

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!

the
GardenCoop
.com
diy chicken coop plans