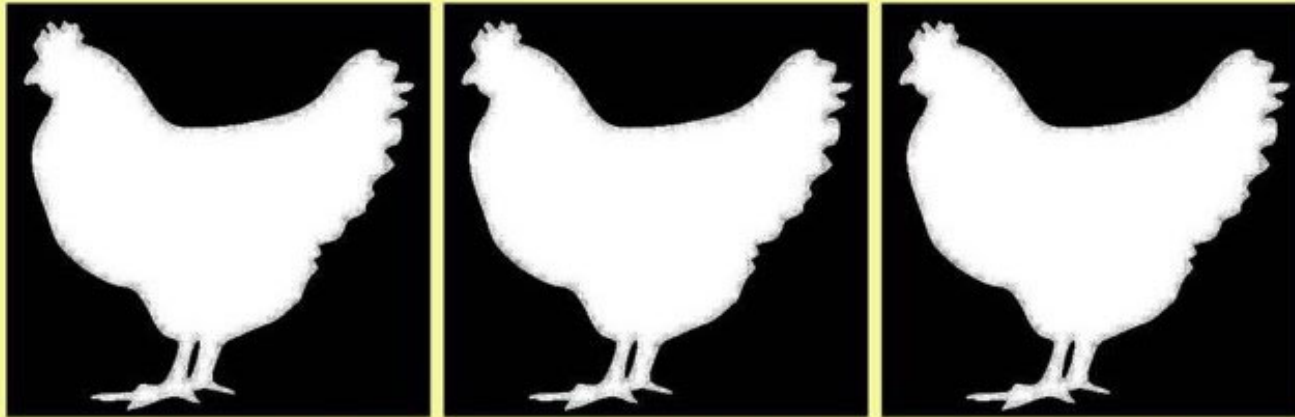




Chicken Basics

John Geib
Master Gardener
Abilene, TX

Health Warning



SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING:

Backyard chicken keeping can be addictive and lead to OCD (Obsessive Chicken Disorder). At this time, there is no known cure, but there are support groups available to enable you further. Proceed at your own risk!

WWW.FRESH-EGGS-DAILY.COM

Overview

- **Requirements**
- **Acquiring**
- **Upkeep / Maintenance**
- **Meat or eggs**

Starting Place

- **Is it legal?**

- **City**

- **Noise**
 - **Smell**
 - **Pests**
 - **Disease**
 - **Property Values**
 - **Enforcement Concerns**

- **HOA**

- **County**

Decisions

- **Eggs**
- **Meat**
- **Both?**

Acquiring

- **Feed store**
- **Online from hatcheries**
- **Online – Social media**
- **Grow your own from seeds**

Acquiring Chicks

- **Feed store**
 - **Pros**
 - **No wait**
 - **Cons**
 - **Limited selection**
 - **No wait**
- **Online from hatcheries**
 - **Pros**
 - **Selection**
 - **Cons**
 - **Wait for them to come**
 - **Stressed chicks**

Acquiring Chicks

- **Social Media - Facebook**
 - **Pros**
 - **No wait**
 - **Selection can be good**
 - **Cons**
 - **No clue what you are getting**
 - **No clue what you are getting**
- **Grow your own from seeds**
 - **Pros**
 - **You MAY know what you are getting**
 - **Cons**
 - **Wait for them to come**

Basic Requirements

- **Food**
- **Water**
- **SAFE warm shelter**

Shelter

- **Contain the chicks**
- **Draft free**
- **Soft floor**
 - **Paper towels**
 - **Shavings**
- **Heat lamp or plate**

Food & Water - Chicks

- **High Protein**
 - 18-20%
 - Medicated or not
- **Crumbles**
- **Grit**
- **Fresh clean water – ALWAYS available**
- **1/2 cup per chick**

Chicks Day 1

- **Have heat lamp/plate on before getting chicks**
- **Place paper towels over shavings**
- **Unpackage chicks 1 at a time**
- **Dip beak in water**
- **Scatter feed on ground**

Chicks Ongoing

- **Slowly adjust heat lamp/plate**
- **Remove paper towels after a day**
- **Watch for pasty butt**
- **Keep fed and watered**
- **Keep shavings clean**

Food – Teenagers 6-10 weeks

- **Protein**
 - **16-18% - Layers**
 - **20% - Meat birds**
- **Crumbles or pellets**
- **Grit**

Food - Adulthood

- **Meat birds – not an issue**
- **Layers**
 - **16-18% protein**
 - **Crumbles or pellets**
 - **Grains**
 - **Food scraps**
 - **Oyster Shell free choice**

Shelters

- **Cages**
- **Chick-shaws**
- **Tractors**
- **Coops**

Shelter

- **Chick-shaws**



Shelter

- **Tractors**



Shelter

- **Cages**
 - **Birds need 3 sqft per bird MINIMUM**
- **Chick-shaws**
- **Tractors**
- **Coops**

Coops



Coops



Coops



Coops



Predators

- **Location dependent**
 - **Dogs**
 - **Cats**
 - **Raccon**
 - **Skunk**
 - **Snakes**
 - **Hawks**
 - **Coyote**
 - **Bobcat**
 - **Mountain Lions**
 - **Humans**
 - **Chickens**

Free Range



Free Range



Free Range



Free Range

- **Electric Poultry Netting**



Eggs

- **Amount depends on breed**
 - **50 – 300 eggs per year**
- **Lights in winter extend production**
- **Refrigerate or not?**
- **Rooster not needed except for babies**

Meat Birds

- **No Processing facilities nearby**
- **Not hard but...**
- **YouTube videos are helpful**
 - **Joel Salatin | Broiler Processing Demo Homesteaders of America 2019**
 - **Joel Salatin Processes Chickens - MOTHER EARTH NEWS FAIR**
 - **Polyface Farm Joel Salatin butchering chickens**

Online resources

- **Hatchery websites**
- **TAMU Poultry Science Department**
- **Facebook**
 - **Friends of Roots and Refuge Farm**
 - **Abilene TX Area Poultry**
- **Books – Storey's guide to Chickens**

QUESTIONS?

www.bcmgtx.org

Big Country Master Gardeners on Facebook

