

The Garden Coop



chicken coop construction plan

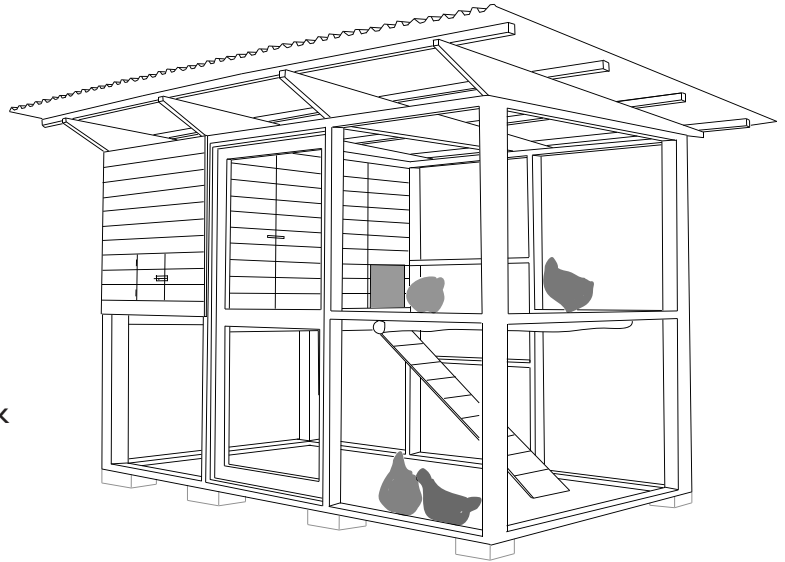
what's inside

Overview and precautions {read first!}	4
Tools and materials	5
Framing the walls	7
Setting the piers	13
Building the roof	15
Framing the henhouse	19
Digging a trench	21
Installing hardware cloth	22
Framing the door	25
Henhouse walls and floor	27
Nesting boxes	36
Ladder and perches	37
Final touches	38
Tips and suggestions	39
Image gallery	40
Appendix (more construction tips)	42

SAMPLE PAGES
NOT FOR USE

overview and precautions

THE GARDEN COOP makes for a comfortable, attractive home for up to eight hens. The polycarbonate (translucent) roof adds a lot both to the form and the function of the coop, providing light, ventilation, security, and cover. It is set atop what is basically a box within a box. The outer box defines the enclosed hen yard; the inner box, the henhouse. The yard and henhouse are made of a two-by-four lumber frame that rests on cinderblock piers set partially in the ground. The piers provide a stable, level foundation and elevate the wooden frame away from the moisture of the ground.



The frame is completely enclosed with a mix of wood siding and half-inch hardware cloth on all sides and at the top, and the hardware cloth is buried a foot into the ground on all sides. This prevents rodents and predators from easily digging in, and helps anchor the structure. The floor of the hen yard is the ground, so the chickens can scratch in earth and straw. Roosts can be hung at various heights in the yard as well as in the henhouse. The hens access the henhouse from a ladder below. There are two nesting boxes up there, and room for more, if you felt like you needed them. Our five hens prefer to share just one. The tall latched door to the yard makes it easy for you to get in and out for care and cleaning. A feeder and waterer can be hung from beneath the henhouse. For egg collection, there is a latched egg door to the outside that opens into both nesting boxes.

Those are the basics of The Garden Coop. It's a flexible design, and you'll no doubt enjoy thinking of ways to modify it to fit into your own setting and routines. Now some important notes and precautions. . .

COPYRIGHT

Unless otherwise noted, The Garden Coop LLC is the legal copyright holder of the material in this plan. Content is intended solely for the use of the purchaser, and may be printed **for personal use only**. No portion of the plan may be published, resold, or distributed without written consent from the copyright holder. **Building multiple coops?** Visit TheGardenCoop.com for details.

DISCLAIMER, WAIVER, AND HOLD HARMLESS AGREEMENT

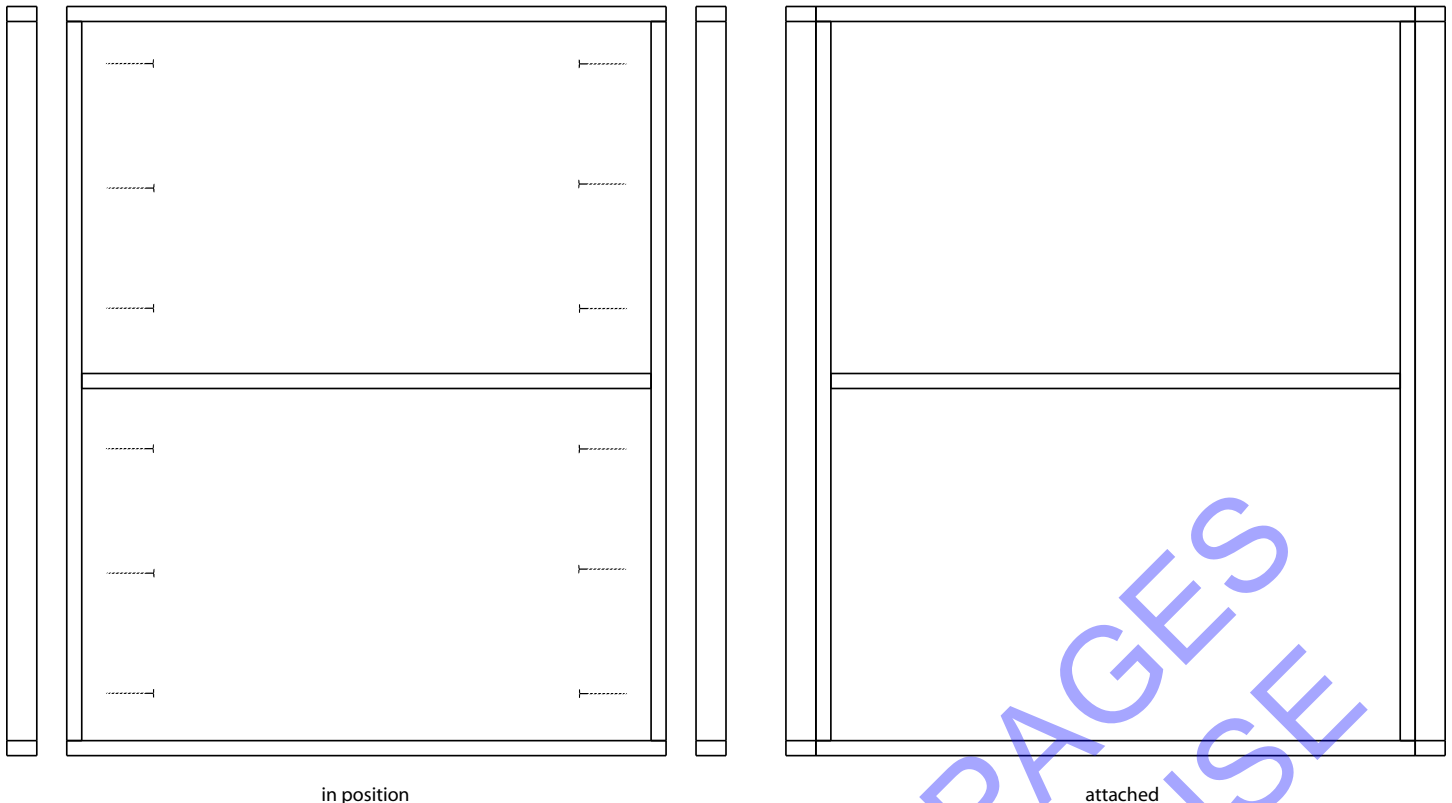
It is your responsibility to make sure that any project you undertake is safe, effective, and legal for your situation. This plan is offered AS IS for information and entertainment purposes only. The Garden Coop LLC makes no warranties or representations of any kind concerning the accuracy, suitability, or safety of the information contained in the plan. By using this information in this plan you expressly acknowledge having read and understood this disclaimer and the waivers contained in it, and you agree to hold The Garden Coop LLC, its owners, employees, and agents or anyone else who has been involved in the creation, production, or delivery of the plan harmless from any damages or injuries of any kind to you or any person that might result from your use of or reliance upon the plan or from any errors, omissions, or other causes.

Make sure to follow all manufacturers' instructions when using tools, materials, or equipment — and use the appropriate protective devices when building, such as work gloves, eye and ear protection, boots, etc. Know what you can handle physically as well, and work within your limits. . .

Build safe and have fun!

framing the walls (continued)

NOW IS A GOOD TIME to apply the environmentally/wildlife-friendly paint, wood treatment, or sealer of your choice to the frame elements to protect them from the weather (see Appendix). Remember to sand the “mill glaze” off of new lumber so that it accepts the paint/treatment/sealer (use 60- or 80-grit sandpaper). Note: once you’ve framed up the door, roof support, and siding, paint/treat/seal those areas too.



in position

attached

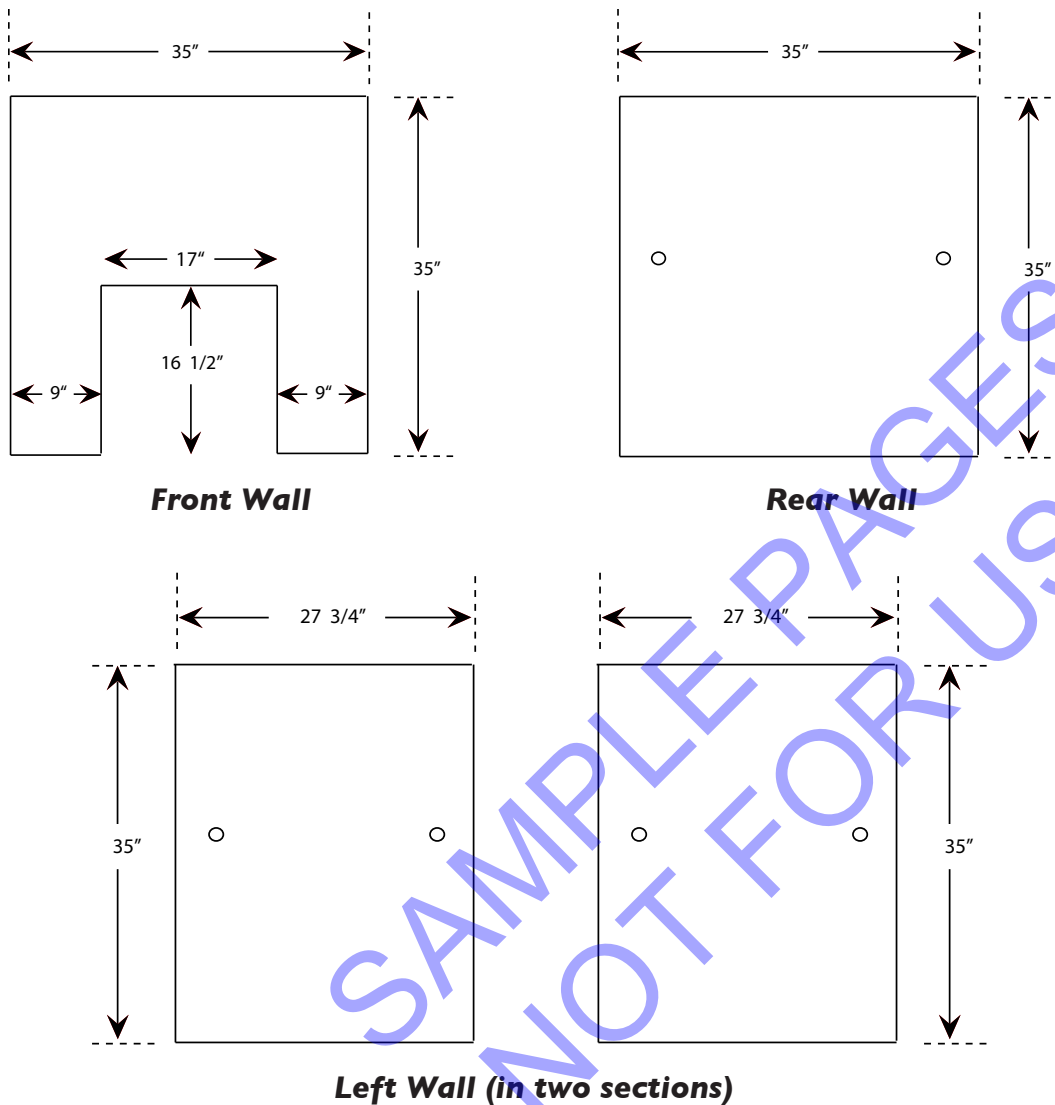
View from Right Side

- Move the finished frame elements to the final assembly area. With some help, you’ll assemble the walls together, and the coop frame will take shape.
- Use caution in standing the front and right walls up vertically. Align them properly, then screw them together at the corner studs using 3” screws. Do the same with the rear wall, then the left wall.
- You’re basically sandwiching the side walls between the front and rear walls. Use three screws above center, and three below. Make sure the pieces fit flush.

henhouse walls and floor (continued)

“FLOATING” INTERIOR WALLS

- STEP ONE: From inside your henhouse, caulk the gaps in the siding to prevent cold air and moisture from getting in. If you do this, you also want to add these floating interior walls. They will prevent your chickens from pecking at the caulk in the siding, block drafts, and help insulate. If you're using sheet siding instead or otherwise not using caulk, then these wall panels are optional. They do not permanently attach to the frame and are meant to be removable, either for cleaning or for adding rigid insulation as desired (see Step Three).
- STEPTWO: Measure and cut plywood according to the diagrams below. Where shown, drill 1" finger holes in the boards (rear and left walls) to help you hold them during positioning.



ladder and perches

LADDER

- **STEP ONE:** Cut a piece of plywood 1 1/2" wide by about 66" long (check for an exact measurement). You want to be able to insert the top end a few inches into the hole in the bottom of the henhouse floor and have the bottom end rest on the ground without slipping. Alternatively, you can use a hinge to attach the top end to the bottom of the henhouse floor.
- **STEPTWO (optional):** If you have leftover hardware cloth, you might attach a piece between the board and the rungs to give your birds a little extra traction in the spaces between the rungs. Make sure it is pressed flat against the board so that their toes don't get snagged.
- **STEP THREE:** I recommend using branches to make the rungs of the ladder and the perches instead of smooth dowels or poles. The natural unevenness of the branch makes it easier for the hens to grab with their feet. Find a branch that's about 3/4" in diameter, and cut it into several 1 1/2" lengths (same width as the ladder board). Using 1 1/4" screws, attach these to the top of the ladder board every 6 inches.



PERCHES



- **STEP ONE:** Find a long branch that's about 2 1/2" to 3" in diameter (for full-sized chickens, smaller for young birds and bantam hens). Attach it with long screws to the horizontal boards that are halfway up the side of the enclosed yard.
- **STEPTWO:** Also put a perch inside the henhouse, leaving enough clearance above and below for the birds to move about. Attach a couple of short two-by-four blocks to the "floating" inside walls, then attach the perch to top of those blocks.

appendix (continued)

Tips for cutting and attaching hardware cloth

- Use leather or rubber coated gloves to protect your hands from abrasion.
- Use a decent pair of wire snips that can handle 19-gauge wire or heavier.
- After you make a cut that leaves a smooth edge on your cut piece, there will be a row of sharp tabs left on the edge of the roll. Cut these tabs off before doing anything else — but don't cut them off at the next wire, or they'll fall loose to the ground. Go another wire over (see picture at right). Then when you cut, you'll be removing a vertical wire with tabs attached on each side. It's much easier to roll that piece up and dispose of it.



- The most secure way to attach the 3/4" galvanized poultry net staples is to nail them across the wire at a weld, so they actually catch the mesh going in two directions. Avoid trying to hammer them in at knots in the wood, as this will likely just deform the staple. You'll get a feel for the particular staples you buy. Some are thicker and really need to be pounded in. Others are thinner/smoothed and go in easier, though you may have to be more careful with your hammering technique so that they don't get bent out of shape.



SAMPLE PAGES
NOT FOR USE