meat productions. ●

#### **RESOURCES**

- Storey's Guide to Raising Ducks: By Dave Holderread
- Choosing and Keeping Ducks and Geese: By Liz Wright
- · www.shirlockacres.com/blog/muscovy-ducks
- www.federalregister.gov/documents/2010/03/01/2010-3284/migratorybird-permits-control-of-muscovy-ducks-revisions-to-the-waterfowl-permitexceptions-and
- www.cacklehatchery.com/heritage-breed-spotlight-rouen-duck/
- https://livestockconservancy.org/saxony-duck/





# Seven Guidelines for **Building a Duck Coop**

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY WREN EVERETT



Duck house from front (compost piles visible behind it).

HEN IT COMES TO easy-care poultry, ducks have to be a contender for top billing (pun intended!). When the goats and chickens are sulking under a roof during a downpour, ducks are enjoying "their" weather with nary a care. When the cold wind blows and the pond is half-frozen, the ducks make it seem like a winter resort as they blithely swim through chilly water and sleep happily atop chunks of ice.

But for all their apparent disregard for all sorts of nasty weather, ducks still benefit from a dedicated shelter and will make good use of it when it's provided. True to form, though, ducks don't need anything fancy, so you can easily design and build a shelter yourself or even retrofit an existing structure. Whatever you decide, here are a few design elements to keep in mind to make it useful and safe for bird and human alike.

#### 1. Make it the Right Size

The general consensus is that each duck needs, at the very least, 4 square feet of indoor space and 15 square feet of outdoor space (disregard that, of course, if your ducks free-range). Keep in mind that the more space any animal has, the happier and healthier it will generally be.

Additionally, make sure the door is wide enough that at least two ducks can enter or exit at the same time (something that happens often). Ducks seem to treat every coop entrance or exit like it's Black Friday in the 90s, pushing and shoving and clambering over each other.



Ducks in the coop.

#### 2. Make It Duck-Accessible

Ducks are truly graceful on the water, and they can cut a fine figure in the air, but when it comes to land navigation, they leave a lot of finesse to be desired. Since they're not the best on their feet, you'll have to make sure your coop doesn't have any steep slopes for them to slip on. If you do have a ramp anywhere in the structure, give it as gentle an incline as possible, and provide ridges for their slippery, webbed feet to grip.

#### 3. Make It People-Accessible

A duck-sized palace may look adorable on social media, but if it's awkward to get a pitchfork in to muck it out or if it has too low a ceiling to allow a human to move comfortably, it's going to be a royal pain to keep it in good condition. Keep the human element in mind when designing the shape of your coop, and make sure you can access the area just as easily as the ducks can. This might be designing a back door that allows you easy access to the duck area or making sure that it's tall enough that you can walk inside without hunching.

#### 4. Make It Near a Compost Pile

This is a personal preference, but I'd never have any waterfowl hous-



Rocks piled around base.

ing without an easily-accessible composting area nearby. Anyone who keeps ducks or geese swiftly becomes aware that they're messy critters. They splash in their water, spread dampness and manure wherever they go, and have no problem turning any puddle they find (or create) into a muck-filled morass. As such, their houses can transform from clean to a mud-splattered, sour-smelling sty faster than you'd believe. Likewise, the amount of muck, manure, and soiled bedding a flock of ducks can generate is impressive.

Instead of seeing the constant need for maintenance as an annoyance, however, I see this as a huge opportunity to create some garden fertility. With a compost pile easily accessible from the duck house, you have a place to put the never-ending supply of soiled bedding and an area to mature and harvest excellent compost for the garden (and it's not as "hot" as chicken manure, so it doesn't need to cure). I even use the duck compost piles as gardens themselves, growing nutrient-hungry squash atop every full pile.

#### 5. Make It Ventilated

Damp ducks make damp bedding, and damp bedding becomes a



Compost pile in front of duck coop.





perfect place for mold and diseases (such as aspergillosis) to stake a claim. To avoid creating a boggy, humid pit, make sure that ventilation is one of your main design elements. It's more important (in most climates) to make sure the air is easily exchanged, rather than to make the coop warm. As you can see from these photos of my own duck coop, the entire southern face of the coop



A duck foraging.

is nothing but wire, allowing air to move freely. This coop kept ducks through winters that reached minus 3 degrees Fahrenheit.

#### 6. Make It Face the Sun, Make a Northern Wall

If you live in the northern hemisphere, the worst of winter weather will probably hit you from the north. Having a solid wall or sheltered area on the north side of the coop will give your ducks something to hide behind when cold winter storms howl.

Accordingly, having direct access to the south (again, if you live in the northern hemisphere) gives your ducks access to the warm rays of the winter sun, allowing them to bask, even if snow is covering the ground.

#### 7. Make It Safe

We must keep in mind that ducks are the source of the idiomatic expression for absolute helplessness ("a sitting duck"). They don't have much in the way of defense if a threat comes stalking. As such, your coop needs to keep your local predators in mind as part of its design.

If raccoons are common in your area, be sure entrances have latches or locks that can't be opened by their surprisingly nimble fingers. If raptors are a problem, cover the duck run with woven wire or bird netting. In our area, for example, digging canines — foxes, coyotes, and dogs — are probably the most problematic aggressors to our birds. As such, we lined the perimeter of the duck coop with half-buried boulders to deter any unwanted excavation.

I hope this brief list can help you design the best possible coop for your feathered flock. Whether you build something from scratch or make alterations to something you already have on hand, keeping these elements in mind will make for a happy duck coop. •

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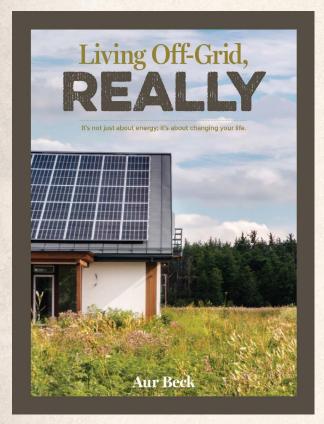
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#### **BREED PROFILE:**

### **CUBALAYA**

BY KENNY COOGAN

ITH A UNIQUE "LOBSTER TAIL," LACK OF spurs, and overall tameness with people, Cubalaya chickens make an excellent dual-purpose addition to your flock. Unfortunately, they're currently listed as "Critical" according to The Livestock Conservancy and need some homestead heroes to prevent them from becoming extinct.

#### **Cubalayas in Crisis**

For a poultry breed to be listed as Critical by The Livestock Conservancy, there needs to be fewer than 500 breeding birds in the United States, with five or fewer primary breeding flocks (50 birds or more), and an estimated global population less than 1,000.

Jeff Smith, third generation at Cackle Hatchery, breeds bantam Cubalayas. They started with one color variation of the Cubalaya 40 years ago, which were obtained from a hobbyist at a poultry show. Since then, they've reverted them back to a wheat color and a BB red (black-breasted red).

"The black-breasted red is a little bit more reddish in the saddle, hackles, and neck hackles," Smith explains. "The wheat are more of an orangey-type of red. Some of the main characteristics of Cubalaya are that they have a low carriage tail, kind of like a pheasant-type body, and a small pea comb on their head."



Wheaton Cubalaya Bantam.



Wheaton Cubalaya Bantam.

Smith says that Cubalayas are one of the rarest chicken breeds available.

"There aren't too many of them. I don't even remember seeing them at the Ohio Nationals. It was kind of frightening how many breeds weren't at the Ohio Nationals. There are several breeds that I'm needing new bloodlines on, and I'm having a hard time finding them."

He says that a lot of the "old-time breeders" are retiring and phasing out, and no one's replacing them and their flocks.

"Some people consider Cubalayas a game chicken, in the sense that they're gamey and they like to fight other males," Smith says. "But they're not bred on the game side; they're fine to be in pens with other males."

According to The Livestock Conservancy, "The Cubalaya is the only chicken breed that's officially recognized by

cal , meat, ornamental o 175 white to tinted eggs a year
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o 175 white to tinted eggs a year
l to medium
6 pounds / Female 4 pounds
be aggressive to other birds; r, mild-mannered compared her game birds; friendly with the
ant of high heat and humidity, ing birds for backyard flocks
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the Asociación Nacional de Avicultura, the Cuban national poultry association. The breed was introduced in the U.S. and was accepted into the American Poultry Association's Standard of Perfection in 1939, with the breed name 'Cubalaya' in honor of Cuba, where the breed originated. They were also first exhibited in the U.S. that same year at the International Poultry Show in Cleveland, Ohio."



BB Red Cubalayn Bantam.



Cubalaya. Photo by Jeanette Beranger.





Smith doesn't know why their popularity has declined. They're tolerant of high heat and humidity, are beautiful, and are good meat and egg birds.

"It's hard to tell. We try to figure out increasing our breeding stock on certain breeds, thinking that there'd be a higher demand for them, and there's no rhyme or reason. We can put out extra, and certain breeds are popular for two years and then nobody wants them."

It's hard to dictate or project the future, Smith says. Smith has been involved with Cackle Hatchery pretty much his entire life.



Cubalaya. Photo by Jeanette Beranger.



Black Breasted Red Cubalaya Bantam.

Cackle Hatchery started in 1936 and has a long history of breeding and shipping poultry to U.S. customers.

"We're more on the quality side. Not to say we don't have some generic, basic backyard chickens, but we also work with fancy and rare breeds and try to breed them to the APA standard," Smith says. "We have some heritage breeds and production breeds. We probably have the largest selection of quality birds in the United States."

They typically don't offer breeds unless they have at least 50 breeding hens available. With the Cubalaya being Critical, they typically run one male for every 6 to 10 hens, and occasionally breed pairs. They only breed yearlings and don't breed birds that are older than two years, typically. They have around 36 hens to a pen with four roosters.

"We primarily don't put all of our breeding stock in one place due to avian influenza, tornadoes, and other kinds of disasters," Smith says. "We have our genetics in all different places within about a 40-mile radius of Cackle Hatchery here in Lebanon, Missouri. Most of our breeding stock is housed and taken care of by Amish families, and we do all the managing, culling, grading, testing, and everything that needs to happen in the breeding program."

The families who raise them also feed, water, and do common husbandry with the fertile eggs brought in every seven days to the hatchery. Balancing a rare breed's population, but not giving into low standards, can be a bit tricky.

"We'll grade them as chicks. We might grade out 10% as baby chicks, and then we put them out as a straight run. We have lots of males to pick from and we'll only keep maybe 10% of the males and the other 90% we grade out. So, it's pretty heavy grading and culling that we do."

Smith says that there sometimes is backlash when you talk about grading and culling, but the reality is every hatchery does it, and that's how they maintain breeds.

"We're a breeding farm, breeding livestock, and there are certain qualities that you have to maintain, so you try to select the best to perpetuate that breed variety and its qualities," Smith says.

Smith adds that backyard poultry hobbyists should add Cubalaya to their flocks.

"They're a gentle bird when you interact with them and take care of them. They're a very good bird to handle and they're unique, so it'd be a bird that not everybody has. You won't have the competition showing them and you can stand out at a poultry show with a breed that's not found very often!"



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Backyard Poultry, 1503 SW 42nd St, Topeka, KS 66609

or email: editor@backyardpoultrymag.com.

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ATTENTION: Due to the avian influenza outbreak, some events may be canceled. Contact event coordinators to confirm before show dates. Poultry Show Central is working hard to stay updated, but changes are being made daily and these events may end up being canceled.

#### IOWA

September 20, 2025 Grundy Center, Iowa

Grundy County Bird & Animal Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Grundy\_ County\_Bird\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### September 27, 2025 Council Bluffs, Iowa

Southwest Iowa Animal Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Southwest\_Iowa\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### September 28, 2025 Waukon, Iowa

Northeast Iowa Bird and Animal Club Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Northeast\_Iowa\_Bird\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### KANSAS

August 10-16, 2025 Coffeyville, Kansas

Inter-State Fair & Rodeo https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Inter-State\_Fair\_Rodeo.html

#### September 5-14, 2025 Hutchinson, Kansas

Kansas State Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Kansas\_ State\_Fair.html

#### September 20, 2025 Gardner, Kansas

Heart of America Game Breeders' Association Gardner Sale

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Heart\_of\_America\_Game\_Breeders\_Poultry.html

#### **KENTUCKY**

August 14-24, 2025 Louisville, Kentucky

Kentucky State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Kentucky\_State\_Fair.html

#### MAINE

August 7-16, 2025 Skowhegan, Maine

Skowhegan Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Skowhegan\_Fair.html

#### August 23 - September 1, 2025 Windsor, Maine

Windsor Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Windsor\_Fair.html

#### September 14-20, 2025 Farmington, Maine

Farmington Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Farmington\_Fair.html

#### September 19-21, 2025 Unity, Maine

Common Ground Country Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Common\_Ground\_Country\_Fair.html

#### MARYLAND

August 8-16, 2025 Gaithersburg, Maryland

Montgomery County Agricultural Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Montgomery\_County\_Agricultural\_Fair.html

#### **MICHIGAN**

September 13, 2025 Montrose, Michigan

Michigan Bird & Game Breeders Assoc. Sale
— Montrose

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Michigan\_Bird\_Game\_Breeders.html

#### September 21-27, 2025 Hillsdale, Michigan

Hillsdale, Michigan

Hillsdale County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Hillsdale\_County\_Fair.html

#### **MINNESOTA**

August 14-17, 2025 Hutchinson, Minnesota

McLeod County Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ McLeod\_County\_Fair.html

#### August 21 - September 1, 2025 St. Paul, Minnesota

Minnesota State Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Minnesota\_State\_Fair.html

#### September 6, 2025 Waconia, Minnesota

MN State Pigeon Association Sale https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/MN\_ State\_Pigeon\_Association\_Sale.html

#### September 13, 2025 New Ulm, Minnesota

New Ulm Fall Classic https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/New\_ Ulm.html

#### MISSOURI

August 7-17, 2025 Sedalia, Missouri

Sedalia, iviissour

Missouri State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Missouri\_State\_Fair.html

#### **NEBRASKA**

August 22 - September 1, 2025 Grand Island, Nebraska

Nebraska State Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Nebraska\_State\_Fair.html

#### September 21, 2025 Lexington, Nebraska

JGrace Auctions

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Lexington\_Fall\_Exotic\_Bird\_an\_Animal\_Auction.html

#### September 27-28, 2025 Norfolk, Nebraska

Nelson Alternative Livestock Auction https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Nelson\_ Alternative\_Livestock\_Auction.html

#### **NEW JERSEY**

August 1-9, 2025

Augusta, New Jersey

New Jersey State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/New\_ Jersey\_State\_Fair.html

#### **NEW MEXICO**

August 14-17, 2025

Farmington, New Mexico

San Juan County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/San\_ Juan\_County\_Fair.html

#### September 4-14, 2025 Albuquerque, New Mexico

New Mexico State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/New\_ Mexico\_State\_Fair.html

#### **NEW YORK**

#### August 6-17, 2025

#### Hamburg, New York

Erie County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Erie\_

County\_Fair.html

#### August 11-17, 2025 Bath, New York

Steuben County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Steuben\_County\_Fair.html

#### August 20 - September 1, 2025 Syracuse, New York

New York State Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/New\_ York\_State\_Fair.html

#### September 6-7, 2025 Bath, New York

Twin Tier Poultry Club https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Twin\_ Tier\_Poultry\_Club.html

#### September 14, 2025 Gouverneur, New York

Northern NY Poultry Fanciers https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Northern\_New\_York\_Poultry\_Fanciers.html

#### September 28, 2025 Cobleskill, New York

Eastern New York State Poultry Association https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Eastern\_ New\_York\_State\_Poultry.html

#### August 2, 2025 Marysville, Ohio

BLT Livestock Swap Meet https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/BLT\_ Livestock\_Auction.html

#### August 11-16, 2025

Norwalk, Ohio

Huron County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Huron\_ County\_Fair.html

#### August 15-24, 2025 Lima, Ohio

Allen County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Allen\_ County\_Fair.html

#### August 17-24, 2025 Wellington, Ohio

Lorain County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Lorain\_ County\_Fair.html

#### August 29 - September 1, 2025 Johnstown. Ohio

Johnstown Swapper Days https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Johnstown Swappers Days.html

#### September 13-14, 2025 Lucasville, Ohio

Lucasville Trade Days https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Lucasville\_Trade\_Days.html

#### September 20, 2025 Fremont, Ohio

Fremont Pigeon Club Young Bird Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Fremont\_Pigeon\_Club.html

#### September 20-21, 2025 Wapakoneta, Ohio

Moon City Poultry Club https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Moon\_ City\_Poultry\_Club.html

#### September 20, 2025 Fremont, Ohio

Fremont Pigeon Club Fall Show & Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Fremont\_Pigeon\_Club.html

#### September 28, 2025 Greenville, Ohio

Dayton Fancy Feather Club Swap Days https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Dayton\_ Fancy\_Feather\_Club\_Swap\_Days.html

#### September 20-21, 2025 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Oklahoma State Fair Open Poultry Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Oklahoma\_State\_Fair.html

#### September 25 - October 5, 2025

Tulsa, Oklahoma

Tulsa State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Tulsa\_ State\_Fair.html

#### **ONTARIO**

#### September 13-21, 2025

#### Lindsay, Ontario

Lindsay Exhibition

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Lindsay\_ Exhibition.html

#### **OREGON**

#### August 12-16, 2025

#### Canby, Oregon

Clackamas County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Clackamas\_County\_Fair.html

#### August 14-17, 2025 Tygh Valley, Oregon

Wasco County Fair and Rodeo https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Wasco\_ County\_Fair\_and\_Rodeo.html

#### August 15-17, 2025 Cottage Grove, Oregon

WOE Heritage Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/WOE\_ Heritage\_Fair.html

#### August 22 - September 1, 2025 Salem, Oregon

Oregon State Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Oregon State\_Fair.html

#### **PENNSYLVANIA**

#### August 16-23, 2025

#### Meadville, Pennsylvania

Crawford County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Crawford\_County\_Fair.html

#### August 17, 2025

#### Dunbar, Pennsylvania

Uniontown Poultry and Farm Products Association https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Uniontown\_Poultry\_Association.html

#### August 23, 2025

#### Mercersburg, Pennsylvania

Snider's Elevator Poultry Swap B-S-T https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Sniders Elevator\_Poultry\_Swap\_B-S-T.html

#### September 13, 2025

#### . Manheim, Pennsylvania

Graystone Small Animal Sale Special Consignment Auction

#### September 21, 2025 Dunbar, Pennsylvania

#### Uniontown Poultry and Farm Products Association

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Uniontown\_Poultry\_Association.html

#### September 27, 2025 Halifax, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Avicultural Society Tailgate https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Pennsylvania\_Avicultural\_Society\_Tailgate.html

#### September 28, 2025 Manchester, Pennsylvania

#### Reading / White Rose Pigeon Associations

Young Bird Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Reading-White\_Rose\_Pigeon\_Associations\_Young\_ Bird\_Show.html

#### **SOUTH DAKOTA**

#### August 27 - September 1, 2025

#### Huron, South Dakota

South Dakota State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/South\_ Dakota\_State\_Fair.html

#### **TENNESSEE**

#### August 9, 2025

#### Alexandria, Tennessee

Middle TN Poultry/Bird/Animal Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Middle\_ TN\_Poultry-Bird-Rabbit\_Swap.html

#### August 12-16, 2025

#### Newport, Tennessee

Cocke County A&I Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Cocke\_ County\_AI\_Fair.html

#### August 14-23, 2025 Lebanon, Tennessee

#### Wilson County Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Wilson\_ County\_Fair.html

#### September 5-14, 2025 Knoxville, Tennessee

Tennessee Valley Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Tennessee\_Valley\_Fair.html

#### September 20, 2025 Lawrenceburg, Tennessee

Middle Tennessee District Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Middle\_ Tennessee\_District\_Fair.html

#### September 20, 2025 Alexandria, Tennessee

Middle TN Poultry/Bird/Animal Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Middle\_ TN\_Poultry-Bird-Rabbit\_Swap.html

#### **TEXAS**

#### August 29 - September 7, 2025 Odessa, Texas

Permian Basin Fair

https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Permian\_Basin\_Fair.html

#### September 6, 2025 Waxahachie, Texas

Ellis County Poultry Trade Days https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Ellis\_ County\_Poultry\_Trade\_Days.html

#### September 13-14, 2025 Abilene, Texas

West Texas Fair & Rodeo Poultry Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/West\_ Texas\_Fair.html

#### September 13-14, 2025 Amarillo, Texas

Amarillo Bantam Club Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Amarillo\_Bantam\_Club.html

#### September 19-27, 2025 Lubbock, Texas

Panhandle South Plains Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Panhandle\_South\_Plains\_Fair.html

#### September 20, 2025 Gilmer, Texas

East Texas Poultry Trade Days https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/East\_ Texas\_Poultry\_Trades\_Day.html

#### September 26 - October 19, 2025 Dallas, Texas

Texas State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Texas\_ State\_Fair.html

#### **UTAH**

#### September 4-14, 2025 Salt Lake City, Utah

Utah State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Utah\_ State\_Fair.html

#### **VIRGINIA**

#### September 11-14, 2025

Windsor, Virginia

Isle of Wight County Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Isle\_of\_ Wight\_County\_Fair.html

#### September 20, 2025 Glen Allen, Virginia

Gilmanor Swap & Sale https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Gilmanor\_Swap\_Sale.html

#### September 27-28, 2025 Doswell, Virginia

Old Dominion Poultry Association Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Old\_ Dominion\_Poultry\_Association\_Show.html

#### **WASHINGTON**

#### August 7-16, 2025 Lynden, Washington

Northwest Washington Fair (A.K.A. Lynden Fair) https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Northwest\_Washington\_Fair.html

#### August 12-17, 2025 Chehalis, Washington

Southwest Washington Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Southwest\_Washington\_Fair.html

#### August 21 - September 1, 2025 Monroe, Washington

Evergreen State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Evergreen\_State\_Fair.html

#### August 29 - September 21, 2025 Payallup, Washington

Washington State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Payallup\_Fair.html

#### September 5-14, 2025 Spokane, Washington

Spokane Co. Interstate Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Spokane\_Interstate\_Fair.html

#### September 19-28, 2025 Yakima, Washington

Central Washington State Fair https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Central\_ Washington\_State\_Fair.html

#### September 20, 2025 Chehalis, Washington

NW Serama Club Tabletop Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/NW\_ Serama\_Club.html

#### WISCONSIN

#### August 2, 2025

#### Elk Mound, Wisconsin

Elk Mound Animal Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Elk\_ Mound\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### August 9, 2025 Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK\_ Small\_Animal\_Auction.html

#### August 16, 2025

#### Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

West Central WI Pigeon and Poultry Club Fall Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/West\_ Central\_WI\_Pigeon\_Poultry\_Club\_Swap.html

#### August 16, 2025 Medford, Wisconsin

Taylor County Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Taylor\_ County\_Swap.html

#### August 23, 2025 Ridgeland, Wisconsin

RiceStonian Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ RiceStonian\_Swap.html

#### August 30, 2025 Neillsville, Wisconsin

Neillsville Small Animal Swap & Market https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Neillsville\_Small\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### September 6, 2025 Wausau, Wisconsin

Northwoods Poultry Fanciers Club Show https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Northwoods\_Poultry\_Fanciers\_Club\_Show.html

#### September 6, 2025 Elk Mound, Wisconsin

Elk Mound Animal Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Elk\_ Mound\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### September 6, 2025 Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin

Tri-City Riding Club Dale Carlson Small Animal Swap Meet https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Tri-City\_ Riding\_Club\_Dale\_Carlson\_Swap.html

#### September 13, 2025 Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK\_ Small\_Animal\_Auction.html

#### September 27-28, 2025 Portage, Wisconsin

Wisconsin International Poultry Club https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Wisconsin\_International\_Poultry\_Club.html

#### September 27, 2025 Medford, Wisconsin

Taylor County Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/Taylor\_ County\_Swap.html

#### September 27, 2025 Neillsville, Wisconsin

Neillsville Small Animal Swap & Market https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ Neillsville\_Small\_Animal\_Swap.html

#### September 27, 2025 Ridgeland, Wisconsin

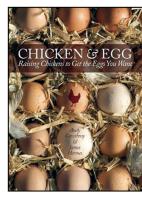
RiceStonian Swap https://www.poultryshowcentral.com/ RiceStonian\_Swap.html

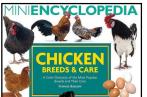


#### **CHICKEN & EGG**

Many states have overturned laws that made backyard poultry keeping illegal and embraced the new generation of small-scale egg producers in the USA. Chicken & Egg is designed for this broad readership but with a determinedly egg-centric focus. It offers a complete reference to raising chickens and other poultry purely for their eggs, from choosing the best-laying breeds, understanding broody behavior, and producing the most colorful egg selections. Featuring artwork guides to the top twenty species and Why Did The Chicken...? problem-solving panels, it is both a gorgeous gift and essential reference.







#### MINI ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHICKEN BREEDS & CARE

This book is packed with sensible advice and practical guidance for all aspiring poultry keepers. It explores all aspects of keeping chickens, including housing, day-to-day management, feeding, breeding, chicken behavior, and - for those who take special pride in their breeds - showing at fairs. This down-to-earth and useful book can get anyone started on keeping chickens or help your current flock prosper.

932 \$19.95 Sale Price: \$15.96



#### STITCHIN' CHICKEN EMBROIDERY KIT

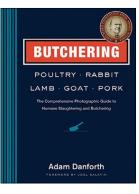
Stitchin' Chicken Embroidery Kit includes designs for crafters of all levels. With a nod to folk-art motifs, these designs have timeless appeal. This collection contains an overview of basic embroidery stitches, original patterns, and instructions for creating each design. Included with the kit are materials to make any two of the ten projects in the book.

#12650 \$22.99 Sale Price: \$18.40

#### BUTCHERING POULTRY, RABBIT, LAMB, GOAT AND PORK

Butchering Poultry, Rabbit, Lamb, Goat, and Pork uses detailed, step-by-step photography to show every stage of the butchering process. From creating the right pre-slaughter conditions to killing, skinning, keeping cold, breaking the meat down, and creating cuts of meat you'll recognize from the market, author Adam Danforth walks you through every step, leaving nothing to chance.

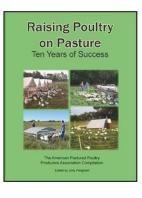
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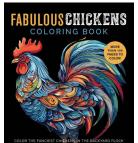


#### RAISING POULTRY ON PASTURE: TEN YEARS OF SUCCESS

A comprehensive guidebook for those interested in raising poultry on pasture. Numerous articles from various authors, each highlighting their "lessons learned" and "best practices." Organized in an easy-to-use format, the topics discussed range from brooding to processing, laying hens to broilers and turkeys. This book offers everything from the basics to the finest details shared by successful pastured poultry producers.

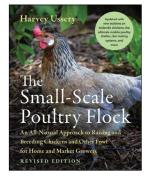
#7803 \$34.50 Sale Price: \$19.95





#### **FABULOUS CHICKENS COLORING BOOK**

Calling all chicken enthusiasts, bird watchers, and nature lovers! It's time to roost and relax with Fabulous Chickens Coloring Book.
Fancy chickens (that's really what they're called!) are hugely popular among hobby farmers, homesteaders, and backyard chicken enthusiasts in the U.S. and abroad. Not only do they provide eggs and make great pets and companions, they're also beautiful to behold.
#12647 \$10.99 Sale Price: \$8.80



#### THE SMALL-SCALE POULTRY FLOCK

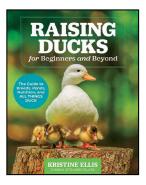
The Small-Scale Poultry Flock provides a comprehensive reference for all homesteaders on the details of raising chickens for eggs and meat. Includes professional advice in flock planning, housing, feed, health, processing, and developing small commercial opportunities. Also included is step-by-step photographs of important processes and procedures. A series of appendices include detailed plans for poultry structures, recipes, and sample documents for flock management.

#11750 \$39.95 Sale Price: \$31.96

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#### RAISING DUCKS FOR BEGINNERS AND BEYOND

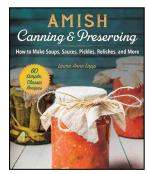
Raising ducks may seem like all fun and games thanks to the adorable and silly birds, but what most people don't realize is just how much work it takes to successfully keep them healthy and happy. The truth is that it's not difficult, but it does require time, effort, and knowledge. Through her social media channels, Kristine shares many different aspects of her experience with raising ducks. She shows the good, the bad, and everything in between. #12493 \$24.99 Sale Price: \$19.99



#### **AMISH CANNING & PRESERVING**

The Amish are known for their canning practices, which are essential to communities of large families and even larger gardens. Written by Amish writer Laura Anne Lapp, Amish Canning & Preserving offers 60 classic recipes for all varieties of fresh garden-made fruits and vegetables. Recipes are written with Amish-style simplicity and no-nonsense instructions, perfect for novices and experienced preservationists alike. Recipes include a multitude of homemade pickles, relishes, brines, and more.

#12097 \$16.99 Sale Price: \$13.59



# ER-CAN

#### **BEER-CAN CHICKEN**

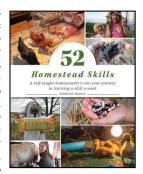
An essential addition to every grill jockey's library, Beer-Can Chicken presents foolproof recipes for the ultimate poultry grilling technique, plus the perfect sides and desserts to go with it. Famed author Steven Raichlen also shares his favorite "beerless bird" recipes and provides detailed instructions for other clever ways to cook your chicken — like Stoned Chicken and Welder's Chicken.

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#### 52 HOMESTEAD SKILLS

Mother Earth News' 52 Homestead Skills follows homesteader Kimberlee Bastien, as she learns one homesteading skill per week over the course of an entire year. The book details all of Bastien's adventures, from building a beehive and becoming a beekeeper to creating her own laundry and dish soap. Whether you already live on a homestead, are transitioning onto one, or are only thinking about it, 52 Homestead Skills will help turn your dreams into a life worth living. #9058

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#### 3.5 LITER DIGITAL AIR FRYER

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#### THE AIR FRYER BIBLE

The Air Fryer Bible cookbook shows you how to make the most of this hugely popular appliance to create more than 200 amazing dishes. These recipes will save you time, promote heart health, and can even help with weight loss. They're easy enough for a beginner, and your whole family will love them.

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dehydrator for any home cook wanting to make high-quality dried goods in the comfort of their own kitchen.

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#### JERKY: THE COMPLETE **GUIDE TO MAKING IT**

Make beef jerky, venison jerky, and much more ... all without preservatives with names you can't pronounce. In this DIY guide to making your own jerky in an oven, smoker, or food dehydrator with beef, venison, poultry, or fish, you'll learn the basics for concocting a simple teriyaki marinade as well as easy gourmet recipes for such exotic jerky delights as Bloody Mary, chicken tandoori, mole, Cajun, and honeyed salmon jerky! \$17.99 Sale Price: \$14.39



#### 101 ONE DISH DINNERS

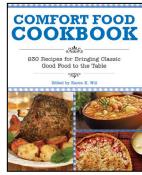
In 101 One-Dish Dinners, Andrea Chesman shows off the versatility of Dutch ovens, skillets, and casserole pans. Classic baked dishes like ham and potato gratin, chicken potpie, and vegetable lasagna go head-tohead with diverse stove top suppers like iambalaya, seafood paella, and pad Thai. For those looking for something a little lighter but still filling, there are plenty of meal-in-a-bowl salads and timeless soups. Serve up a nourishing meal tonight with little fuss and fewer dishes!

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#### COMFORT FOOD COOKBOOK

Open up the Comfort Food Cookbook and discover how easy it is to make delicious comfort food with a few wholesome ingredients that will bring the whole family together. With 230 recipes from the archives of long-running country lifestyle magazine Grit, you're sure to find your next favorite meal!

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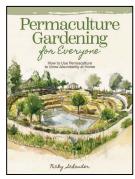
Through engaging storytelling, practical advice, and step-by-step instructions, EJ Snyder empowers readers with the tools necessary to thrive amidst uncertainty so they can unlock their potential, embrace the adventurer within, and embark on an awe-inspiring journey of knowledge and self-discovery. *Emergency Home Preparedness* is the essential guide to uncovering the secrets of survival, resilience, and the indomitable human spirit in the face of any challenge.

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#### PERMACULTURE GARDENING FOR EVERYONE

Nicky Schauder starts by defining permaculture, then goes on to offer advice on designing a garden, choosing your plants, starting your seeds, designing a garden plot, transplanting the seedlings, maintaining your plot, and harvesting the bounty. Take the opportunity this book provides to start your own journey on growing food to help keep your family happy and healthy while becoming more self-sufficient and less reliant on a commercial food chain.

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#### THE SEVEN-STEP HOMESTEAD

In *The Seven-Step Homestead*, author Leah M. Webb takes readers through the process of developing their own homestead with a series of doable steps. Step-by-step photos from the author's own homestead, accompanied by her hard-earned advice and instruction, make this a one-of-a-kind guide for anyone who aspires to grow more of their own food.

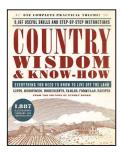
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Country Wisdom & Know-How is an unprecedented collection of information on nearly 200 individual topics of country and self-sustainable living.

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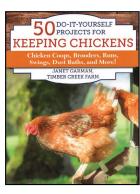
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#### 50 DO-IT-YOURSELF PROJECTS FOR KEEPING CHICKENS

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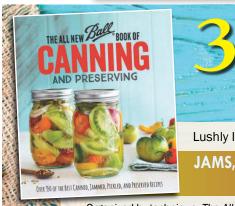
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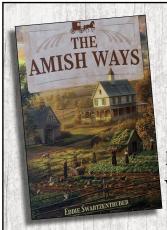
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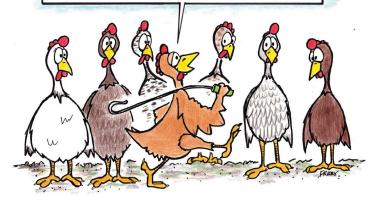


#### Backyard Poultry Word Search, August/September 2025

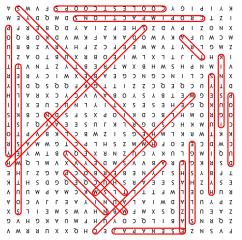
Have fun completing this word scramble! Most of the words are found in this issue of Backyard Poultry.



### Let's go Ladies, shell em out! A drop in production means a drop in a pot.



#### Answer Key



## Show us your art skills by coloring this picture!

Enjoy this coloring page! Once you're done, snap a picture and send it to us via email at editor@backyardpoultrymag.com or via snail mail at *Backyard Poultry*,
Attn: Coloring Pages, 1503 SW 42nd St, Topeka, KS 66609.





#### A colorful selection of art submitted by our readers!

Color the picture on the previous page and your picture could be published in the next issue!







- 1. Aurora & London Fulbright, ages 10 & 12;
- 2. Ava Heppe, age 12; 3. Fiona McCall, age 10;
- 4. Irene, age 12; 5. Jeremiah Jackson, age 5;
- **6.** Lester Parks, age 90 years young; **7.** Lulu, age 4;
  - 8. Mary Koszuta, age 67;
  - 9. Natalie Campbell, age 16;
    - 10. Vicki J Nelson, age 72;
- 11. SaxtonKrostag, age 7; 12. AnitaKrostag, age 7;
  - 13. Aryanna Krostag, age 12;
  - 14. Sophia Krostag, age 16



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**CLEAN UP!** Wash your hands and tools before and after. Protect food, water and litter from wild birds, pests and pets.

**DIVIDE UP!** Separate your species. This virus can move from birds to mammals and back.

**BRUSH UP!** Learn the signs of avian influenza in your flock and learn how to report it.



From backyards to barnyards, let's band together on biosecurity! The USDA has checklists, info, and tools online — to help you **Defend the Flock.** 

