

CHICKEN KEEPING AND COOP DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Ventilation

- › Helps prevent odor
- › Protects hens' lungs

Protection

- › Raccoon-proof latches
- › 1/2" hardware cloth (not chicken wire)
- › Secure floor from digging predators

Bedding/Litter

- › Few inches of carbonaceous bedding
- › Chickens mix it, composts in place
- › Add carbon if it smells
- › Compost for rich fertilizer

Seasons

- › Give shade in summer
- › Cover to keep dry
- › Protect from cross-drafts in winter
- › Insulate/add warmth as needed, check with others in your area



Water and Food

- › About 1/4 lb. of feed/hen/day
- › Hanging feeder prevents wastage
- › Chickens are omnivores (so table scraps, grass, bugs are all good)
- › Check/refresh water daily

Materials

- › Softwoods (painted/sealed) or rot-resistant woods
- › Quality exterior screws
- › Try not to overbuild
- › Recycled materials where practical
- › Avoid toxic stuff

Perches

- › Hens like to roost above ground
- › Put perches in henhouse and run
- › 10" linear width per hen

Space

- › Min. per hen 2 sq. ft. in house, 4 in run
- › More is better—extra day yard is great (with 4' fence)

Doors

- › Pop door (hens' access): 1 ft. x 1 ft.
- › Human door: taller is better
- › Cleanout door: make easy to reach

Raised Henhouse

- › More under one roof
- › Easy height for cleaning
- › Larger run or storage

Mobile Coop (chicken tractor/ark)

- › Great for small flocks
- › Move around garden
- › Ideal for people who rent or move

Artificial Light (optional)

- › For more eggs in winter
- › Heat in extreme cold

Neighbors

- › Position coop thoughtfully
- › Share your eggs, expertise

Sound

- › Hens are not like roosters
- › Mostly a pleasant quiet chatter
- › Louder clucking when laying
- › Only ever after sunrise
- › No louder than a small dog's barking

Other Tips

- › Make your coop look nice
- › Add door for gathering eggs
- › Use a plan if it helps



Resources

- › TheGardenCoop.com – our website, for detailed coop plans (the two coops pictured here) and chicken keeping resources
- › MyPetChicken.com – popular online store for ordering chicks and supplies
- › BackyardChickens.com – large, active forum, design ideas
- › Look for a local online chicken keeping group to join – or start a new one! And shop at local feed and farm stores, lumberyards, and hardware stores.

Build safe. And have fun!

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GardenCoop
.com
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