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America's Favorite Poultry Magazine

APRIL/MAY 2026 • VOLUME 21, NUMBER 2

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Contents April/May 2026

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 04 **Editor's Letter**
- 06 **Photo Essay:**
Caywood Coop
- 10 **Flocks to Follow**
- 12 **Flock Photos:**
The best of the best submissions via snail mail and our social sites.
- 14 **Poultry News**
- 16 **Something to Crow About**
- 60 **Coming Events**
- 64 **Recommended Products**
- 67 **Marketplace**
- 68 **Breeders Directory & Classifieds**
- 70 **Just for Fun**

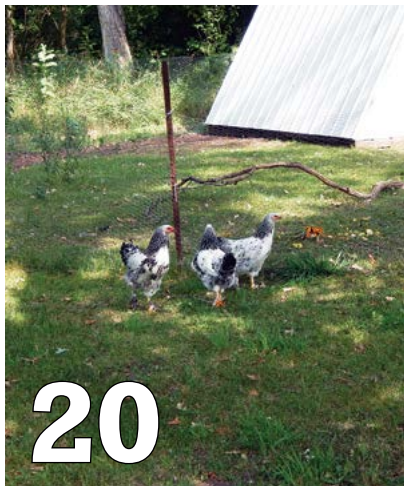
ARTICLES

- 18 **Picking Show Chicks**
By Sherri Talbot
- 20 **Free-Range, Second-Year Laying Hens**
By Doug Ottinger
- 24 **Chicken Terms for Beginners**
By Erin Snyder
- 28 **Tired of Being Mother Hen? Try Heritage Chickens**
By Bruce Ingram
- 30 **Do Chickens Mourn?**
By Erin Snyder
- 34 **My Chicken, Sierra**
By Gina Stack
- 38 **What's Cooking at the Firehouse?**
By Cappy Tosetti

- 42 **Using Herbs in the Coop**
By Karen Kopf
- 46 **Entertaining Ducks**
By Sherri Talbot
- 50 **Duck-Assisted Therapy**
By Mark Hall
- 52 **Breed Profile: Shamo Chickens**
By Kenny Coogan

RECIPES

- 56 **Celebration Cakes From Scratch**
By Rita Heikenfeld



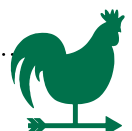
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From the Editor

It's April, and most of us are finally leaving cold, blustery temperatures behind as spring settles in. It's a time of new beginnings. One of those new beginnings is me at the helm of *Backyard Poultry*. I've kept a flock of chickens for over 20 years, and I've kept ducks and geese in the past. My flock is a bunch of urban chickens, if you can call a tiny town out on the Kansas prairie—without a single stoplight—urban. Even so, they're used to human noise, and not much bothers them at all. They do, however, like to have their beaks in our business and want to know what's going on. To that end, know that I won't be guiding this magazine alone. Penny, my most nosy—and least likely to be where she's supposed to be—hen has appointed herself assistant editor. Because, clearly, she knows much more about all of this than a human. I get the feeling she plans to peck me if I don't do as she thinks is best.

Speaking of knowing what's best, Sherri Talbot makes sure we know what to look for when you're searching for the best chick to raise for the show ring. Not all chicks will have what it takes to compete.

When it comes to chicks, not every human wants to deal with a brooder and being a mother hen. That was the case for Bruce Ingram, and he shares the solution he and his wife arrived at so they aren't faced with being chicken parents.

Once your chicks have grown into hens and have reached their second year, they're likely ready to be reliable free-rangers. Doug Ottinger tells us why he thinks second-year hens are well-suited to the free-range lifestyle.

Eventually, those hens will reach the end of their lives. Erin Snyder addresses how a hen's death can affect your flock and how to help should you have a grieving hen.

If that's a sadder subject than you want to deal with, you can instead have a quacking good time learning about duck-assisted therapy, as Mark Hall shows us how our aquatically inclined feathered friends can bring smiles and healing to those in need.

Spring is a busy season; make sure to take a moment and relax with this issue of *Backyard Poultry*.

Audra Trosper (and Penny)



Audra, *Backyard Poultry* Editor-in-Chief.



Penny, Assistant Editor.



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CAYWOOD COOP

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHANIE CAYWOOD



The story of the Caywood Coop

starts off like so many. Inherited flock goes to a (pregnant) girl who knows nothing about chickens. Girl learns everything about chickens. Girl defends her chickens from bears like an absolute lunatic. Girl raises her baby with chickens while obsessing over chickens. Girl graduates from “crazy chicken lady” to full-blown chicken farmer; there’s a difference. The coop grows a little, the flock size grows a lot, and everyone lives happily ever after.

The details form the story of when the happily-ever-after part started. The varied egg colors, the different breeds, the favorite birds, the losses, the wins, the heartbreak, and the growth. Hi, my name is Stephanie Caywood, and I’m the owner of Caywood Coop.

Caywood is my married name, and what we named the 40-plus acres of property we moved onto in 2018. Caywood was and still is “the dream.” What dream that might be isn’t a completely defined, tangible thing. We have so much potential right in front of us, right under our feet; we can literally reach out and touch it with our bare hands. However, turning that potential into what we see in our dreams takes

time and even more money. So we do what we can with what we have and try not to make too many poor financial decisions while enjoying our time together as a family.

When I first started the Caywood Coop, it was a new and exciting hobby I could never have imagined I’d enjoy. I grew up in the “city” of Billings, Montana. So it shocked everyone when we moved to a farmhouse—and not one of those cute farmhouses like you see on the trendy shows and social media. This was a dilapidated, rickety, two-times-added-on-to house with shoddy workmanship. It even had a gaudy propane tank sitting right out front, but I’d never felt more at home.

The coop came naturally, another shock to everyone. How hard and deep I dove into the chicken game was... mind-blowing, but how right it felt was even more so. As time went on, seasons came and went, and the coop evolved and morphed into different things. The birds led the way, but I constantly felt as though I was being expanded, fractured, and hardened, building my confidence with each decision I made. That’s enough of my history though; let’s get into the good stuff and geek out like the bird nerds we are.

I don't often ask, "What's your favorite breed of chicken?" I'm more interested in people's least favorite breeds and why. Speckled Sussex is my number one "never again," but Sapphire Splash is a close second. The Sussexes I had were "meh" at best, sickly, and didn't fit with our group; it just came down to a feeling on those. The Splashes, on the other hand, were a little too hardcore. Probably some of the best layers I've ever encountered, the noisiest birds by far, and hardy beyond belief. I had one particular Sapphire Splash that was, without exaggeration, completely naked for a full year. I watched her diligently, but she ate, drank, laid, and chickened with the best of them. I eventually culled her because I couldn't sell a naked chicken, and she was incredibly aggressive toward everyone. When I butchered her, I found the most healthy, unlaidd eggs that I'd ever seen inside a hen. So, why never again? I've never had so much bloodshed in our flock. When I say aggressive, I mean it. Every single one of them in my pen was the same way.

I also want to know if you're a Rhode Island Red die-hard or a "no way" kind of person, because I've found there's no in-between. I'm no exception; I'll walk right by those "hardy" chicks every time and take a handful of New Hampshire Reds without even blinking an eye. I'll ask, "Do you use lime or diatomaceous earth (DE)?" just to really get people fired up. In our coop, we live and breathe with a light layer of DE on everything, and have no shame about it. And when it comes to the spring shipment chick craze and standing in line at the farm and ranch stores, I've done my fair share. I truly enjoy listening to what everyone has to say, not judgmentally but more of understanding where they are in their own personal chicken journey, because I can relate to almost all of them.

Being a chicken farmer has brought me so much more than just beautiful, multicolored, farm-fresh eggs. It's built a part of me that I never knew

existed and shown me limits within myself that I'm proud to say took a lot of hard work to find. Owning and caring for a flock of birds is as elementary as it comes. I've found the beauty in taking it a little more seriously than

some, but not as much as others. At the end of each day and season, I'm proud of what my birds and I have accomplished. I get to feel good about all the work I've put in, and I'm happy with the life we've built. ●



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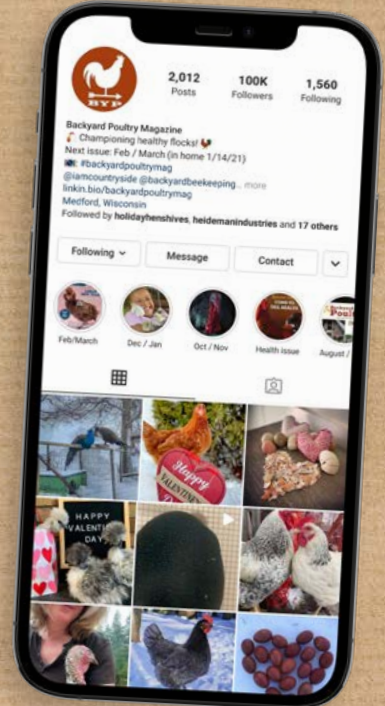
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Waiting for her turn because she **HAS** to have this box. — Audra Trospen



Part of my flock. — Audra Trospen



— Cheryl K. Smith





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.

Backyard Boom Fuels a Rooster Crisis

The backyard chicken movement continues to grow, fueled by interest in local food, sustainability, and animal connection. But animal sanctuaries across the country say a less visible consequence of this boom is becoming impossible to ignore: an overwhelming surplus of roosters.

Cathy Rogers, Executive Director of FlipFlops Animal Sanctuary, sees the

fallout daily. "If you don't want to add to the rooster epidemic, don't let your backyard flock hatch out any eggs," she says.

The issue often begins innocently. New chicken keepers incubate eggs for educational purposes or purchase straight-run chicks to save money. What many fail to plan for is simple genetics.

"Don't buy straight run chicks... half or more will be roosters," Rogers warns.

As chicks mature, crowing quickly becomes a problem in residential neighborhoods. Many municipalities prohibit roosters, leaving owners scrambling to

rehome birds that may be only a few months old. Online listings offering "free roosters" are common, but successful placements are rare.

"Nobody's going to give your roosters a good home," Rogers says. "Someone might take them to eat them, and shelters are overrun with roosters already."

FlipFlops Animal Sanctuary is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit rescue that's entirely volunteer-run. Rogers emphasizes that every donated dollar goes directly to animal care, yet the influx of unwanted roosters has pushed many sanctuaries beyond capacity. Roosters require individual housing in many instances, long-term care, and specialized management, making them significantly more resource-intensive than hens.

Sanctuary operators say prevention is the most humane solution. Purchasing sexed chicks, avoiding casual incubation, and understanding local ordinances before acquiring birds can dramatically reduce the number of roosters entering an already overwhelmed rescue system.



Oklahoma Poultry Pollution Case Sparks Political Clash

In Oklahoma, poultry production has become the center of a public dispute that extends far beyond the barnyard.

The state's attorney general recently accused the governor of spreading misinformation regarding a court judgment tied to poultry pollution, which stemmed from a long-running case focused on environmental

damage allegedly caused by poultry litter runoff, particularly in watersheds affected by excess phosphorus.

Poultry litter — a mixture of manure and bedding material — is widely used as fertilizer. When applied responsibly, it can improve soil health. When overapplied or improperly managed, nutrients can leach into waterways, contributing to algal blooms, oxygen depletion, and long-term ecosystem damage.

The attorney general has argued that the judgment represents a meaningful acknowledgment of environmental harm and accountability. In contrast, the governor's office has framed the ruling as narrow and cautioned against portraying it as a sweeping condemnation of the poultry industry.

The dispute has placed poultry producers in a difficult position. Many farmers argue that they've followed recommended practices for years and fear the ruling could lead to stricter regulations, increased costs, or legal uncertainty. Environmental advocates counter that legacy pollution requires decisive action, regardless of intent.

For the broader poultry community, the case highlights the growing intersection of agriculture, environmental science, and politics. It also underscores the importance of transparent communication. When legal decisions are filtered through political messaging, public trust — both in government and in agriculture — can erode quickly.

Bird Flu Contained, but Not Defeated

After years of disruption, the United States succeeded in significantly reducing outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza in 2025. Enhanced surveillance, faster response times, and stricter biosecurity protocols helped slow the spread of a disease that previously decimated flocks and sent egg prices soaring.

Despite this progress, scientists and poultry health experts agree that the threat is far from over.

Avian influenza continues to circulate in wild bird populations, particularly migratory waterfowl that act as natural reservoirs. Seasonal

migrations create recurring windows of risk, especially for outdoor and free-range flocks.

Commercial poultry operations have invested heavily in biosecurity infrastructure, but backyard keepers often face greater challenges. Shared water sources, contact with wild birds, and limited space make complete isolation difficult. In some cases, flock owners may not recognize early symptoms or may hesitate to report illness.

The recent success in managing outbreaks has reinforced the importance of vigilance. Practices once considered optional — such as restricting coop access, changing footwear, and disinfecting equipment — are increasingly viewed as baseline responsibilities.

The experience of 2025 also reshaped public awareness. Consumers became more conscious of the connection between poultry health, food prices, and supply stability. For poultry keepers at every scale, avian influenza is no longer an abstract risk but a recurring reality that requires ongoing attention.

Protein Markets Shift Beneath Poultry Producers

While disease and legal battles dominate headlines, economic forces are quietly reshaping the poultry sector.

Recent analysis from Rabobank indicates that global animal protein markets are entering a period of transition. Poultry remains one of the most affordable and efficient sources of animal protein, but rising feed costs, labor shortages, and geopolitical instability are tightening margins.

In many regions, poultry consumption continues to grow, driven by

affordability and a perception of lower environmental impact compared to red meat. At the same time, consumer preferences are fragmenting. Plant-based proteins, hybrid products (which include blended meat, such as chicken nuggets with 80% chicken and 20% plant protein), and emerging alternatives (plant-based proteins and lab-grown meat) are drawing investment and media attention, even as traditional poultry remains dominant.

For producers, the outlook suggests cautious optimism paired with adaptability. Disease resilience, efficiency, and transparency are becoming increasingly important. Operations that can demonstrate responsible practices, whether environmental stewardship or animal welfare, may be better positioned in a changing market.

Backyard poultry keepers may feel insulated from global protein economics, but these trends influence feed prices, chick availability, and public perception of poultry keeping itself. What happens in international markets often reaches the coop door sooner than expected. ●

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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Keeping Things Warm

We live in Michigan and have 14 birds and two coops—one insulated, one not. We do deep litter with 8 inches of hemp as a base and a good layer on straw on top. We use a 400-watt infrared wall heater in the insulated coop and nothing in the second coop, and it works great. No threat of fire. On a 25 degrees F day, it's 45 degrees in there. I believe we've found the answer to the question of whether to heat or not. With our coops, they have a choice, and I know for a fact that when a chicken feels a bit under the weather, a nice roosting bar close to some warmth is the ticket.

Thanks,

Ron and Elizabeth, Michigan

Politically Correct Much?

This is America, not Iran or Somalia! Why would I care about receiving an email from you talking about halal chicken?

Time to unsubscribe!

João Barroso

.....

There's no need to be in another country to learn about halal. The United States is a melting pot of people and cultures. Many U.S. citizens practice halal, and given that it's about humane responsibility and respect for the animals, most people who learn about it are in favor of it.

Audra

Hen or Rooster

I have a Buff Orpington named Buttercup. At first, it seemed like she was going to be a hen, but now she looks, talks, and acts like a rooster. What's going on?

Oliver Sommers

.....

It's easy to mistake roosters and hens when they're young. Some are obviously one or the other almost, but then a few will keep you guessing right up until they either lay an egg or crow. Now, there are times when a hen experiences changes that make her more like a rooster. You can read about that in this article on our website: www.BackyardPoultry.com/chickens-101/spontaneous-sex-reversal-poultry/

Audra

In Response to "Duck Eggs vs. Chicken Eggs"

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Debbie Fleischer

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CHICKENS, CHICKENS, CHICKENS

Picking Show Chicks

Chicks to raise for the ring aren't a feedstore find.

BY SHERRI TALBOT

For new chicken

owners interested in showing their birds, knowing how to begin can be a challenge. Local poultry clubs, videos from the American Poultry Association, and attending chicken shows can help people learn breed standards, what to expect from judges, and how birds will be judged.

However, if you're buying your first fluffy chicks, how do you know which ones will grow up to be ribbon winners? The short answer is: you don't. Many of the traits your chickens will be judged on won't appear until later in their lives. You'll need to buy many chicks to find the few with show ring potential. Nevertheless, you can rule out the chicks that aren't suited for your program early to help boost your showing plans.

Research

The first and most immediate need is to research the breed you're interested in. As with any new chicken owner, you'll want to find out if it has any special needs, whether it will thrive in your environment, and its production value. Even when raising birds for show, you'll have some birds that aren't show quality, and knowing their other uses will be helpful.

Breeders interested in showing need to do additional research. Breed standards are the most obvious need, since different breeds must meet different requirements. You also need to make sure your chosen variety qualifies for poultry shows. Even some well-established varieties, such as the Bielefelder aren't accepted by the APA and are therefore ineligible for the ring.

Where to Shop

Where you buy your chicks is an important consideration. Hatcheries and big-box companies may be fine for backyard egg layers, but they rarely meet breed standards for the ring. Judges tell stories of people who enter chickens into poultry shows that aren't even the breed the owners believed the bird to be!

Buying from local breeders will allow you a look at the parents, since many show breeders track parentage carefully. Again, how closely the parents fit the breed standard isn't a guarantee of the chicks, but it's a good starting point. Mail-ordered chicks make this impossible, of course, even if they come from a show breeder, but you should at least be able to ask for pictures.

Chick Check

Buying local lets you assess the health of the birds. You want chicks that are actively exploring their surroundings, not huddled together, and not the “outcast” chicks that make you feel sorry for them. In the chicken world, there’s often a reason a chick is an outcast, and you don’t want those birds in your breeding program.

Look closely at the feet, body, and eyes. Avoid chicks with spraddle legs or crooked toes—these defects will likely disqualify birds when they go to show. Make sure the back toe curves back, not forward. Know the color requirements for legs, feet, and toes in your breed, and ensure they match. Again, while this doesn’t guarantee a show-worthy bird, it at least weeds out some of the cull stock early on.

“Pasty butt” may be common in chicks, but it’s still a health issue, and these chicks should be avoided. The beak should be straight and free of malformations. Chick down should be fluffy, dry, and soft to the touch. It can also be useful to find a chick that has distinct markings. This will allow you to verify that you’re getting what you paid for and rule out some chicks with flawed markings early on.

The eyes should be clear, and there should be no respiratory distress sounds. Respiratory issues can also pass to chicks stored in the same area, even if the birds you choose aren’t showing symptoms when you visit.

DIY

To keep a long-term supply of chicks, bring in several genetic lines and be prepared to start your own breeding program. There’s a chance your initial stock won’t be show quality, no matter how careful you are. And, in the long run, your birds



will someday need to be replaced. Breeding your own offspring means a steady supply of birds in the future.

It will be important to know what to look for in adults, both physically and genetically, and even more important to learn to cull those that don’t work for your program. The more you can learn about breeding, genetics, and chicken health, the more prepared you’ll be for success.

Rare Breeds

It may be tempting to work with a rare breed in hopes of having less competition. However, the initial rounds of judging are often based on breed standards, not just against the other birds. Even if you have the only Red Cap at the show, there’s no guarantee of a blue ribbon if standards aren’t met.

Show Quality Costs

Healthy, show-quality chicks aren’t inexpensive, so don’t expect to pay backyard chicken prices for them. The more that’s gone into the breeding program, the more they’re likely to cost. Be prepared to ask them about their program if the price seems higher than you find reasonable. You may discover more has gone into their chicks than is initially evident. ●

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 www.Facebook.com/saffronandhoneyhomestead.



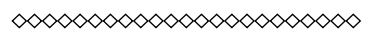
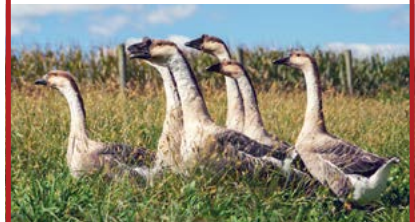
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CHICKENS, CHICKENS, CHICKENS



FREE-RANGE, SECOND-YEAR LAYING HENS

Settled and savvy foragers can reduce your feed bill.

Birds on range still need secure shelters at night.

BY DOUG OTTINGER

Most laying hens,

especially those from breeds and strains bred for high first-year production, are often known for significant drops in second-year production. By the end of the second laying year, many of these breeds or strains have exhausted their laying capacity and end up costing much more to keep than the value of any eggs they produce. Examples of these high-production breeds or strains include commercial White Leghorn strains, commercial sex-links, and breeds such as Rhode Island Reds or New Hampshire Reds, if from family lines maintained solely for high egg production.

Many dual-purpose breeds (raised for both meat and eggs) and several landrace breeds fell out of favor 60 to 80 years ago. After World War II, U.S. poultry and egg production shifted from dual-purpose birds, maintained at least partially on pasture and forage, to high-production laying hens and rapid-growth broilers, raised in entirely enclosed housing systems and fed only

commercial, high-protein feed. Dual-purpose fowl were heavier, consumed much more feed, and laid fewer eggs. The meat production capabilities of these birds couldn't match the rapid growth of the broilers being developed. Consequently, most dual-purpose fowl became economically nonviable in high-production systems.

If you have land for your birds to forage on, you may find that many dual-purpose breeds, some landrace

breeds, and even a few high-production breeds can be extremely economical egg producers during their second laying year, if allowed to free-range and forage for much of their own food. While egg production may still be 40% lower than in the first laying year (a normal decline



Hungarian Yellows are top-notch foragers. Photo credit: Grade Eh Farms.



Barred Rocks are excellent foragers and second-year producers. Photo credit: Happy Feet Hatchery.

PHOTO CREDIT: TOP: DOUG OTTINGER; LEFT: GRADE EH FARMS; RIGHT: HAPPY FEET HATCHERY

for high-production breeds), older layers that forage for themselves can significantly reduce the consumption of purchased feed, which makes the cost of producing eggs much lower. As a producer and seller of eggs at our local farmers market, I find that the highest profit, for every dozen eggs I sell, comes from my second-year laying hens that are allowed to forage for much of their own feed.

Eggs from hens in their second laying year tend to be much larger and heavier. Unfortunately, shell quality can lessen as well. Calcium reserves in the bodies of higher-production breeds are easily depleted during the first laying season. While not always the case, it's not uncommon for second-year laying hens that free-range on green pasture or a vast expanse of lawn to have better shell quality than their counterparts kept in enclosed systems. The nutritional components in green forages are much higher than many people realize.

Gallinaceous birds (fowl group that includes chickens, pheasants, and turkeys), whether wild or domesticated, will consume voluminous amounts of green forage, including young grasses, when available. In spring and summer, fowl foraging for their own feed can extract surprisingly high amounts of protein, minerals, and carbohydrates from these natural feedstuffs. According to Gustave F. Heuser in *Feeding Poultry* (first published in 1955), young, green grass can contain protein levels as high as 30% (calculated on a dry-weight basis). Young grasses can also contain surprisingly high levels of sugar, supplying needed carbohydrates. Another textbook from the same period, *Poultry Science and Practice*, by A.R. Winter and E.M. Funk, makes the following statement: "All the vitamin requirements are taken care of when birds have a good green, young, and tender grass range." Green feeds are also known to help produce eggs with high interior quality and deep-yellow or orange yolks.

Poultry that free-range and forage on their own will consume a host of

insects and other invertebrates, as well as mice and lizards. As summer progresses, plants produce mature seeds, and a myriad of seeds will form a large part of the diet. However, green plants play a more significant role in the nutritional panoply.

Supplying free-range poultry with a choice of grain-based feed or commercial laying ration, plus ground oyster shells for calcium, is still recommended, in case the foraging options become inadequate. However, many poultry keepers will notice a marked decrease in commercial feed consumption. Most poultry, including laying hens, have an affinity for foraging their own food if allowed to do so.

Allowing your second-year laying hens to free-range and forage much of their own feed doesn't mean that they're neglected and left 24 hours a day outdoors or roost outside at night. A secure coop should still be provided, with standard nesting boxes for them

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to lay in. Second-year producers will go inside to lay in the familiar nesting boxes and return to the coop at dusk. Whether you manually open the coop after daylight and close it at dusk or use an automatic door, ensure it's sturdy enough to withstand nocturnal predators.

Some people who free-range their laying flocks choose to start all of their layers, including their young pullets, on a free-range forage system. This is a viable option, but I like to make sure the idea of sleeping in the coop and laying in

the nesting boxes is well ingrained into their little chicken brains. Young pullets can be quite flighty and aren't always the most skilled at avoiding predators. If not habituated to using the nests in the coop, young pullets and hens can be notorious for finding hidden places to make their own nests and laying in hard-to-find spots. Many bantams, regardless of age, are also known for this trait. If roosters are in the flock, it's not uncommon for young males, which have just reached puberty, to form harems of young pullets, enticing them to roost in trees or shrubs

with them at night instead of the safety of the coop. For these reasons, I prefer to keep young pullets in an enclosed coop and yard for the first half of the initial laying season.

Many chicken breeds can make excellent, economical, free-range egg producers. Some books and websites recommend using lighter-weight Mediterranean-type fowl for their alertness. Mediterranean breeds are also known as reliable layers. However, many old-fashioned, dual-purpose breeds are beautiful and make dependable second-year producers in free-range systems. I highly recommend trying some of these.

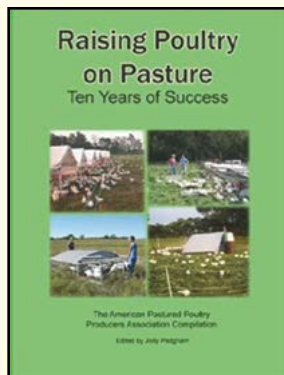
Three older American farm breeds that are good foragers and dependable second-year layers include Delaware, Barred Plymouth Rock, and Jersey Giant. Unfortunately, Jersey Giants are sometimes prone to predator attacks when foraging, largely due to their sweet, trusting dispositions.

A few European landrace breeds that may be hard to source in North America, but make excellent foragers and second-year producers, include the Hungarian Yellow, Bielefelder, and Basque Hen. Hungary has designated the Hungarian Yellow as one of their national treasures. Bielefelder is native to the farmland of the Lower-Rhine. Basque Hens are from the Basque regions of Northern Spain and Southwest France.

This year, when ordering new chicks, consider a few old-fashioned, dual-purpose breeds known to be good foragers and second-year producers. You might be pleasantly surprised at the results. ●



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DOUG OTTINGER lives, works, and writes from his small hobby farm in northwest Minnesota. His educational background is in agriculture with an emphasis in poultry and avian science.



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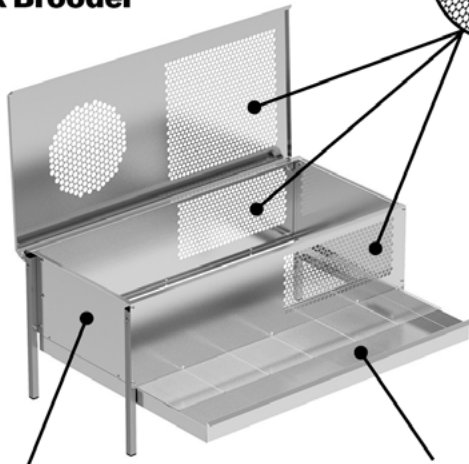
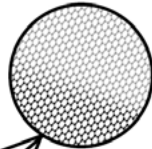


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Chicken Terms for Beginners

Learn the language of the chicken world.

BY ERIN SNYDER



Hen: Until the female chicken reaches one year old, she remains a pullet. After the first year of life, pullets become hens and are sometimes referred to as mature laying hens.

Anatomy

Comb: The comb is the red, fleshy growth on the top of the head.

Earlobe: The fleshy part of the face directly behind the ear is called the earlobe. Although it may appear ornamental, the earlobe helps protect the ear canal and maintain temperature regulation in the inner ear.

Wattles: The red fleshy lobes dangling from a chicken's chin.

Keel: The breastbone running from the crop area past the wings. An interesting fact about the keel is that it works like an anchor, aiding in a chicken's strong wing flapping.

Chicken terminology can be confusing, especially for those new to the hobby. However, learning chicken terms can be helpful, so let's take a moment to cover a variety of terms you're likely to encounter in the world of chickens.

General Terms

Chick: Baby chickens are called chicks from the time of hatching until they reach the age of 6 to 12 weeks.

Cockerel: The name given to male chicks when they reach 6 to 12 weeks of age.

Pullet: Female chicks are called pullets after the first 6 to 12 weeks of life.

Started Pullets: A name given to young pullets about to reach the point of laying eggs. These pullets are raised by an individual or hatchery for sale to backyard flock owners who aren't interested in raising their own chicks.

Cock/Rooster: A cockerel becomes a cock/rooster at the age of one year.

CHICKEN ANATOMY

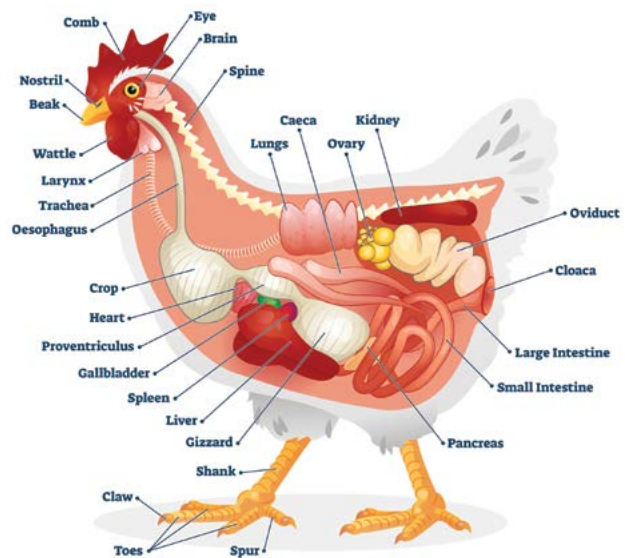


PHOTO CREDIT: TOP: ADOBE/STOCK/ Annabell Gsödi, Bottom: AdobeStock/VectorMine

Spurs: The long nail on the back of a rooster's leg used to fight other roosters and intruders (including humans).

Saddle Feathers: The long, curving feathers near the edge of the back. Hens sport rounder, shorter saddle feathers, but theirs are less noticeable than a rooster's.

Cloaca: Also called the vent, is the orifice for digestive waste, mating, and egg laying.

Rooster Terms

Flogging: This behavior takes place when roosters are fighting. During flogging, roosters run and fly at their target and beat them with their wings and spurs.

Cock-eyed: Did you know the term "cock-eyed" actually comes from a rooster's behavior? When in close proximity to a human, aggressive roosters shuffle their feet, cock their heads, and give a side-eye stare.

Capon: A castrated rooster.

Egg Terms

Eggs are such a big part of a chicken keeper's vocabulary that it's little wonder they have their own terms.

Albumen: The white of an egg.

Bloom: Also known as the cuticle, the bloom is the protective wash that covers the eggshell. Not only does the bloom protect the chick from bacteria entering the egg and killing the embryo, but it also helps protect humans from consuming harmful bacteria and pathogens.

Fairy Egg: Fairy eggs are usually laid by pullets close to the start of laying, but they can happen other times too. These tiny eggs are about one-third to one-fifth the size of a regular chicken egg and are usually yolkless.

Pip: A pip is the first hole a chick makes in the shell when hatching.

Sexing Terms

While most chicken keepers will never need to sex a chick, the practice of sexing chicks is both interesting and rewarding for the flock owner who doesn't desire a rooster. Please note that chick sexing should only be done by trained professionals to avoid accidentally injuring baby chicks.

Vent Sexing: Vent sexing is the traditional and most common type of sexing.

Wing sexing: Some bantam breeds can be sexed by the shape of their primary flight feathers upon hatching.

Autosexing and Sex-Linked Hybrids: Autosexing and sex-linked chickens are the most accurate of the sexing options, as these chickens can be sexed by the color of their down when hatched. However, these two chickens are very different, as autosexing chickens breed true (meaning an autosexing hen bred to an autosexing rooster will



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produce autosexing chicks), while sex links are a hybrid and don't breed true.

Straight Run: A name given to unsexed chicks. Straight run orders always consist of at least 50% roosters.

Health Terms

No one likes it when their chicken is sick, but familiarizing yourself with telltale signs and possible illnesses can be a lifesaver for your flock.

Egg Binding: Egg binding is when an egg is lodged somewhere in a hen's reproductive tract. Egg binding is a serious condition that must be treated immediately to save the hen.

Hardware Disease: Also known as heavy metal poisoning, hardware disease happens when a chicken eats a harmful metal toxin, such as a staple, jewelry, or a bit of wire. This condition is often fatal.

Oviduct Prolapse: An oviduct prolapse occurs when part of the hen's oviduct protrudes out of the cloaca.

Pasty Butt: A condition occurring in young chicks where poop sticks to the cloaca, preventing the chick from excreting.

Penguin Stance: The position in which a sick chicken stands. Tail down, almost touching the ground, head and neck pulled in toward the body. Chickens standing like a penguin may also appear to be squinting.

Chicken-Keeping Lifestyles

Have you ever wondered what the difference is between free-ranging and pastured, or between confinement and caging? Let's examine what each of these terms means.



Young female chickens are called pullets.

Caged: Caged chickens rarely see the light of day or feel the warm sunshine on their backs; instead, they're forced to live in metal cages, often crammed full of other chickens.

Confined: Also known as confinement, these chickens are kept solely in their coop and run. They're allowed access to the outdoors, without the fear of roaming chickens disturbing the neighbors or hungry predators snatching up one of your beloved flock.

Pastured Chickens: When raised wisely (chicken tractor versus large open pasture), pastured chickens have the best of both worlds. Enjoying the freedom and natural lifestyles of free-ranging without the fear of a predator attack.

Free Range: Free-range chickens are the hens that enjoy the wonders of the natural world, happily scratching and foraging where they please. While it may seem ideal, free-range chickens are prone to wandering into neighbors' yards or onto roadways and can be easily picked up by opportunistic predators.

In the commercial egg industry, it's often a misleading term that means they have "access" to the outdoors, not that they're actually able to roam around in the sun searching for bugs.

These interesting terms are only a few that describe the behaviors, health concerns, and body parts of the amazing chicken. There's more to learn, but these will get you started, so when you're talking to and getting advice from other chicken keepers, you won't be lost when it comes to the terms. ●

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ERIN SNYDER and her family have raised chickens and ducks for nearly two decades. She's 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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Tired of Being a Mother Hen?

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ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY BRUCE INGRAM

A summer ago, I thought

our 5-year-old, annually broody hen, Charlotte, wouldn't go broody for the first time in her life. So, my wife Elaine and I ordered Rhode Island Red chicks from Chicken Scratch Poultry and began raising them in our basement. This brought back all the things we despise about taking on the role of a mother hen: heat lamps, a pasty butt, dipping chick beaks in water so they learn to drink, worrying about piling, keeping them warm ... the list goes on and on.

Meanwhile, Charlotte went broody — two weeks later than she normally does. As we expected, Charlotte rejected the now fortnight-old chicks we'd ordered. When three more

weeks elapsed and none of Charlotte's eggs had hatched, we decided to order another set of chicks from Chicken Scratch, as we didn't want our prized broody to sit on eggs for what would've amounted to about two months. From prior experience with broody Reds, we've learned virtually no force in the universe will deter them from the nest.

When the chicks arrived a few days later, I performed a ruse that's always worked in the past: I removed a squalling Charlotte from her nest and set her outside the coop. Meanwhile, my sneaky spouse surreptitiously removed four eggs and deposited eight chicks in the nest. Charlotte, as seems to be true with all chickens, is not particularly adept at mathematics and

willingly accepted the interloping octet. Then she gave each of her young charges a gentle peck on the head, which Elaine interpreted to mean: "Listen to me, I'm your mother."

And listen they did, quickly grasping the concepts of eating and drinking, as well as nestling under Charlotte when they were cold or sleepy. With newly hatched chicks, we always place a small feeder and waterer inside the henhouse for the first week or so. But by the start of the second week, Charlotte had decided that it was time to introduce her offspring to the joys of the run: dust baths, sunbathing, random bugs, and clover. I always plant clover when a hen enters her maternal period, and the plant grows quickly since I remove all other chickens from the run during that stage.

We always give Charlotte blueberries when she's broody, as it's a way for her to receive food and moisture. As such, she's always glad to see Elaine and me and sprints to us when we enter the run, which her chicks do as well. Since she isn't afraid of us, the chicks aren't either, and soon consent to our handling them. In Charlotte's run, peace and harmony reign supreme, and when the sun starts to set, she, without any drama, chauffeurs her young into the henhouse.

Meanwhile, chaos characterized the adjoining run. Those chicks spent their first six weeks in our basement, in a large rubber container lined with newspaper and straw, and a standard heat lamp overhead. This batch seemed slow to grasp the concepts of eating and drinking, and regularly piled up in random corners, regardless of where the heat lamp was. Fortunately, they survived the night the heat lamp went kaput. Obviously, none of these events is a concern in a mother hen's kingdom.

When it was time for the other chicks to move into their run, they seemed unable to understand that the henhouse was where they should spend the night. Instead, evening



Here's the first day that Charlotte's chicks arrived in the mail. She's already taught them how to eat and drink.

after evening, as night fell, they literally wandered from the proverbial pillar to post—becoming more and more terrified as the sky grew darker. Making matters worse, the unruly chicks were scared of Elaine and me as we tried to catch them, constantly running from us, even in the dark. About a week elapsed before this discombobulated bunch mastered the act of simply walking up a ramp and sleeping inside a structure.

Even then, issues arose. The worst one was that these now “teenage chicks” bickered among themselves on which one should be among the three or four individuals that slept at the entrance of their house. Apparently, they’d decided that the prime snoozing spot was the doorway, which caused a massive chick jam there every evening.

The early arrivals didn’t want to cede their spot to the latecomers, which lined up on the ramp and tried to shove their way in. Elaine and I

had to hand-carry every bird into the abode, which caused more squawking and ill feelings. Later, additional issues arose. Cockerels mature sexually more quickly than pullets do, and, with no mother hen to temper the former’s hormones, chaos reigned in the flock as the feisty young males constantly fought among themselves and harassed the pullets.

Among the many traits that Elaine and I relish about heritage chickens is that the hens haven’t had the “broody” trait bred out of them. Angie McEwen, who, along with her husband, operates Chicken Scratch Poultry, raises a number of heritage breeds.

“Right off the bat, a heritage mother hen will teach her young to eat, drink, scratch, and forage,” McEwen says. “She even teaches them to roost at a young age, which is so important for the health of a bird. It simply can’t be healthy for a chicken to spend the night under a roost or sit on poop all night.

“High production crossbreeds have had broodiness bred out of them. They won’t sit on eggs and wouldn’t know how to care for chicks if they did have some. With no mother hen in a flock of young birds, the cockerels take over. And you don’t want your birds to have a cockerel as their role model.”

McEwen notes that Welsumers are among her favorite heritage breeds, because the hens are good mothers and egg layers. She adds that the Coronation Sussex and the Light Sussex feature “excellent broody gals,” and the Appenzeller Silver Spitzhauben are “great foragers and egg producers, and a petite bird that doesn’t eat a lot.” For more information visit them at: <https://ChickenScratchPoultry.com>.

So, if you’re tired of being the mother hen, consider raising heritage chickens. Elaine and I have never regretted making the switch to a traditional breed. ●

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Mourning chickens can become withdrawn from the rest of the flock.

DO CHICKENS MOURN?

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY ERIN SNYDER

Do chickens mourn?

Just like humans, chickens mourn whenever they lose someone they're close to. Losing a flockmate can be difficult for poultry, so here are a few things to help your flock adjust to the loss of their friend.

When It's Time

As a chicken nears the end of her natural life, I often witness the rest of the flock becoming depressed and withdrawn as they start to pull away from her. When this happens, I sometimes choose to euthanize the ailing hen to prevent my entire flock from suffering both physically and mentally.

Euthanasia isn't always necessary and is a personal choice, as many backyard chicken owners prefer to let their hen pass on her own. However, while it may be more difficult for the keeper, if the death is drawn out or weighs the rest of the flock down, euthanasia is the best option for the hen and the flock.

Saying Goodbye

When a hen passes naturally in the coop or run, the rest of the flock will take turns saying their goodbyes. Chickens need this time to mourn and pay their final respects by gently pecking the deceased flock member on the head.

While this ceremony may look harsh to the flock owner, it's a chicken's way

of saying goodbye and shouldn't be disturbed. Allow enough time to ensure all flock members are able to pay their respects, then remove the deceased bird before cannibalistic behaviors can set in.

How Do Chickens Mourn?

Like humans, each chicken has its own way of mourning. Some hens barely seem to notice when a flock member passes away; others remain sad and withdrawn for weeks or months. Though rare, a few chickens seem to die from a broken heart, never recovering from the loss of their friend.

In my experience, the flock members closest to the deceased seem to take the loss the hardest. These hens mourn the loss of their friends for several days before participating in normal activities again, and can often be found visiting their deceased friend's favorite places (i.e., sunny spot, dustbathing area, etc.).

During this period of grief, it's not uncommon for another flock member to spend time with the lonely hen until she's ready to partake in the daily activities. After the time of mourning has passed, the two hens usually become fast friends.

Loss of a Queen

In my flock, the hardest losses are when the queen of the flock passes away. This change may be made easier if the fallen queen has time to prepare the new up-and-coming queen to take over the role.

After the death of my most recent queen, my flock surprised me by not picking one queen, but two. These hens work side-by-side to keep the younger hens in line. While it may not be the most conventional way, it works for my flock, and peace and harmony have been restored.

However, when a queen dies unexpectedly, it's not uncommon for pecking order problems to arise as the flock takes turns trying out for the top spot in the flock's hierarchy. It can take several months, but eventu-

ally things settle down, and the flock chooses the best hen(s) for the job.

Roosters and Loss

The loss of one of his hens is extremely difficult for a rooster and can actually cause him to react violently when you approach the dead chicken.

To avoid aggressive behaviors, speak in a gentle voice while removing the rooster from the scene. Confine him to the coop or another safe enclosure before removing the body.

Once the hen's body has been removed, allow the rooster to rejoin the flock. Sprinkle scratch or dried bugs in the run to distract him. Watch carefully for any signs of leftover aggression caused by stress.

Stress Grief

Stress grief occurs after chickens have gone through a traumatic loss, such as a predator attack. This grief is often longer-lasting, as surviving flock members are also suffering from the effects of shock and trauma.

During this time, care should be taken to avoid stressing the flock further. Keep chickens confined to a completely predator-proofed coop and run and provide mental and physical stimulations to boost their confidence.

A Flock Loss and You

Losing a flock member isn't just hard on your flock; it's also a difficult time for the flock owner. Like dogs and cats, chickens work their way into our hearts and leave big holes when they leave.



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CHICKENS, CHICKENS, CHICKENS

Common Mourning Symptoms

- ~ Calling and looking for fallen flockmate
- ~ Hiding
- ~ Refusing to eat or drink
- ~ Refusing to engage in normal behaviors
- ~ Revisiting the deceased hen's favorite places
- ~ Standing hunched up, tail nearly touching the ground, head and neck pulled in toward the body
- ~ Stress molting

When a flock member passes, the most healing thing for me is to spend time with their best chicken friend and the rest of the flock. My flock always seems to recognize when I'm mourning their flockmate, and respond in an appropriate manner.

Whether flying up to perch on your shoulder, sitting on your lap, or just being there to hang out with, chickens are always the best antidote when mourning the loss of a flock member.

Other healing ideas include planting flowers on your hen's grave or collecting some of your favorite photos and creating a fun memory scrapbook.

Easing the Process

Although a death is sad for you and the flock, there are ways you can help yourself and your flock through the grieving process.

- Encourage your chickens to move on from mourning by providing mental and physical stimulation. Offering your flock new toys such as tree stumps, chicken swings, a new perch, or even a chicken-safe xylophone can boost confidence and reduce stress.
- Treat enrichments are another way to help mourning hens move on. Treat balls, hanging homemade treat cakes, or sprinkling scratch in clean straw is often enough to entice a depressed hen to engage in flock activities.
- Whether a single hen or the entire flock is grieving, spending time with their favorite human can help lift their spirits. Chickens that bond closely to their human families view you as part of their flock, so having the presence of the "alpha chicken" (i.e., you) is comforting to them.

Yes, chickens do mourn, and it isn't uncommon for them to grieve the loss of a flockmate for several days. However, with some extra attention from you and a strong flock bond, most chickens recover quickly from the loss. ●

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CHICKENS, CHICKENS, CHICKENS

My Chicken, Sierra

Sometimes a hen decides
to befriend you.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY GINA STACK

While doing my daily

chicken chores, Sierra, my Buff Orpington hen, kept walking in front of me and would almost trip me until I picked her up. She'd then slam her head against my cheek and sigh repeatedly. When I peeked, her eyes were shut. She'd let me pet her comb while she clucked softly, and I repeated her sounds. Although she didn't seem to want to stop, I'd eventually put her down and wonder what all the attention was for.

This happened every day. The only thing I could think of as to why she had this clingy behavior was that she'd hatched out chicks some months back. I'd been eager for a hen to go broody, as I'd planned for over a year and dreamed of for 20 years. I'd chosen a

few Buff Orpingtons because, from my experience, they often went broody. I just needed one hen to start setting on the golf balls in one of the nest boxes. At 8 months old, Sierra was the one!

We put her in her own pen, made from a dog crate, and put a large cardboard box in it as a nest. I settled her in with 12 fertilized eggs, and there she stayed, still as a stone. If I got near, she'd screech.

She was very determined, attending to those eggs. I was amazed at how she could just sit in her trance-like state and hardly get water or food for herself. I knew it was her instinct, which is so fascinating. I'd hold up water and food for her, to make sure she was getting what she needed—which she seemed to appreciate. I probably didn't need to "help," but

she was starting to look a little dehydrated. Maybe it was doing all that for her while she was still a pullet that caused her to bond with me.

During this time, we had a storm with 80 mph winds. I thought the whole pen was going to blow away with her and the eggs in it. I prayed as we sat holed up in our basement while the storm raged. But after it passed, there she was, snug and sitting still, waiting. With such inborn persistence, it's no wonder there are still chickens on the earth!

She eventually hatched six of the eggs and raised them beautifully without my help, and I loved being around to watch her handle them at every stage of growth. It was almost like she'd read a manual on raising chicks. She was very protective of

them, even with me, and I was like a mother hen with them on the outside of the cage. I still don't know why she became so affectionate. I hadn't spent a lot of time trying to get her to like me.

Becoming Chicken Friends

If you're hoping to get a friendly hen like Sierra, there are several ways to get a chicken's attention, such as offering treats. I give treats almost every time I feed. If I don't have any old bread or vegetable scraps, I toss around some chicken scratch. That way, they're always excited when I come. One of my favorite treats to offer is cheese. If you offer it to them when they're little chicks, they'll forever be your friend. When I take cubed cheese to my grown hens, they fight over which one will take it from my hand. Talk softly and move slowly. Eventually, one or two of them will crouch, which means they trust you



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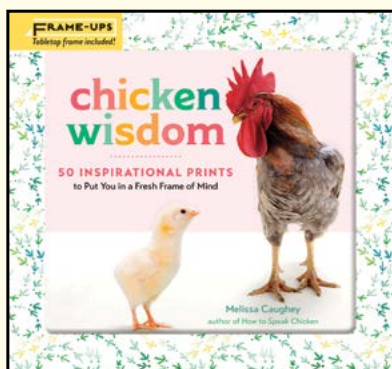
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and know that you're safe. Then you can try to pick them up, keeping their wings down as you hold them. If they don't struggle, walk around and have a chat or a song. Yes, I sing to my chickens! If they seem to enjoy it, I'll pet their comb or wattle and mimic their soft clucking. Of course, I name them if the mood strikes.

Some breeds will be more receptive to attention. Silkies are always listed first, but I've never owned one. Cochins and Brahas are also known to be warm toward their owners. In my experience, Orpingtons are always sweet and friendly. I hear the roosters are nice, too. Barred Rocks seem to be the same, along with Black Stars. I've had quite a few very sweet hens from that breed.

This year, I got two ISA Browns and two White Leghorn pullets. When the man from the farm where I bought them grabbed them all by the tails to take them to my car, I thought those hens would hate humans, as they swung from his hands upside-down across the parking lot. But that wasn't the case. All four are very friendly and let me pick them up right away when I got them home.

There are times when they don't want to be bothered, for sure when they're broody and screech at you from the nest box, giving you a deadly stare, even when they're sitting on nothing or golf balls. Or if they're molting or sick. When molting, they seem crabby and withdrawn, as it's draining their energy to grow new feathers. Even though their feathers are half gone and they look pathetic, once their new feathers grow in, they'll look like new chickens and return to their energetic and friendly ways again.

Hopefully, I was able to pass on some of the homegrown chicken wisdom I've gained over the years of keeping layer hens. If you have a chicken that decides you're the best, enjoy it, as it's a true blessing! ●



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CHICKENS, CHICKENS, CHICKENS



What's Cooking at the Firehouse?

Firefighter Naomi Rasschaert. She tried to get a fellow firefighter to snap a photo in the kitchen, but the alarm sounded ... off they went.

Eggs help keep firefighters going.

BY CAPPY TOSETTI

The kitchen is the heart of the neighborhood firehouse, serving as a gathering place for shared meals, camaraderie, bonding, and building trust. It's often located in the center of the fire station, allowing for quick response to emergency calls and doubling as a place for morning musters, meetings, training sessions, and decompressing after stressful and dangerous calls.

Fire crews typically work 24- to 48-hour shifts, staying overnight at the station, where they divide their

time grocery shopping, preparing meals, and doing cleanup tasks. The bonds these dedicated individuals share are often described as their second family. Sharing meals together provides an opportunity for camaraderie — moments to talk, laugh, and relax between the traumatic experiences they respond to out in the community.

Good nutrition for firefighters is critical for managing the intense mental and physical demands of suiting up and tackling the diverse range of

duties they encounter on the job. It's also important that they consume a significant amount of calories to enhance cognitive function under stress, support stamina, reduce fatigue, and ensure safety measures during high-heat demands on the body. On average, a firefighter can lose up to 40 ounces of sweat in 30 minutes, so proper nutrition and hydration help manage electrolyte balance. A healthy diet can improve an individual's health, enhance job performance, and reduce the risk of serious diseases.

Building a meal plan around whole, unprocessed, unrefined foods is the foundation of a healthy diet for first responders. Eggs are a versatile and important part of the list that includes fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, dairy, and whole grains.

Eggs are an excellent source of complete protein, containing essential amino acids necessary for muscle building and repair. They're also rich in choline, a vital brain nutrient that supports memory and cognitive function, helping firefighters stay sharp during high-stress decision-making. Recent studies indicate that eggs can increase the "good" HDL cholesterol levels. They also contain Vitamin K for bone health; lutein, zeaxanthin, and vitamin A for protecting the eyes; and vitamin D, found in egg yolks, is essential for immune health, particularly during high stress and potential carcinogen exposure.

Since firefighters pool their money for groceries, extending the budget is



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always a topic of conversation. Some firefighters and paramedics have started raising chickens at home and sharing the eggs at the firehouse. One wonders whether any departments are building chicken coops behind the station, but in reality, that's probably not feasible, mainly because most stations are in urban areas without additional space for a flock of hens.

There's also the situation with food safety regulations. Firefighters are required to source all food items from approved commercial facilities that've been inspected. This is a concern when folks stop by with homemade food items, eggs, or locally grown produce. Is it legal? There's a fine line between saying "thank you" to someone familiar and having to toss it out because of unknown sources.

An example that worked out for one department occurred when a widow of a fire captain called to say she had an abundance of eggs from the family's chickens. In remembrance of her husband, she wanted to donate a weekly supply for their meals. Since they knew her and had been to the family farm, they had no problem accepting her generous gift.

Many fire departments operate through funding from local governments and may have strict guidelines

on accepting homemade or homegrown food donations, so it's wise to check first with one's local fire station. Some businesses and service clubs plan special events, such as summer picnics, during which they donate store-bought grilling items. There's always a way to connect; just call and see what ideas might blossom.

Back at fire stations around the world, plans for today's meals are underway. It's bound to be a wholesome and hearty menu that brings everyone together. Sometimes, the alarm goes off in the middle of preparing food or while sitting down to eat. When it does, the stove and grill are turned off, and the firefighters dash to the emergency. Hopefully, the food can be salvaged upon their return to the firehouse.

"I wish I had a nickel for every meal we've had to reheat or toss out when out on a call," says firefighter and paramedic Naomi Rasschaert, who's with Detroit Fire Department-Station 59 in Detroit, Michigan. "It's simply something inevitable in this line of work, so we go with the flow, hoping things haven't spoiled in our absence."

Naomi has been with this fire department for 11 years. It's a busy station with 12 to 14 guys on the crew, who are always hungry. She

loves to cook, using a lot of her grandmother's recipes that get rave reviews from everyone.

A recent Sunday morning brunch had everyone racing to the table when Naomi served up a scrambled egg, sausage, and cheese casserole baked in a large cast-iron skillet, along with homemade biscuits and gravy, buttermilk pancakes, bacon, cinnamon rolls, assorted homemade muffins, fresh fruit, pitchers of juice, milk, and plenty of coffee. In addition, she cooked up some fried eggs and hashbrown potatoes, just to be sure no one went hungry.

"Cooking for a crowd is fun," explains Naomi, "It's easier for me to crack 40 eggs for that casserole instead of fixing something for just two people. And, the best part is sitting down at the table with my fellow firefighters, enjoying a hearty meal, and talking about our day. The brotherhood and sisterhood we share create a special bond like nothing else I've ever experienced. Being a firefighter gives me a strong sense of purpose. It's more than a job; it's a calling!"

Like Naomi, many first responders enjoy cooking and sharing meals. For a peek into their kitchens and meal prep, check out "Cooking at the Fire House" on Facebook. It's a captivating culinary adventure that proves some of the best food in town is around the corner at the local fire station!

Bon Appétit! ●

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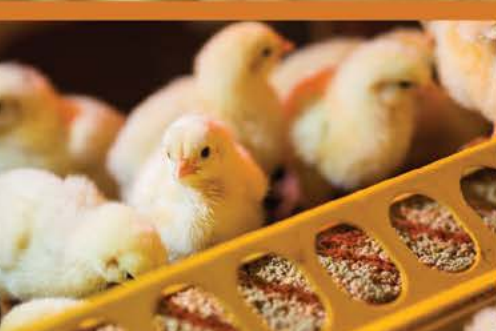
CAPPY TOSETTI is a magazine and business writer based in Asheville, North Carolina, where she works as the community engagement coordinator for Heart of Horse Sense, a non-profit organization that provides equine-assisted psychotherapy for first responders, veterans, and other individuals struggling with trauma.



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Sorting useful herbs from misinformation.

BY KAREN KOPF

Backyard chicken

keepers often prefer simple, natural solutions, which is why herbs have become so popular in modern chicken care. Many people raising healthy chickens seek gentle, effective ways to support their flock, and herbs fit easily into that context. They're beautiful, fragrant plants with a long history of use, making them welcome additions to any chicken coop. Whether you're exploring herbs for chickens, improving coop conditions, or looking for safer approaches to chicken keeping, herbs offer appealing options that blend well with everyday flock management.

Herbs have a place in chicken care, not just as a trend but because many contain compounds with real aromatic, antimicrobial, or calming properties. They enrich the environment, encourage natural behaviors, and make the coop a more pleasant place for both birds and people. They can even help nudge insects in the right direction—preferably away from your birds. Used thoughtfully, herbs fold into flock care in ways that feel natural and grounded in how chickens actually live.

In practice, herbs can be integrated into the coop in several gentle, support-

ive ways that align with how chickens interact with their environment.

Aromatic Bedding Boosters

Dried lavender, lemon balm, rose, mint, and rosemary release fragrance as the birds move through the coop. They don't sterilize the air, but they freshen it in a way that makes the space feel tended and pleasant.

Nesting Box Additions

Chamomile, calendula, lemon balm, rose, and lavender can be tucked into nesting boxes to add gentle, soothing aromatics. While nest box herbs haven't been formally studied, these plants are well-known for creating a sensory-rich, calming environment. The key is to keep things subtle. Use small amounts—think “accent,” not “potpourri.” Mix herbs lightly into the bedding rather than creating a layer, and avoid using strong herbs in large quantities (especially mint, rosemary, and sage). It's wise to keep at least one plain, unscented nest box available in the event a hen doesn't prefer the additions.

Forage Enrichment

Basil, dill, parsley, and cilantro become small adventures when tossed

into the run. Chickens shred, nibble, and explore them with enthusiasm, turning simple herbs into meaningful enrichment. The key is to offer herbs alongside regular feed and water, not mixed into them. When herbs are provided as a supplement—scattered, hung, or piled where birds can choose how much to sample—ingestion stays optional and self-regulated. This keeps herbs in the enrichment category, where they're safest and most beneficial.

Herbs as Part of Your Own Keeper Experience

Herbs make coop chores more pleasant—the clean scent of rosemary at the door, mint softening the weight of summer heat, calendula and rose petals brightening the nesting boxes. They add beauty and intention to the daily rhythm of flock care.

Shade, Shelter, and Microclimate Helpers

Tall herbs, such as fennel, can shape the microclimate around the coop, creating pockets of shade and coolness in summer. Some herbs contain volatile oils that can influence where pests choose to linger. Mint, rosemary, lemon balm, wormwood, and tansy fall into this category; they don't repel insects outright, but they can make certain areas less attractive. These plantings help guide insect activity without relying on harsh chemicals. Consider incorporating the herbs you use inside as plantings around your coop. Definitely explore the safety and risk of any plantings the chickens can access.

A Caution About Herbs

Most culinary herbs are safe for chickens, but some plants commonly called herbs appear on toxic plant lists. These aren't fear-based warnings—just reminders that strong botanicals deserve respect. Wormwood, tansy, pennyroyal, and foxglove show up repeatedly and should be used cautiously. Comfrey

and borage contain compounds that can be harmful in large amounts. Because online lists sometimes contradict each other—mint, parsley, and sage may be labeled “toxic” on some sites, despite being widely used. I lean on a simple rule for my flock care: research. Just as with people, if you’re curious about using herbs with poultry, do your own research and find your comfort level. There’s a lot of good information passed from producer to producer—and misinformation as well.

What Science Says

While backyard practices rely on observation and tradition, scientific studies help explain why certain herbs behave the way they do in poultry environments. Garlic, ginger, oregano, turmeric, thyme, and basil have been studied in poultry research for their supportive roles. Chamomile, calendula, mint, and lemon balm have long been used by keepers to promote calmer nest boxes, fresher bedding, and more engaging forage. Research on individual herbs and their volatile oils shows:

- Volatile oils can repel insects (mint, rosemary, thyme, oregano).
- Aromatic herbs can reduce stress (lavender, chamomile, lemon balm).
- Many herbs have antimicrobial properties (oregano, thyme, basil, sage).
- Feed-based studies show improvements in yolk color, shell strength, and egg weight.
- Herbs can support flock health in meaningful ways, but they have limits. No amount of lavender can fix poor ventilation. No bundle of rosemary will compensate for wet bedding. Herbs can complement good management, but they cannot replace it.

Environment vs. Ingestion

To understand why ingestion differs from environmental use, it helps to examine how a chicken’s body processes plant compounds. Chickens live life at a different speed. Their fast metabolism means compounds are absorbed and distributed quickly, effects show up sooner, and the margin between “helpful” and “too much” is

narrow. Their livers use different detox pathways, clearing some compounds too fast and others too slowly. A single drop of essential oil—harmless to a human—can be equivalent to cups of fresh herb for a chicken.

Their digestive system (crop → proventriculus → gizzard → short intestine) changes how herbs behave. Essential oils can irritate the crop. Strong herbs can slow crop emptying. Others can speed transit time, reducing absorption of beneficial compounds. Their microbiome depends on lactobacilli and cecal fermentation. Antimicrobial herbs can support balance in controlled doses but can also suppress beneficial bacteria or alter nutrient absorption if overused.

Chickens have delicate respiratory systems. Thin air sac membranes and unidirectional airflow make volatile oils irritating. Diffusers concentrate these oils dangerously, while dried herbs in nest boxes remain gentle and passive.

Bird Behavior and Safety

Behavior is part of physiology and shapes how safely a flock will interact with new stimuli, including herbs. While chickens typically avoid bitter or toxic plants, confined birds may sample or overindulge in things they’d ignore while free-ranging. Novelty can override instinct, so use caution when supplementing, and observe your flock closely.

The safest, most effective way to use herbs with chickens is simple:

- Use herbs as enrichment—nest boxes, bedding, dust baths, forage piles—where ingestion is optional.
- Always offer plain water alongside herbal water.
- Whole herbs are safer than extracts. Essential oils are concentrated and easy to overdose.
- For medicinal dosing, consult a poultry vet or nutritionist for mg/kg calculations, safe dilution, duration, and interactions. Some helpful herbs can be harmful if used continuously.

Chickens are physiologically unique in ways that make herbal dosing less predictable, more potent,

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Culinary herbs are great forage for chickens.

and more dependent on controlled, informed studies. Herbs as enrichment are low risk; herbs as ingestion require species-specific caution. Used with clarity and respect—for both the plant and the bird—herbs become a delightful and beneficial addition to flock care.

For keepers who want to explore the science behind these ideas, the

following studies offer a helpful starting point:

1. *Herbs & Essential Oils in Poultry Nutrition*, Windisch, W., Schedle, K., Plitzner, C., & Kroismayr, A. (2008). *Use of phytogetic products as feed additives for swine and poultry.* https://academic.oup.com/jas/article-abstract/86/suppl_14/E140/4789896

2. *Essential Oils in Poultry Nutrition* Brenes, A., & Roura, E. (2010). *Essential oils in poultry nutrition: Main effects and modes of action.* www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0377840110000775

3. Abd El-Hack, M. E., et al. (2018). *Melissa officinalis (lemon balm) as a natural feed additive for poultry: Effects on performance, immunity, and antioxidant status.* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7477259/>

4. Toriki, M., et al. (2018). *Effects of a phytogetic blend (including chamomile, mint, and thyme) on stress indicators and performance in broilers under heat stress.* <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12164185/>

5. Cristo, AB & Schmidt, JM & Benito, Carlos & Buzim, R & Pinto, LAM & Fernandes, JIM. (2022). *Effect of the Supplementation of Plant Extracts Based Additive in Broiler Chicken Diets on Productive Performance, Carcass Yield, and Meat Quality.* *Brazilian Journal of Poultry Science.* 24. 10.1590/1806-9061-2021-1528.

www.researchgate.net/publication/362437529_Effect_of_the_Supplementation_of_Plant_Extracts_Based_Additive_in_Broiler_Chicken_Diets_on_Productive_Performance_Carcass_Yield_and_Meat_Quality ●

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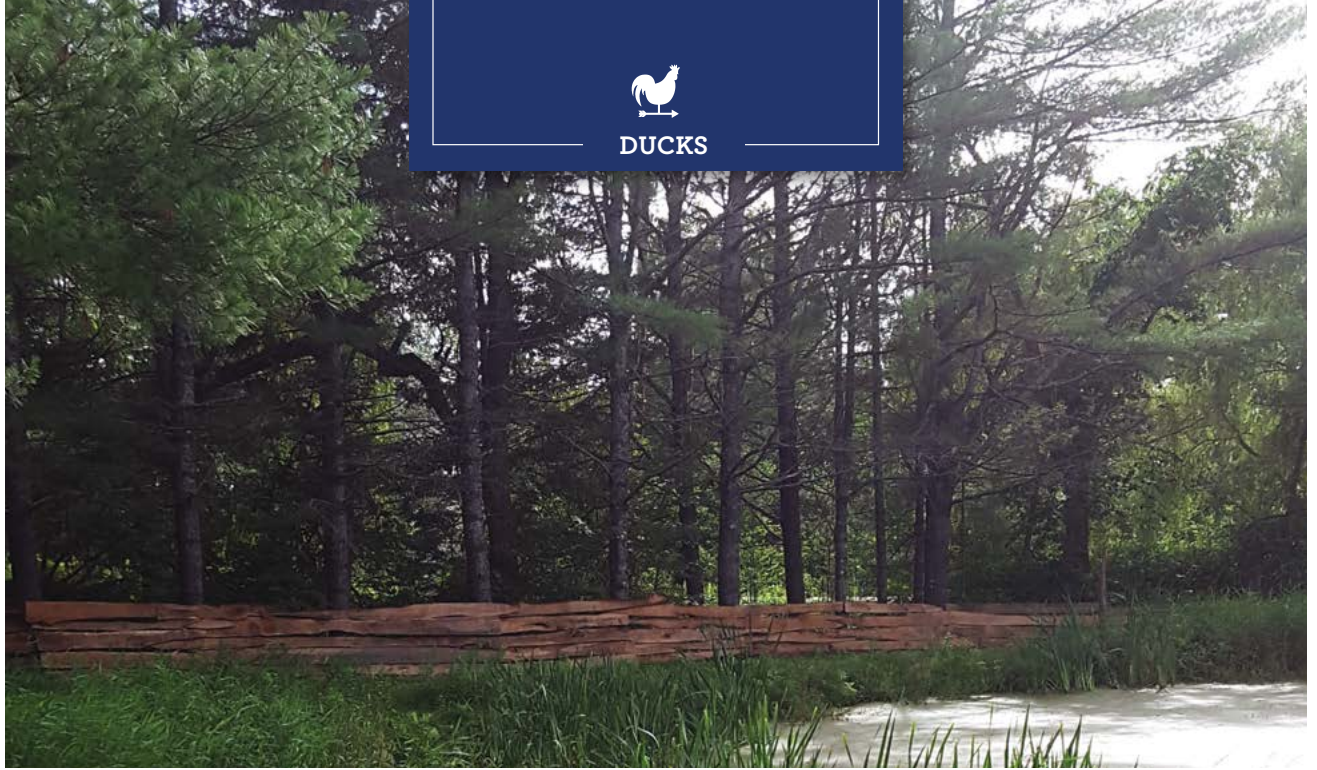


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ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY SHERRI TALBOT

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However, birds raised in enclosed environments with no outdoor access are more likely to experience stress and exhibit aggressive behavior to-

ward one another. They're also likely to get their bedding wet, which can lead to mold or frozen ground underfoot. Waterfowl allowed to free-range have higher nutrient levels in their eggs and meat, show fewer stress-related behaviors, and are reported by many to taste better.

Choosing the Right Waterfowl

The first step to making your waterfowl happy is choosing a breed that'll be comfortable in your area. Learning about breeds ahead of time and

deciding what you're looking for in your waterfowl (meat, eggs, grazing, or pets), will help you choose a breed that fits your lifestyle and climate. Domestic waterfowl have a wide variety of sizes, personalities, and habitat needs. Some struggle in extreme heat; others may not do well in freezing temperatures. Knowing which birds will thrive in the environment you provide will make it far easier to keep them content.

Water for the Waterfowl

The term "waterfowl" doesn't just mean these birds enjoy water; it means they need it. The larger the bird, the more water it will need. Large, natural bodies of water can help alert waterfowl avoid being hunted by most land predators, reducing stress and increasing safety simultaneously. Large ponds or access to constant running water is best for large duck breeds or geese, to ensure they have enough space for bathing and exercise.

It's difficult to keep larger waterfowl using kiddie pools or similar artificial water sources. Especially in cold climates, limited bathing space can lead to fights over resources. If this is the only available water source, keeping smaller breeds—such as call

ducks — will reduce concerns about access to water. If you choose an artificial water source, be prepared to change it frequently. Waterfowl are incredibly messy birds and will foul their water and the surrounding area.

The Comforts of Home

When raising geese, ducks, and Muscovies, the enrichment inside a chicken coop should be about the comfort and health of the birds while sleeping and laying. The coop should be kept clean, parasite-free, and well-ventilated. However, encouraging them to be in the run as much as possible will provide the best enrichment. There are several reasons for this:

- Birds that get more exercise are healthier overall.
- Ammonia and bedding dust can cause respiratory issues in birds that stay inside all day.



- Food kept inside a coop can attract rats, opossums, raccoons, and other unwanted guests.
- Keeping water inside the coop will result in consistently soggy bedding and dirty eggs.

Keeping a shelter dry is a challenge with waterfowl. Even leaving water buckets outside the shelter is often unhelpful, since ducks will troop inside with muddy feet and wet feathers. While waterfowl bodies are used to wet conditions, duck feet can still be prone to issues and injuries if the shelter conditions are poor. Wet bedding increases the risk of frostbite, especially when frozen straw or shavings are underfoot. Keep a layer of dry bedding on the surface for them to nest and stand in to protect their feet from freezing.

If raising waterfowl in below-freezing temperatures, expect bedding to freeze quickly. The deep bedding method — piling layers of new bedding on top of old to give birds a dry surface — can be helpful. In theory, this will also result in warmth later when the lower layers begin to decompose and release heat. However, bedding that gets wet and re-freezes daily may mean layers never get a chance to decompose.

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 **MUST READ!**

Backyard Poultry's Guide to Waterfowl



Backyard Poultry's Guide to Waterfowl provides the necessary knowledge and informative tips for raising ducks, geese, and swans. While ducks, geese, and swans can be easier to keep than chickens and catch fewer diseases, they have needs specific

to their species. *Backyard Poultry*, America's favorite poultry magazine, is here to help! The *Guide to Waterfowl* provides guidance written by experienced waterfowl owners, from choosing the right breeds, caring for babies, providing housing, and beyond. **Item #12165, \$17.99**

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Natural Cover

A primary way to enrich run space for waterfowl is to provide them with cover. This can involve planting bushes and long grass for them to hide in or placing their run under overhanging trees to hide them from aerial predators. As with chickens, the fear of predation is a source of stress for waterfowl, even in areas with few predators, and having cover can help them feel more secure.

As a side note, it's important to research ahead of time whether or not your waterfowl can fly. If so, you may need a more solid cover to prevent them from seeking entertainment—and finding danger—elsewhere.

In addition to cover, grass and bushes provide nesting areas and shade. Ducks and geese and other waterfowl can't sweat, so it's extremely important they have an area to cool off with water or a pleasant breeze. Waterfowl are also grazers and will enjoy eating grass and insects. Many breeds of geese are vegetarian and would like nothing more than a chance to keep the long grass "mowed."

While much of the research on enrichment for birds has been conducted on chickens or mixed flocks, a recent study in Russia on Muscovies provided the birds with natural nesting areas, bathing water, and forage options. Compared with contained, biosecure locations, the birds showed lower stress levels, greater natural engagement, and increased activity.

Finding Balance

Balancing flock security and lower stress levels can be accomplished with enriched coops and runs. Waterfowl are primarily interested in being safe and fed. Improving the physical structure of their living environment and adding items to increase activity or reduce stress in confinement can help domestic waterfowl lead happier, better-quality lives. ●

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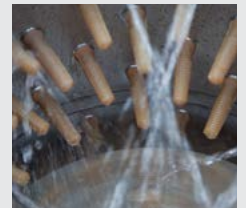
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Duck-Assisted Therapy

Are You Down with It?

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY MARK HALL



Did you know that interacting with ducks is therapeutic? In 1956, the November issue of *Life* magazine reported on an animal-assisted therapy program that had been in existence for 30 years at University Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan. In this unique effort, among the first of its kind, children with chronic illnesses or disabilities were cheered up by visits from a wide variety of animals, including ducklings.

Today, duck-assisted therapy seeks to improve the emotional and mental welfare of people in need of various forms of care, and perhaps it should come as no surprise. As intelligent, social creatures, they're easily trained and form strong bonds with humans. Motivated by food, ducks can be trained to sit, jump into a lap, be handled, or even walk around at the end of a leash. All of this makes them excellent therapy animals.

Duck-assisted therapy can be beneficial for those living in nursing homes. Some of these care facilities are treated to duck visits from keepers, such as Jeremy Piatt, a military veteran from New Jersey. Residents feel a longed-for reconnection to the outside world as they slowly stroke the soft downy feathers of a duck that's been trained to sit still on their laps and eat from their hands. This also benefits Jeremy, for he's greatly fulfilled in bringing a smile to the faces of those who endure so many long, lonely days. Disabled and suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder, he views the experience as an effective form of emotional support for himself as well.

This therapy is effective for people who suffer from high anxiety and for some who are autistic. Like many other animals, such as dogs, cats, and horses, ducks offer the comforts of companionship and love without judgment or conditions. They're a calming influence during stressful situations or meltdowns. Their soft, steady sounds and gentle mannerisms can lower human stress levels and help manage emotions.

Individuals with autism can also benefit from physically caring for ducks. A steady routine of feeding and looking after them makes possible an understanding of the ducks' needs, as well as a recognition of the creature's complete dependency on the individual. In turn, these discoveries encourage empathy and can generate a strong sense of responsibility toward them. Here, a value is placed on social interaction with one's environment, and the individual's concern for the needs of ducks might be directed toward those of people as well.

For schoolchildren suffering from learning anxiety, duck-assisted therapy in the classroom is considered by some to be amazingly beneficial by increasing motivation, boosting confidence, improving school attendance,

and even building stronger connections with teachers and other students. It's also proposed that this decrease in anxiety leads to better academic performance, such as enhanced reading and writing skills.

A recent study shows that duck-assisted therapy can even help people with traumatic brain injuries (TBI). Rehabilitation is a long road, and this emerging therapeutic intervention seeks to support the individual's difficult recovery. The study participants described their duck interactions favorably, and one even called them "life-changing." The study findings indicated that interacting with the ducks improved emotional well-being and could positively impact TBI rehab outcomes.

A long stay in the hospital can feel terribly isolating, but duck-assisted therapy can help patients in need of ongoing care reconnect to the outside

world. Decades ago, Christchurch Hospital in Christchurch, New Zealand, began its own duck interaction program. Considered a critical step toward wellness, many long-term patients were frequently rolled out of the hospital and down to the shore of the Avon River. Besides benefiting from exposure to fresh air, their well-being was improved by observing ducks in their natural habitat. Former patients shared their feelings of joy that resulted from the outdoor excursions. These happy experiences were positive reconnections to reality and key ingredients of patient recovery.

To benefit the lives of people in your area with your ducks, you'll need to do a little research. There are no federal stipulations on the subject, but requirements governing various institutions in your state may impact your plans. So, check with any

local medical facilities, schools, and nursing homes first. If this good work sounds interesting to you, I hope you won't duck the opportunity. ●

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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



BREED PROFILE:

SHAMO CHICKENS

BY KENNY COOGAN

As part of our ongoing series highlighting rare and endangered poultry breeds, this issue we're focusing on one of the most visually striking and least commonly encountered chickens in North America: the Shamo.

Tall, upright, and powerfully built, the Shamo is a breed many poultry enthusiasts have read about, but few have encountered firsthand. Its commanding presence, intense expression, and deep history make it unforgettable once seen.

A Breed Worth Knowing

The Shamo traces its roots to Southeast Asia and Japan. Ancestors of the modern Shamo were brought from regions of Pakistan and India to Siam (now Thailand) and later to Japan during the Edo period (1603–1867). The breed's name is derived from "Siam," reflecting this geographic journey. These birds were selectively bred for strength, endurance, and presence—traits that remain evident today.

According to The Livestock Conservancy, the Shamo is currently listed as Critical on its Conservation Priority List, meaning it's among the rarest poultry breeds in the United States. This designation underscores the importance of responsible breeding and education to ensure the Shamo's survival.

Presence and Purpose

The Shamo's physical structure immediately sets it apart. Males can reach close to 30 inches in height, with a nearly vertical stance, broad shoulders, and long, muscular thighs. Standard weights average around 11 pounds for males and 7 pounds for females, though height often makes them appear even larger.

Shamos are recognized by the American Poultry Association and are found in several traditional color varieties, including Black, Dark, and Black-breasted Red (Wheaten).

Historically, Shamos were bred for fighting, a purpose that shaped their athletic build and alert demeanor. Today, they're kept for exhibition, conservation, ornamental appeal, and, for some, meat. The Livestock Conservancy notes that Shamo meat is firm and richly flavored, reflecting the bird's slow growth and constant movement, though it isn't universally preferred.

Housing and Management Considerations

"These birds are unlike anything most chicken keepers have worked



Shamo hens aren't prolific layers and aren't well-suited to keepers focused on egg yields.

with,” says Jessica Watson, owner of Game Fowl Conservation. “The mighty Shamo is a breed the average backyard chicken keeper has never seen.”

That rarity comes with practical implications.

“Keeping this breed requires careful planning, consistent handling, innovative cooping, and confidence around large birds,” Watson says.

Shamos aren’t for mixed flocks.

“The spirit of the fighter is still strong in the Shamo,” Watson explains. “They cannot be housed with mixed flocks due to their fighting instincts, but a single male Shamo can be housed with 2 to 3 hens, given proper space.”

Standard backyard coops are rarely suitable. Pop doors, perches, and runs must be designed to accommodate their height and upright posture.

“They need plenty of space to stretch their legs and wings,” Watson says. “A generic coop and door will be far too small to house the breed. Everything about these birds is unique and requires creative husbandry strategies.”

Shamos are a hard-feathered breed. Their feathers lie tightly against the body, and the keel bone running down the chest is completely bare. This feathering highlights their muscular form but provides less insulation than fluffier breeds.

“If you live in the north where temperatures stay below freezing for extended periods,” Watson advises, “it’s best to offer a radiant heat source on the coldest days and provide draft-free housing with deep bedding.”

Temperament: Intense Looks, Gentle Bonds

The Shamo’s intimidating appearance often leads to assumptions about

its behavior, but experienced keepers tell a more nuanced story.

“I particularly like Shamo because they’re active foragers and they’re able to protect themselves from predators more so than normal backyard chicken breeds,” says Heather Whitley of Triple Creek Farm in North Carolina. “The hens make great mothers, and they’re a very docile and friendly breed toward people.”

PHOTO CREDIT: JESSICA WATSON



Shamos can't be housed with mixed flocks.

A large advertisement for Vetericyn Poultry Care. The top half features a white spray bottle with a white trigger nozzle. The bottle label reads "Vetericyn plus ANTIMICROBIAL POULTRY CARE HEALING AID + SKIN REPAIR". Below the bottle, a person's hand is shown applying the product to a chicken's foot. The background is a blurred outdoor scene with a chicken in the foreground.

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Watson describes an exceptional level of human bonding. “They form deep bonds with their caregivers and will make and hold eye contact unlike any other breed of chicken,” she says. “They have a magnetic attraction to their owners and will put on mating displays, tidbit to offer their caregiver

treasures and snacks, and even the hens will beg to be picked up and carried around just for companionship.”

That confidence is evident from the start. “They’re curious as chicks, never running away or showing fear in the brooder,” Watson adds. “I’ll never tire of the Shamo’s propensity to form bonds with humans.”

don’t think they would be a good fit for someone looking for egg production.”

The Livestock Conservancy characterizes Shamos as fair-to-poor layers, producing a modest number of medium-sized, light brown to tinted eggs each year. Their large size can also lead to accidental egg breakage.

Where they excel is in heritage value, broodiness, and presence. Hens are attentive mothers, and the breed’s overall utility lies more in conservation and exhibition than in output.

Shamo at a Glance

Conservation Status: Critical

Primary Uses: Exhibition, conservation, ornamental, companionship

Egg Production: Low

Egg Color: Tinted to light brown

Meat Quality: Firm, richly flavored, slow-growing

Temperament: Strongly bonded to people; aggressive toward other poultry

Ease of Care: Advanced

Best For: Experienced keepers, exhibition breeders, conservation-minded flocks

Egg Production and Utility

Shamos aren’t well-suited for keepers focused on egg yield. “They aren’t prolific layers,” Whitley says. “So I

Exhibition and Conservation

“They make excellent birds for exhibition,” Whitley says.

In the show ring, Shamos command attention through posture alone. Successful exhibition birds are typically those that have been handled regularly, reinforcing the breed’s calm demeanor toward people.

Beyond exhibition, Shamos play a critical role in poultry conservation. With numbers remaining low, each carefully bred bird helps preserve genetic diversity and maintain a living connection to poultry history.



Shamo chickens make excellent show birds.

Is the Shamo Right for You?

Shamos aren’t beginner birds. They require space, specialized housing, and a keeper willing to adapt to their needs. In return, they offer something increasingly rare in modern poultry keeping: presence, personality, and partnership.

For those drawn to heritage breeds and willing to rise to the challenge, the Shamo is unforgettable. ●

Learn More:

Jessica Watson, Owner,
Game Fowl Conservation
Instagram: @keepcluckin
Website:

www.GameFowlConservation.org

Heather Whitley,
Triple Creek Farm, North Carolina
Website: www.TripleCreekFarmnc.net
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Shamos aren’t beginner birds: They require special housing, space, and handling.



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Mini Nutella cupcakes.

CELEBRATION CAKES FROM SCRATCH

Cakes and cupcakes for every season.

ARTICLE AND PHOTOS BY RITA HEIKENFELD

What is it about

celebrations, especially in the spring, that calls for cakes and cupcakes made from scratch? Maybe it's the weather. We feel energized in spring.

It's fun to open our home (and windows!) to family and friends when an occasion like a graduation, birthday, tea party, shower, wedding, or anniversary comes up.

I'm so happy to share some of our family's favorites that are worth the time to make.

Old-fashioned pineapple upside-down cake is a moist, fruity cake with a golden-brown sugar glaze and, of course, pineapple slices and cherries!

In the mood for cupcakes? Make a batch of simple yellow cupcakes. They're yummy, plus the icing can be tinted to match the occasion.

Double chocolate Texas sheet cake is easy to tote and serves a crowd. The warm frosting is poured onto the cake while it's still hot, creating a shiny glaze.



Celebration cupcakes. These were for a breast cancer survivor function—thus the color scheme.

We love the Nutella mini cakes, too. So quick, easy, and lovely for a tea party or kids' celebration.

If you've got a special occasion on the horizon, I hope I've inspired you to gather in the kitchen and bake!

OLD-FASHIONED PINEAPPLE UPSIDE DOWN CAKE

Creative Kentucky baker, Steve True, shared this recipe. Use a cast-iron skillet for the cake.

INGREDIENTS

Topping

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 20 ounces of pineapple slices, plus juice (dry slices between paper towels), see note for extra slices
- ½ cup brown sugar
- Maraschino cherries and pecans (optional)

Cake

- 8 tablespoons butter, room temperature
- ½ cup light brown sugar
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup buttermilk



Old-fashioned pineapple upside down cake.

INSTRUCTIONS

Topping

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Heat an 8- to 9-inch cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat.

Add butter, pineapple juice, and brown sugar.

Stir until boiling and mixture starts to thicken, about 10 minutes.

Remove from heat and arrange pineapple rings, cherries, and nuts in the liquid, working from the outside in.

Place the skillet in the oven while preparing the cake batter.

Cake

On medium speed in a mixer, beat butter and both sugars until light.

Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well each time.

Stir in vanilla.

In a separate bowl, mix flour, baking powder, and salt.

With the mixer on low, alternately add the dry ingredients and buttermilk, starting and ending with the dry ingredients. Don't overmix.

Note

Crush any leftover pineapple and fold gently into batter.

Remove skillet from oven. Spread batter evenly over the pineapple.

Bake 45 to 50 minutes until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.

Remove from oven. Let sit 10 minutes before turning out onto a platter.

SIMPLE YELLOW CUPCAKES

INGREDIENTS

3 cups cake flour

2½ teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

⅔ cup butter, softened

1½ cups granulated sugar

2 eggs

1½ teaspoons vanilla

1¼ cups milk

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Line two 12-cup muffin pans with baking cups.

Combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Set aside.

Beat butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy.

Add eggs, one at a time, and vanilla, then mix well.

Add flour mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition. Divide into cups.

Bake 19 to 23 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool in the pan 5 minutes, then remove to finish cooling.

HOMEMADE VANILLA CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

Can be tinted any color.

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup butter, room temperature

8 ounces regular cream cheese, softened

1¼ teaspoons vanilla

¾ to 1 cup confectioners' sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

Beat butter, cream cheese, and vanilla until fluffy.

Beat in ¾ cup sugar; add more if desired.

Tips

Coconut frosted cupcakes:

Dip frosted cupcakes into flaked coconut, gently rotating them to coat.

Easy to tote:

Put cupcakes back into cupcake pans.

Almost-From-Scratch Cupcakes:

So easy! Tastes homemade due to a couple of extra ingredients. To box cake mix, just add one more egg than the recipe calls for or substitute milk for water.



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Double Chocolate Texas Sheet Cake with Cocoa Frosting

Because this is baked in a jelly roll pan, the cake won't be as lofty as one baked in a 9-by-13-inch pan. A rich, moist, "take to the party" kind of cake.

INGREDIENTS

Cake

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs plus 2 yolks
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 8 ounces semisweet or bittersweet chocolate, broken up
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- ¾ cup water
- ½ cup cocoa powder

Frosting

- 8 tablespoons butter, cut up
- ½ cup heavy whipping cream
- ½ cup cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon light corn syrup
- 3 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla
- 1 cup toasted pecans (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Place the rack in the middle of the oven. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.

Grease a jelly roll pan or a half-sheet pan.

Cake

Whisk flour, sugar, baking soda, and salt in a large bowl.

In a separate bowl, whisk eggs, yolks, vanilla, and sour cream until smooth.

Heat chocolate, butter, oil, water, and cocoa in a pan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until smooth and very warm.

Whisk the chocolate mixture into the flour mixture until incorporated. It will look grainy.

Whisk or stir egg mixture into batter. Pour into the pan.

Bake until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 18 to 20 minutes.

Frosting

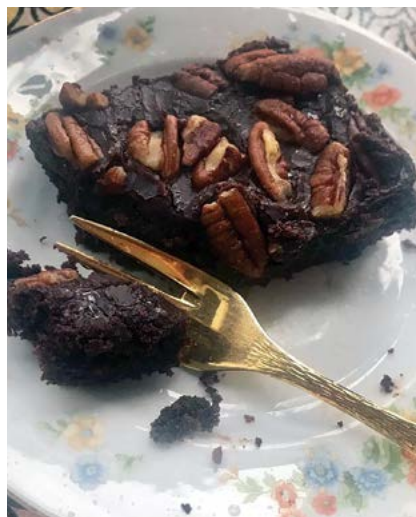
About 5 minutes before the cake is done, heat butter, cream, cocoa, and corn syrup in a pan over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until smooth and fairly hot.

Remove from heat, whisk in sugar and vanilla until smooth.

Pour warm frosting evenly over the hot cake; it will look thin, then sprinkle with nuts.

Let the cake cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until the frosting is set, about 1 hour. Can be covered and stored in the refrigerator for a couple of days.

Serve at room temperature, cut into squares.



NUTELLA MINI CAKES

Spray liners with cooking spray before measuring Nutella for easy removal.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup Nutella
- 1 large or extra-large egg
- 5 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon + 1 teaspoon cocoa powder
- Mini muffin pan lined with 12 paper liners
- Candy sprinkles for top (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Line a mini muffin pan with 12 liners.

Whisk Nutella and egg until smooth.

Stir in the flour and cocoa, then blend.

Divide among cups. Sprinkle with candies.

Bake 12 to 14 minutes. A toothpick that comes out with a bit of fudgy batter on it means they're done! Don't overbake.

Tips

If Nutella is really firm, microwave it for a few seconds.

RITA HEIKENFELD comes from a family of wise women in tune with nature. She's a certified modern herbalist, culinary educator, author, and national media personality. Most importantly, she's a wife, mom, and grandma. Rita lives on a little patch of heaven overlooking the East Fork River in Clermont County, Ohio. She's a former adjunct professor at the University of Cincinnati, where she developed a comprehensive herbal course.

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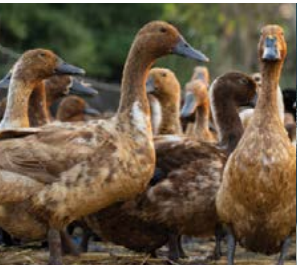
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COMING EVENTS



The Coming Events listing is gathered and provided by **poultryshowcentral.com**. Add your show listing on their website or send to: **Coming Events, Backyard Poultry, 1503 SW 42nd St, Topeka, KS 66609** or email: editor@backyardpoultrymag.com. To be included in the *Backyard Poultry* magazine listing, event details must be sent **90 days in advance**.

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.

ARKANSAS

April 18, 2026

Greenwood, Arkansas

River Valley Poultry Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/River_Valley_Homestead_Conference_and_Poultry_Show.html

ARIZONA

April 16-26, 2026

Tuscon, Arizona

Pima County Fair
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Pima_County_Fair.html

CALIFORNIA

April 18, 2026

Sebastopol, California

Sonoma County Youth Poultry Showdown
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Sonoma_County_Youth_Poultry_Showdown.html

May 14-17, 2026

King City, California

Salinas Valley Fair
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Salinas_Valley_Fair.html

COLORADO

April 18, 2026

Pueblo Colorado Colorado Poultry

Association Spring Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Colorado_Poultry_Association.html

May 10, 2026

Keenesburg, Colorado

Front Range Small Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Front_Range_Poultry_Swap.html

DELAWARE

April 11-12, 2026

Harrington, Delaware

Delmarva Poultry Fanciers Club
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Delmarva.html

IOWA

April 4, 2026

Council Bluffs, Iowa

Southwest Iowa Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Southwest_Iowa_Animal_Swap.html

April 11, 2026

Waverly, Iowa

Waverly Iowa Exotic Bird and Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Waverly_Iowa_Exotic_Bird_Animal_Swap.html

April 18, 2026

Grundy Center, Iowa

Grundy County Bird & Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Grundy_County_Bird_Animal_Swap.html

April 18, 2026

Maquoketa, Iowa

Eastern Iowa Bird and Small Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Eastern_Iowa_Bird_Small_Animal_Swap.html

April 26, 2026

Waukon, Iowa

Northeast Iowa Bird and Animal Club Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Northeast_Iowa_Bird_Animal_Swap.html

May 30, 2026

Grundy Center, Iowa

Grundy County Bird & Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Grundy_County_Bird_Animal_Swap.html

IDAHO

April 25, 2026

Caldwell, Idaho

Bird Breeders of Idaho Spring Fling
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Bird_Breeders_of_Idaho_Spring_Fling.html

May 16, 2026

Ammon, Idaho

Idaho Chickenstock
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Idaho_Chickenstock.html

ILLINOIS

April 25, 2026

Freeport, Illinois

Freeport Small Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Freeport_Small_Animal_Swap.html

May 3, 2026

Kankakee, Illinois

Tri-K Pigeon & Bantam Club Pigeon Fair
www.poultryshowcentral.com/TriK_Pigeon_Bantam_Fair.html

INDIANA

April 11, 2026

Spencer, Indiana

White River Poultry Club Spring Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/White_River_Poultry_Club_Show.html

April 25, 2026

Shipshewana, Indiana

Shipshewana Swap Meet
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Newbury_Square_Swap_Meet_Flea_Market.html

May 2, 2026

Kimmell, Indiana

Wolf's Swap Meet
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Wolfs_Swap_Meet.html

May 9, 2026

Charlestown, Indiana

Kentuckiana Poultry Club Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Kentuckiana.html

May 16, 2026

Shipshewana, Indiana

Shipshewana Swap Meet
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Newbury_Square_Swap_Meet_Flea_Market.html

KANSAS

April 11, 2026

Valley Falls, Kansas

Jefferson County Poultry Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Jefferson_County_Poultry_Show.html

KENTUCKY

April 18, 2026

Morgantown, Kentucky

Green River Poultry Club, Inc. Spring Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Green_River.html

May 10, 2026

Milton, Kentucky

Semi Annual Animal Swap Meet & Flea Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Semi_Annual_Animal_Swap_Meet_Flea_Market.html

MASSACHUSETTS

May 3, 2026

Carver, Massachusetts

New England Bantam Club Spring Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/New_England_Bantam_Club_Fall_Show.html

MAINE

May 24, 2026

Windsor, Maine

Central Maine Bird Fanciers Spring Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Central_Maine.html

MICHIGAN

April 25, 2026

Imlay City, Michigan

Michigan Bird & Game Breeders Assoc. Sale
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Michigan_Game_Breeders_Swap_Imlay.html

May 16, 2026

Carson City, Michigan

Michigan Bird & Game Breeders Assoc. Sale
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Michigan_Game_Breeders_Swap_Carson_City.html

May 23-24, 2026

Hillsdale, Michigan

Saulk Trail Poultry Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Saulk_Trail_Poultry_Show.html

MINNESOTA

April 4, 2026

New Ulm, Minnesota

New Ulm Bird & Small Animal Swap & Sale Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Brown_Co_Pigeon_Poultry_Club_Swap.html

May 2, 2026

New Ulm, Minnesota

New Ulm Bird & Small Animal Swap & Sale Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Brown_Co_Pigeon_Poultry_Club_Swap.html

MISSOURI

April 2-5, 2026

Versailles, Missouri

Frank's Swap/Jacob's Cave Swapping Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Jacobs_Cave_Swapping_Days.html

April 3-5, 2026

Boonville, Missouri

Lake of the Ozarks Pigeon Club Swapper's Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Lake_of_the_Ozarks_Pigeon_Club_Swappers_Days.html

April 18, 2026

Sedalia, Missouri

Missouri State Poultry Association Swap and Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Missouri_State_Poultry_Association.html

April 18, 2026

Sedalia, Missouri

Missouri State Poultry Association Swap and Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Missouri_State_Poultry_Association.html

NEBRASKA

April 4, 2026

Arlington, Nebraska

Rural Nebraska Poultry and Livestock Spring Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Rural_Nebraska_Poultry_Livestock_Market.html

April 25-26, 2026

Norfolk, Nebraska

Nelson Alternative Livestock Auction
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Nelson_Alternative_Livestock_Auction.html

NEW YORK

May 2, 2026

Schaghticoke, New York

Brunswick Grange Tailgate Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Tailgate_Sale_Schaghticoke.html

May 9, 2026

Bath, New York

Twin Tier Poultry Club Spring Auction
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Twin_Tier_Poultry_Club_Auction.html

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OHIO

April 4, 2026

Marysville, Ohio

BLT Livestock Swap Meet
www.poultryshowcentral.com/BLT_Livestock_Auction.html

April 12, 2026

Greenville, Ohio

Dayton Fancy Feather Club Swap Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Dayton_Fancy_Feather_Club_Swap_Days.html

April 18, 2026

Fremont, Ohio

Fremont Pigeon Club Spring Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Fremont_Pigeon_Club.html

April 24-26, 2026

Lucasville, Ohio

Lucasville Trade Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Lucasville_Trade_Days.html

April 25-26, 2026

Greenville, Ohio

Dayton Fancy Feather Club
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Dayton_Fancy_Feather_Club.html

May 8-10, 2026

Chillicothe, Ohio

Chillicothe Trade Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Chillicothe_Trade_Days.html

May 9, 2026

Painesville, Ohio

Western Reserve Poultry Club Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Western_Reserve_Poultry_Club.html

May 15-16, 2026

Mt Hope, Ohio

Mid Ohio Swap Meet
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Mid_Ohio_Swap.html

May 16, 2026

Cortland, Ohio

Tri-State Poultry Association Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Tri-State_Poultry_Association_Show.html

May 30, 2026

Eaton, Ohio

Preble County Poultry Breeders Youth Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Preble_County_Poultry_Breeders_Youth_Show.html

PENNSYLVANIA

April 11, 2026

Manheim, Pennsylvania

Graystone Small Animal Sale Special Consignment Auction
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Graystone_Small_Animal_Sale.html

April 19, 2026

Dunbar, Pennsylvania

Uniontown Poultry and Farm Products Association
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Uniontown_Poultry_Association.html

May 2, 2026

Halifax, Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania Avicultural Society Tailgate
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Pennsylvania_Avicultural_Society_Tailgate.html

May 17, 2026

Dunbar, Pennsylvania

Uniontown Poultry and Farm Products Association
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Uniontown_Poultry_Association.html

SOUTH CAROLINA

April 18, 2026

Easley, South Carolina

Dacusville Chickenstock
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Dacusville_Chickenstock.html

TENNESSEE

April 11, 2026

Lawrenceburg, Tennessee

Lawrence County Poultry Club Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Lawrence_County_Poultry_Club.html

April 11, 2026

Alexandria, Tennessee

Middle TN Poultry/Bird/Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Middle_TN_Poultry-Bird-Rabbit_Swap.html

May 2, 2026

Dickson, Tennessee

Volunteer State Poultry Club Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Volunteer_State_Poultry.html

May 9, 2026

Alexandria, Tennessee

Middle TN Poultry/Bird/Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Middle_TN_Poultry-Bird-Rabbit_Swap.html

TEXAS

April 4, 2026

Pleasanton, Texas

South Texas Spring Classic
www.poultryshowcentral.com/South_Texas_Winter_Classic.html

April 18, 2026

Gilmer, Texas

East Texas Poultry Trade Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/East_Texas_Poultry_Trades_Day.html

May 16, 2026

Waxahachie, Texas

Ellis County Poultry Trade Days
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Ellis_County_Poultry_Trade_Days.html

VIRGINIA

May 2, 2026

Glen Allen, Virginia

Gilmanor Swap & Sale
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Gilmanor_Swap_Sale.html

WASHINGTON

April 9-12, 2026

Puyallup, Washington

Washington State Spring Fair
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Puyallup_Fair.html

April 18, 2026

Stevenson, Washington

CRPE Spring Invitational
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Washington_Poultry_Exhibitors_Invitational.html

May 2, 2026

Port Orchard, Washington

Western Washington Poultry and Homestead Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Western_Washington_Poultry_and_Homestead_Swap.html

WISCONSIN

April 4, 2026

Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK_Small_Animal_Auction.html

April 4, 2026

Medford, Wisconsin

Taylor County Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Taylor_County_Swap.html

April 18, 2026

Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK_Small_Animal_Auction.html

April 18, 2026

Walworth, Wisconsin

Walworth County Fur and Feather Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Walworth_County_Fur_Feather_Swap.html

April 19, 2026

Medford, Wisconsin

Taylor County Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Taylor_County_Swap.html

May 2, 2026

Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK_Small_Animal_Auction.html

May 9, 2026

Elk Mound, Wisconsin

Elk Mound Animal Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Elk_Mound_Animal_Swap.html

May 16, 2026

Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK_Small_Animal_Auction.html

May 23, 2026

Medford, Wisconsin

Taylor County Swap/Poultry & Rabbit Fun Show
www.poultryshowcentral.com/Taylor_County_Swap.html

May 30, 2026

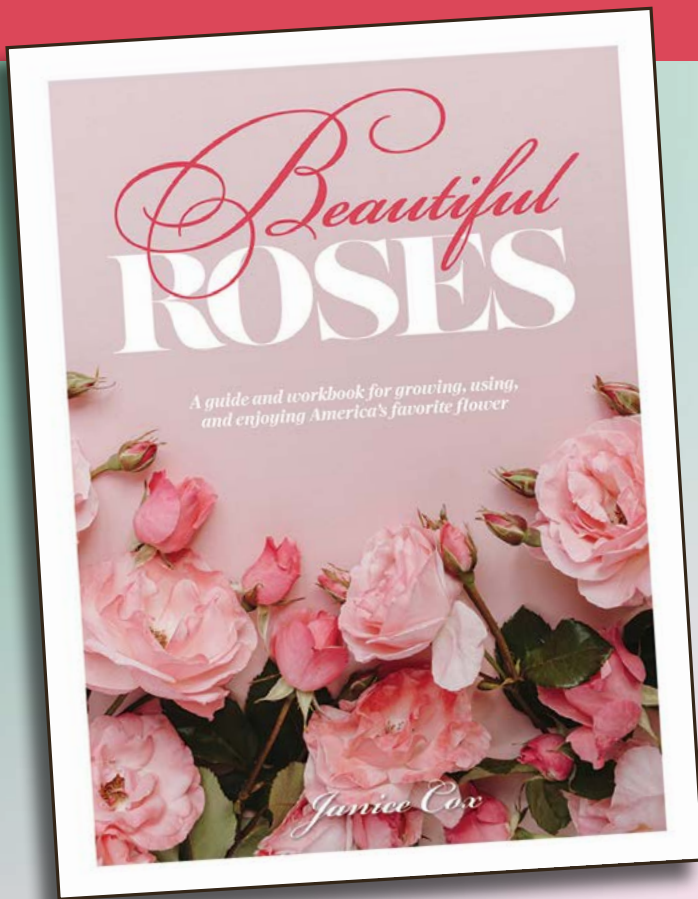
Amherst, Wisconsin

PK Small Animal Swap & Flea Market
www.poultryshowcentral.com/PK_Small_Animal_Auction.html

May 30, 2026

Ridgeland, Wisconsin

RiceStonian Swap
www.poultryshowcentral.com/RiceStonian_Swap.html



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Everyone loves roses. And author Janice Cox proves why in *Beautiful Roses: A Guide and Workbook for Growing, Using, and Enjoying America's Favorite Flower*. With chapters on growing, natural beauty, cooking, and crafting with roses, Cox offers something for everyone who loves this timeless bloom. Learn how to keep your roses healthy, make your own rosewater or natural insect repellent, and discover recipes for fragrant treats — cinnamon-rose sugar, rose olive oil cake, candied rose petals, and much more. Then, turn your petals into garden potpourri, rose petal beads, rose bud pomanders, and charming corsages and boutonnieres. Sprinkled throughout the book are delightful rose facts — stories of history, symbolism, and tradition, along with practical tips for preserving blooms and storing petals. Filled with gorgeous photography and hands-on projects, *Beautiful Roses* invites you to grow, cook, craft, and pamper yourself naturally — all with the world's most beloved flower. **\$17.99, Item #12729**

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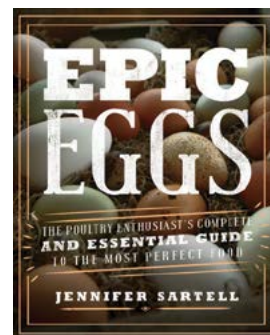
 *Backyard*
Poultry



EPIC EGGS

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.

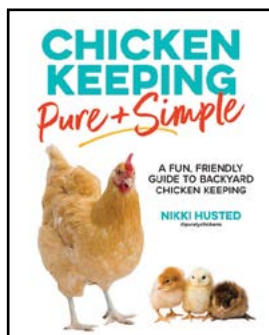
#8612 \$21.99 **Sale Price:** \$18.69



CHICKEN KEEPING PURE AND SIMPLE

Keeping chickens can look almost glamorous online. It's all beautiful chickens, cute baby chicks, and coops that look nice enough to spend the night in. The reality is that keeping chickens is rewarding — but also a lot of work and, well, poop cleanup. If you follow her online, you already know that Nikki shares the good, the bad, and the ugly of this popular hobby. In her first book, she remains unfiltered while she shares the essential techniques and helpful stories from her own experience with backyard chickens. That's right: you can learn

from her own successes and mistakes!
#12086 \$24.99 **Sale Price:** \$21.24



BEST SELLER



LET'S ALL KEEP CHICKENS!

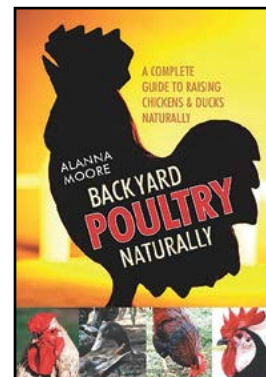
Dalia Monterroso, founder of the popular website Welcome to Chickenlandia, brings a fresh, inclusive voice to the community of backyard chicken keeping with this entry-level guide designed to empower anyone who's always wanted to keep chickens but may have thought it required special knowledge and a large investment in equipment. Monterroso's enthusiasm is contagious as she conveys the basics of chicken keeping, with an emphasis on low-cost, natural practices, and shares her belief that humans have an innate ability to care for chickens.

#11950 \$16.99 **Sale Price:** \$14.44

BACKYARD POULTRY NATURALLY

From housing and feeding to selection and breeding, this book covers everything the backyard farmer needs to know about poultry husbandry — including preventative and curative herbal medicines and homeopathy. The author takes a permaculture point of view in raising poultry, creating a diverse base of plant life for the birds to choose from, all cohesively fitting into the landscape and overall farm. Complete enough for the beginner, yet the experienced poultry farmers will find the book packed with techniques and ideas found nowhere else.

#11413 \$20.00 **Sale Price:** \$17.00



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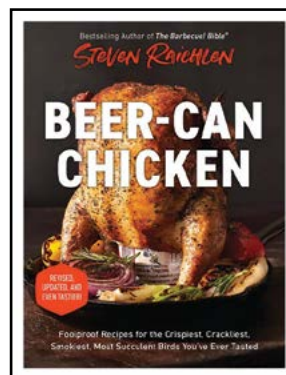
Everything you need in one convenient package to temporarily fence poultry in the backyard or on the pasture. 42" tall. 100' long. Choose this starter kit if you plan to move the fence daily/weekly and have heavy breeds



such as Orpingtons and Wyandottes. Kit includes these essentials:

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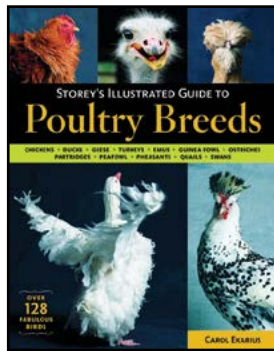
Whether on a can, under a brick, or in the embers, each grilling technique is explained in easy-to-follow steps, with recipes that guarantee no matter how wild the process, the results are always outstanding. Includes sides, desserts, and all new instructions for beer-canning on a pellet grill—with full-color step-by-step and beauty photography throughout.

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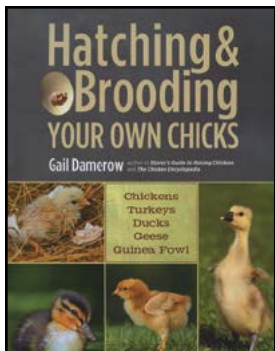
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STOREY'S ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO POULTRY BREEDS

This definitive guide to North American barnyard and wildfowl includes a brief history of each breed, detailed descriptions of identifying characteristics, and colorful photography of more than 128 birds that celebrate the birds' quirky personalities and charming good looks. If it's fowl facts and photos you want, you'll find them all here. A brief history of each breed, detailed descriptions of identifying characteristics, and colorful photography of more than 128 birds. Includes: chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, emus, guinea fowl, ostriches, partridges, peafowl, pheasants, quails, and swans.



#4297 \$24.95 **Sale Price:** \$21.21



HATCHING & BROODING YOUR OWN CHICKS

This is the guide you need if you want to incubate, hatch, and brood chicks yourself rather than buying them from a hatchery. Filled with beautiful illustrations, poultry authority Gail Damerow explains how to hatch healthy baby chickens, ducklings, goslings, turkey poults, and guinea keets. She addresses everything from selecting a breed and choosing the best incubator to ensure proper set-up and sanitary conditions, understanding embryo development,

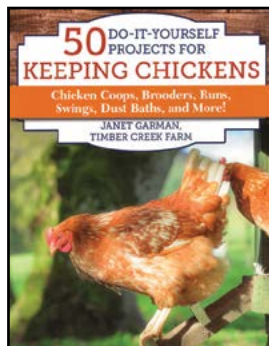
and feeding and caring for newborn chicks in a brooder.

#6584 \$24.95 **Sale Price:** \$21.21

50 DO-IT-YOURSELF PROJECTS FOR KEEPING CHICKENS

Get ready to jump into the world of chickens, one DIY project at a time. Owning and raising chickens doesn't have to be an expensive hobby. With imagination, simple tools, and salvaged or bargain materials, you can make everything your flock needs for their health and safety. Buying a chicken coop can be a major expense. Follow the steps provided in the book to retrofit an existing structure into a chicken palace fit for the fanciest hens.

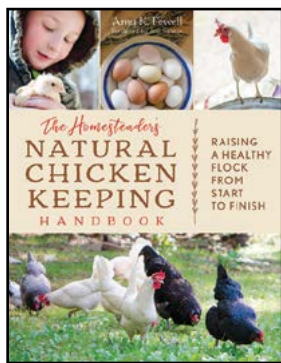
#9145 \$19.99 **Sale Price:** \$16.99



THE HOMESTEADER'S NATURAL CHICKEN KEEPING HANDBOOK

The Homesteader's Natural Chicken Keeping Handbook is the modern homesteader's guide to raising, feeding, breeding, selling, and enjoying the noblest animal on the farm: the chicken. From the rooster's crow in the morning to the warm egg in the nesting box, chickens are the gateway livestock for almost every homesteader and backyard farm enthusiast. In this book, you'll learn everything you need to know about raising chickens naturally.

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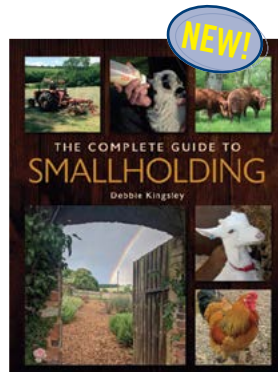
This 3-gallon Quick Clean Waterer is the ideal waterer for any chicken coop. With 5-inch legs that stand up and out of the bedding (to reduce soiling) and a lid that removes from the top (to make filling and cleaning easy), this item ensures your flock will always be well-watered.

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Growing your own food and living off the land is an aspiration for many, but where do you start and how do you make it work? Providing a truly comprehensive insight and packed with practical guidance for the 21st century smallholder, this book is for anyone considering, starting out or in the throes of smallholding. Addressing the challenges and pitfalls, as well as the joys,

with over 400 illustrations.
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THE ETHICAL MEAT HANDBOOK, 2ND EDITION

In this 2nd edition of *The Ethical Meat Handbook*, Meredith Leigh argues that by assuming responsibility for the food on our fork and the route by which it gets there, animals can be an optimal source of food, fiber, and environmental management. Eating diversely may be the most revolutionary action we can take to ensure the sustainability of our food system. *The Ethical Meat Handbook, 2nd Edition* challenges us to take a hard look at our dietary choices, increase self-reliance, and enjoy delicious food that benefits our health and our planet.

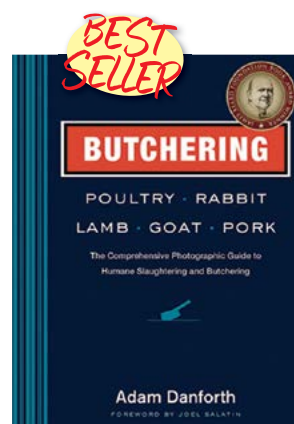


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WOODSIDE AVIARY, James Kotterman, Peru, Indiana. 765-985-2805. PHEASANT ENTHUSIASTS check this out! Displaying full color. Temminck, Satyr, and Cabots Tragopan Pheasants. NO CATALOG AVAILABLE. GIVE ME A CALL AND WE'LL TALK ABOUT THE BIRDS

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ASSOCIATIONS

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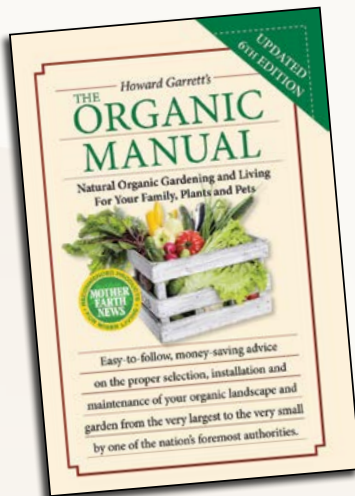
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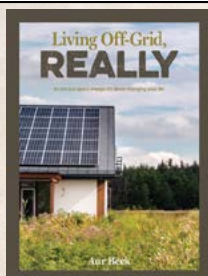
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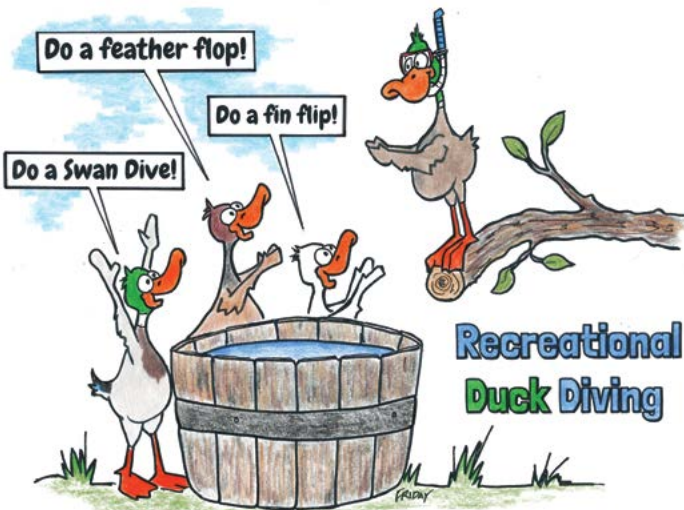


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Backyard Poultry Word Search April/May 2026

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 O O K M U W A Q E R W P H O E I T O Z Z D E H O
 M O O L B O N C T A I L F U O N N A P K L W E G
 S D L P H T Z G T A Y L A V I C H R E E V A R S
 K A P N S S C E Z H N P V Y R M P C E M M I I C
 H U D Q L L R J R J S X F V I X O K I Y H N T R
 D V A O E F P S Y D X R N G S N X E P L C O A A
 U K F B O T C W A T T L E S J P G A C R U M G M
 R S N W P I N T C J W I J T O L R H B J D M E B
 A Y L T E L L U P E G Y S Q H E A H E F M A C L
 R V N A T U R A L C O V E R H G O U P N D O H E
 E B H F L Z T R U Q I M B T Q T I B B N S T I D
 B R K R M E N N R L I I K R Z A Y F C K I A C E
 R A R E Z D B S E Y P C T S O R T E E D X S K G
 E Z Q E L J H R U M U R J L T O O S U R N W E G
 E U W R E T O J O D N E Q L P K D A F C I U N S
 D X H A O E U T B O B I U Y S E L E E I Q F S V
 S T S N N Z H P S W D O A F V P L N R N U Y O R
 D Z E G F A N J C K P Y Q T U C H L C E W K E Q
 Z C O E N Q W C Y J C W A R R B D H W T J B G B
 S P S S H A M O K Z V O P Y S E I T L W F N G I
 R Y E Q Q S O R R P Q O L I O C T H I G T X S K
 K E P U P V K X P Z S T I F K X U N M U Y F I P
 F I P W N H L V T E T V H S C M W V E E A U R F

- SCRAMBLED EGGS
- BLOOM
- KEEL
- SHAMO
- RARE BREEDS
- BROODER
- COOP
- WATTLES
- CHICKS
- BROODY
- HERITAGE CHICKENS
- FLOCKS
- POULTRY
- FREE RANGE
- MEAT
- EGGS
- DUAL PURPOSE
- PULLET
- LAYING HENS
- AMMONIA
- NATURAL COVER
- ENTERTAINMENT
- WATERFOWL
- FIREFIGHTERS
- DUCK THERAPY



Answer Key

Answer key grid showing the words found in the word search, with red lines indicating the word paths.

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5. Oliver Sommers;
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