

Keeping Chickens Newsletter

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www.KeepingChickensNewsletter.com



April 2010

Hi

Welcome to my Keeping Chickens Newsletter.

Thanks to everyone who has sent in their keeping chickens tips, stories and photos etc. - as usual, if you have anything chicken related (tips, photos, stories, questions, coops etc.) you'd like to share in future issues of the newsletter or blog posts then just email news@self-sufficient-life.com and I will do my best to answer / include them.

Best Wishes
Gina

Subscriber Letters



David Miller : I really enjoy your blog, and have learned a lot from you about taking care of my chickens. I do have a couple of questions for you. First, I've noticed little red dots on the shells of some of the eggs. They can be brushed off (please don't tell my wife I used her tooth brush,) so my thinking is that it must be blood on the outside of the shell. Also, some of the eggs have zillions of dark spots at one end. Is this just a normal calcium deposit? And third, I discovered that my chickens spread much less feed on the ground if I use an old drain gutter as a feeder. Thanks for the good job you're doing! Rome, Georgia

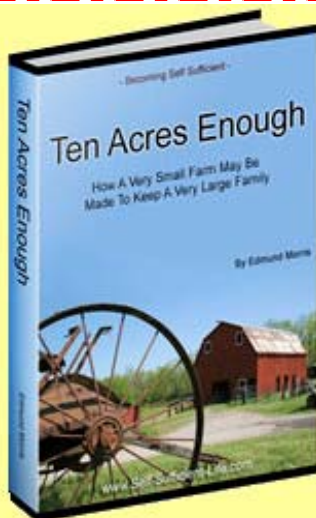
My Reply : *Thanks for the tip ☺ I could be wrong but it looks to me like normal calcium deposits and speckling - the pigment is the last thing to be added in the egg making process and some hens, regardless of breed, will naturally sometimes lay speckled eggs (also, if you have pullets they can be a law unto themselves until they get established at laying eggs).*





Lisa Ruminski : We recently started a flock of layers and this morning I discovered my little Chinese Silkie was going “broody”. She refused to get out of the nest and I found her sitting on one of her eggs, plus two from our Auracanas and one from our Polish hen. I quickly referred to your web site for information and advice. We immediately converted one of our big show dog crates into a ‘penitentiary’ in the barn. She was NOT happy, mind you, but I hope she will come out of this soon. We don't have a rooster, or I would let her become a mama, but as I've read this thing can be very difficult for them...not to mention disappointing when nothing comes of it. Here's a little video of her protesting her incarceration (*added to the stopping broodies blog post*) :

<http://successwithpoultry.blogspot.com/2009/06/how-to-stop-broody-hen-from-staying.html>



Ten Acres Enough

How A Very Small Farm May Be Made To Keep A Very Large Family

Ten Acres Enough is a self-sufficiency classic written by Edmund Morris, and is his personal story of his journey from city businessman to farmer. In this book Edmund details the first 3 years of his 'back to the land' experience; how he selected the land, what he chose to grow, the animals he raised, planning and managing his fully stocked kitchen garden and the layout of his fields. He also passes along many tips for planting and growing his selection of fruits and vegetables as well as sharing his experiences with cows, pigs and chickens. He explains honestly what worked for him and what did not.

[**CLICK HERE FOR MORE DETAILS**](#)

Vivian : Dear Gina I just read something in one farm magazine that said not to feed chickens raw potato peels they can get sick. I didn't know this, please let your readers know cooked potato is ok. Vivian in Tennessee.

Pauline Stanford : Recently, one of my hens was acting very strange all day, not moving around, doing her usual scratching. When the time came to secure them for the night, I found her hiding in a corner, very cold. I quickly warmed her up under my coat. After cuddles & coos, I put her back with the rest. I stayed to make sure she was all right. One of the other hens encouraged her to walk, & kept her going. After about 10 min, she layed an egg without a shell, after much effort. It amazed me that another hen intuitively, knew to help. Newfoundland, Canada

Sharon : I have never had any luck boiling my chicken eggs for hard boiled eggs and then being able to peel them. Any advice?

My Reply : *Very fresh eggs are nearly always hard to peel. If you are able to let them age for a week or so that would probably help. Another method would be to put them in warm water and bring them up to boil. Once boiling, put a lid on the pan, and turn the heat off and leave them for ten minutes.*

Pauline : I have a question about my galvanized water dispenser. The interior has rusted is it safe to use it? I worry it will harm my girls.

My Reply : *As far as I know rust is not particularly harmful in a nutritional sense but there may be sharp bits ingested and if your water is a little acidic or you use anything acidic (such as vinegar) then that may cause some of the elements of the coating/container to leech into the water. I don't know if the levels would be high enough to do any harm but if you have an alternative container it may be preferable to use that instead.*

Kara : Our hens are major diggers, and consistently make a mess of the run. They get plenty of time out in our yard, but rainy days when they can't get out, they just spend digging away. The run is not so small (maybe 1x2 meters) but not huge. How could we discourage this behavior? Or do we just have to accept it? Would increasing the run size help? Thanks! Kara Portland, OR USA

My Reply : *It is in their nature to dig and scratch about so it would be very hard to discourage the behaviour. A larger run would spread/slow down the destruction, but it would still probably end up in a mess on rainy days. You may be able to distract them from it a little with other activities - I have some 'distractions' mentioned on the blog here :*

<http://successwithpoultry.blogspot.com/2009/03/keeping-chickens-entertained.html>



Mr Roberto

Pam : Hi Gina, Thanks to all who contributed to our questions regarding Mr. Roberto. He loves his new home with our church friend but is so proud of his status, he crows NON stop. They had to relocate him further away from the house! Etta Fay, Lucy, and Attila the hen missed him at first but soon got over it.

With that said, in reply to Molly C from Brittany France. Get at least 3 girls. They can grieve! So if you have 2 and lose 1, your other may be sad. Plus 3 is fun. It's like high school all over again. 1 Week Etta Fay and Attila are BFFs and exclude Lucy. Then all of a sudden Lucy and Attila are BFFs and Etta Fay is odd gal out. It's funny to watch!



Atilla

Neil this may be an issue with your egg in the run! We use to think Lucy layed her egg in the run sometimes due to inexperience or just plain laziness but now we think she does it sometimes to avoid Etta Fay and Attila when they are excluding her. It could also be Etta Fay deciding to relocate Lucy's egg away from hers. And the Fake eggs worked for about two days. Now they “play soccer” with them! We still put a fake egg in every time we completely clean out the coop (golf balls even work) but soon find them “kicking it around”. Next girl I get I may name Pele'!



Etta Fay

Chris from Dorset, we found Etta Fay's eggs to be soft sometimes. So now I pull the egg shells from the compost bin in the kitchen. I keep them rinsed and dried out. From time to time I lay them between sheets of paper towels and crush them under a rolling pin. The girls will never recognize the shells as their eggs then. Then I mix the shells with one of their favorite treats (chopped roasted peanuts). They get some extra calcium from the shell pieces they consume with the peanuts. Since then we have had no soft eggs.



Lucy

Now for my questions: We would like at least 3 more chickens. I could sure use advice on how to introduce 3 chicks to the group. Can I sneak 3 babies under a broody hen one night? How do you keep the grownups from eating the medicated chick feed? I would truly appreciate everyone's advice. And... Any clue what I have in hens now? Etta Fay's eggs are cream and Lucy's are brown. Attila lays a brown eggs with darker brown spots (almost purple spots!) We rescued these gals last summer as chicks from a dog. I don't know about you guys, but sitting out in the afternoon watching our girls helps us de-compress from the day. My doctor actually wanted to know what I was doing to bring down my blood pressure. I told him Yoga and chicken watching so my medical records now read "Yoga with chickens"! hmm, I might have to give that a try!
Pam in Moyock, North Carolina

My Reply : Thanks for the photos and tips ☺ It is a risk but it does sometimes work to sneak day old chicks under a broody hen - the best chance of it working is if the broody has been sitting on some eggs for close to 21 days and then you gradually replace an egg for a chick every few hours and see how it goes. It is usually easiest to keep the broody and her chicks in a seperate broody coop, or area of the coop because sometimes the other flock members will attack chicks - it will also make it easier to keep the rest of the flock on their normal layers feed. The mother hen can eat the chick feed (she will not normally start to lay eggs again until after the chicks are 'raised' and she has left them which will be several weeks). If she does lay eggs whilst eating the medicated feed you may need to discard them (the feed package should give exact instructions).

I'll put your identity request in the newsletter, hopefully someone will know - the breeds they seem like to me (bearing in mind I am pretty useless at it!) are Ameraucana's and Faverolles (the feathering on Eta Fay seems quite Salmon Faverolle-ish to me), but, Faverolles have feathered feet and five toes and Ameraucana's lay blue / blue-green eggs so I wonder if they are what are known generally as 'Easter Eggers' which are not exactly a breed but are hybrids related to Ameraucanas and Araucanas but then bred with many different breeds. Each 'easter egger' hen may lay a different coloured egg to another 'easter egger' hen.



200 Eggs a Year

Chicken Care Guide

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Tom Hall : I finally finished making the tiles for the roof of my coop so here are the photos I promised. The roost area measures 3' x 4' and I built a skylight so that the birds have light during the day. The exterior door to the roost area slides and I can use either a glass or a screened panel depending on weather conditions.



The run area is 3' x 9'. The chicken's door is also a sliding door that I can open and close from outside the coop. The caged area under the coop swings out on hinges and at the far end is a screened door which, when opened, triggers a gas shock that automatically lifts the roof area allowing good access for feeding and cleaning. When the birds are ready to lay I will attach two laying boxes with an entrance through the left wall of the roost area. The large room attached to the run is where I have my pottery wheel and kiln. When I am finished with that room I will add a smaller door that will allow the birds to visit me while I am throwing pots.





Estelle Cameron : Thankyou Gina, I'm pleased to have found your site and newsletter. I live in Brisbane, Australia with my husband and two children in a suburban area close to the city. Growing up I always had chooks (chickens) and really wanted for my kids to grow up with them in the back yard too. We have recently converted the rarely used sandpit under the cubby house into a chook pen and have bought three beautiful black Australorps to live there.



We get two to three eggs a day which are the tastiest and most beautiful looking eggs I've ever seen. We've clipped their wings and let them out to roam the backyard each afternoon for a few hours.



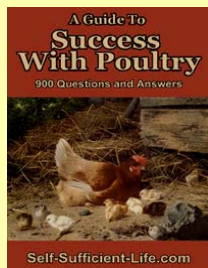
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Adrian Lowes : I have a question that I hope either yourself or fellow readers can help with. We have been incubating some fertile eggs recently. Some have hatched without a problem. Some we heard the chicks cheep inside so put back in the incubator expecting a chick to appear. After a few day the egg has gone silent and no chick appeared. We have cracked open the egg and found a perfectly formed chick dead inside. Is it a case of the chick was simply not strong enough to crack out so wouldn't have survived anyway? Is it something we are feeding our chickens that are making the shells too hard the chick can't break out or is it something else? We have experience in the past with chicks half out and we have helped them but generally we have found they do not survive. We have had one of our chicks hatch with a deformed leg. It is managing perfectly well. It's parents are not related so I assume it is just a twist of nature for this poor little one. I couldn't bring myself to kill the chick and it doesn't appear to be bothering it so have left it alone and it is coming along nicely (3 weeks old now).

We are in Yorkshire, England near selby if any fellow readers are in the area and want to connect. We have Rhode Island Reds, Buff Orpingtons, Barred Plymouth Rocks and Light sussex chickens. Attached are a few pics of our Birds.

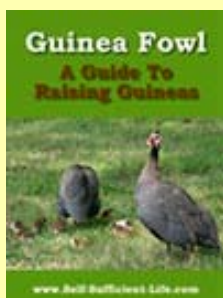


My Reply : *Many subscribers do have a lot of experience with incubating so hopefully we will get some replies for you. Most of the guides I have seen say it is usually advisable not to try to help if a chick is not healthy enough to hatch*

out on its own, especially if it has not even started to break through the shell. If a chick is fully formed and from good strong stock but unable to break out of the shell it can sometimes be due to the humidity levels in the incubator causing the chick to be stuck to the membrane in the shell (also if the chick is too big for the shell that can make it hard for it to move about like it needs to). In the case of a chick that has broken the shell and has been hatching for several hours but seems stuck due to dryness that has developed it may help to gently mist it with warm water. In theory that could help stop the membrane from completely drying out but it often seems to me that successfully helping with a hatch has more to do with luck than anything else.

Tam Armstrong : I'm loving the newsletter as always and have a question I have not yet heard discussed. I warn you it's a bit disgusting but here goes nothing.....I recently realized my chicks (1 year old black australorps) have been eating my dog's daily poop! Now I knew that the dog was enjoying a little chicken dropping every now and then and wasn't too surprised about this considering that my dog will eat anything. This latest development really disturbs me! Is this normal and is it OK for their eggs? Thanks for any advice and I am currently in the process of sequestering my girls from dog poop access just in case! Tam Armstrong Missoula, MT

My Reply : *Dogs eating chicken poop is a more common problem. I haven't really heard much about the other way around but I do know that the eggs are a direct product of what your girls are eating - grass and bugs make free range eggs taste better than caged bird eggs and if chickens eat onions or garlic then that taste passes to the eggs too. It is a bit icky to think about (I'm not overly keen on the thought of the bugs and worms they eat either!). When chickens are wormed it is often recommended by the worming manufacturer not to eat their eggs for a week or two so it may be wise not to eat their eggs if your dogs have recently been treated for fleas and/or worms. I don't know if there is anything in dog poop that could adversely affect the eggs - I would guess a little occasionally is probably not going to do any harm but it is probably as well to keep them away from the dogs poop if you can.*



Guinea Fowl

A Guide To Raising Guineas

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Christy Weick : Here are some pics of what Patrick got in yesterday morning. The best news is that they called after he went to school. It was a **SURPRISE** when he picked up his chicks.



More new additions for Patrick... Gilbert is the biggest one at 25 lbs and Spot is the littlest one at 18 lbs. They are 3 mths old. The guineas have been in an uproar since they came. Spot tried to eat the white male, when he got to close and was yelling at him. Spot is the runt and is grumpy sometimes. But I guess you have to be like that to get your food since he is the littlest out of 7 live piglets.

Lynn : I have 8 ex-bat hens that I've had 8 months, I also got a cockerel, which I have had for 3 weeks. I would like to hatch some of the fertile eggs. None of my hens look like they are broody, and I was wondering if I could hatch some eggs without buying an incubator. If anyone has tried, with success I would be really interested. I live in Melton Mowbray, England

My Reply : *In the August 09 newsletter Pauline gave details of her homemade incubator so you could perhaps try that (there would still be a cost in the materials but perhaps less than if you were buying an incubator).* ☺

Andrea Worthington : Love your work! I have a question that I haven't found an answer to on your web site. I had 2 backyard hens and one of them recently suddenly died. Now the one hen is alone and I am worried for her "mental health" since chickens are social animals. I am not sure how to remedy this. Should I find another adult laying hen for company or get one or two female chicks for her to raise? I live in a suburb where we aren't supposed to keep chickens and so I have to have a tiny flock. (They have a portable coop which I wheel around our 1/3 acre lot). Thanks again for your great newsletter. Andrea Worthington Albany, NY

My Reply : *They do generally prefer to be in groups if possible. She may mother a chick but the best chance of that happening would be if she was already broody. Even a broody hen who has been sitting on eggs for a few weeks will not always accept chicks as their own and so it can be a bit risky. With regards to adding another adult hen, the usual recommendation for adding to a flock would be to quarantine any new additions for at least 30 days to minimise the chances of 'catching something' and wiping out your whole flock, but as you have only one hen you may feel it is worth taking a chance on just adding a new one in straight away. Either way, it's usually recommended to try adding new addition(s) at night when they are roosting because the old and new can wake up together and feel like they've always been together. However, in your case I think perhaps that would be a bit strange (scarey?) for your current hen to wake up and find a second one there again so they may be better introduced outside in the daytime – perhaps partitioned to start with so that they can see and hear each other and get used to each other for a while that way before being let together to see how they get on. I don't know if that would definitely be the best way, it is just a feeling. I have some general adding to flocks tips here :*
<http://www.keepingchickensnewsletter.com/mixingflocks.htm>

Judy : I just received my first newsletter, sat down with a cup of coffee and my computer and read every page start to finish! Loved it! What a great sense of community this is. Like minded people coming together to share their experiences, losses, successes and wonderful ideas. I am awaiting my first chicks arrival in a couple of weeks and am preparing their housing. We live in a mountainous- wooded area with the same predators as usual plus a few more! I am diligently planning to keep my girls safe and happy with multiple fencing and safe areas. They will not be able to fully free range, but will have ample room to roam. Happy Hatching to you all-Judy



Brenda : Hi Gina, Just love your newsletter! It's great to hear all the stories from people around the world. I started with 4 chicks last year, who have been providing us with an average of 3 eggs a day. This year I brought home 14 chicks.....which are now residing in my downstairs bathroom (Yikes!) in a large portable dog pen until we get our "chicken tractor" finished. My plan is to move the 4 older girls into the chicken tractor and the chicks into the big coop and larger grazing area (after it's given a thorough cleaning). We live in Oregon and have hawks, coyotes, weasels, raccoons but the biggest source of pending disaster is neighbors dogs and cats which is why we chose not to "free-range"! But the chicken tractor will give the big girls access to lots of fresh grass while being protected too, so hopefully, the best of both worlds. Here are a few pictures of the new chicks in their temporary house. There are Australorps, Silver Laced Wyandottes, Rhode Island Reds, Buff Orpington, and Ameraucanas and a few Golden Sex Links. Brenda – Oregon City, Or.

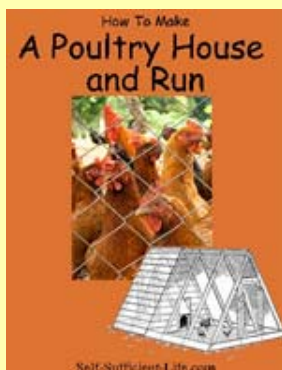


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Jennifer Fisk : Came home after dark one February night to find my RI Red Roo and 2 hens outside in the glow of the house light. I just knew this wasn't a good thing. When I looked in there was an almost eaten chicken on the floor and a rather large bird trying to figure out a way to escape from me. Ultimately, it landed on the chicken roost so I got some photos, one of which I've attached. It was a Goshawk which is a year round resident of the forests of Maine. That was the 4th chicken he had gotten this winter. Guess I now know why there aren't any squirrels around this year. The culprit was in question until that night. I ended up giving him a little boost with the snow shovel because he wouldn't leave. He flew across my yard and hit the house and then came back and did a less than stellar landing in the Balsam Fir next to me. Then he flew towards the woods and I haven't seen him since but I'm keeping my chickens in their pen rather than free ranging. That night I found 3 hens hiding next to the foundation of my house and the next morning another emerged from the snow under a tree where she'd been hiding. I wonder if Lucky the RI Roo tried to defend his flock or just ran for cover himself. I'll never know. Jennifer Fisk. Bar Harbor, ME



How To Make A Poultry House and Run

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Brenda : Thanks again for such an enjoyable newsletter. Come May we will have had our 6 chickens a year. You may remember that we were concerned about our hens with our very cold winters and despite advice it wasn't necessary, we insulated our coop. I'm so glad we did. In early January we had a week and a half of very cold weather, for three days the temperature stayed at -41 and never got above -37C. The hoar frost lasted almost two weeks. Very pretty but very cold. Every day we got 5 eggs and once a week 6. They did not venture outdoors, however. **Smart** chickens!



We kept their water from freezing with a 100W heating lamp and in the coldest weather we added an additional 175W lamp. Because they can't scrounge for added “treats”, each morning we give them defrosted mixed berries, flax, buckwheat groats, steelcut oats, and yogurt in addition to their laying mash and oyster shell. On alternate days we give them defrosted mixed veggies instead of the mixed berries.



They love ripe tomatoes cut up, kale, collards and the occasional scoop of scratch. As soon as that really cold spell passed they were outside again every day even with temperatures at -15 to -20. I think that's 0 to -10F. We love reading about other folks in different parts of the world enjoying their chickens and we're very glad we're close to April and good weather again. Alberta, Canada



Amy : Thank you so much for your newsletter, a great read and well anticipated each month. I recently hatched out some little peeps in my incubator and now have 17 fluffy chicks running about. Here are some pictures of the little guys - 14 light Sussex crosses and 3 pure white silkies. Notice how two fell asleep back to back. Amy, England.





Jill : Here is a sample of the eggs I get. I have 11 chickens, RI reds, Speckled Hamburg, Andalusians, Ameraucanas, and a white one that I don't know what she is but she gives one beautiful large white egg every day. She (the White one) is funny she really enjoys the RI reds she keeps them in there place. The Reds sometime pick on the other but they leave the White one alone.



There is a speckled hamburg drinking out of the fish pond. The others run the yard.

Today I got 11 eggs they are wonderful chickens. Most of the time I find between 4 and 8 a day.

The girls get along well with Scamp he is great with them. Although sometimes He will chase one of the Speckled Hamburg chickens and its like game on. He will catch one and then lets it loose. The gray Andalusian will give Scamp a run for his money.



This is Scamp and a Blue Andalusian although it looks more gray. They play with each other. Most of the time the chicken wins.

Thank you for the newsletter I really enjoy reading all the wonderful information that's published. Reading the stories from others has given me a lot of advise on how to raise the girls. They seem to be happy. Enjoy the photo's, Jill

Lori Brown : My name is Lori and as a relative newcomer to the world of poultry, I must say how grateful I am for your newsletter. My girls (6 Buff Orpingtons, 5 Silver Laced Wyondottes and 5 Golden Comets), will be a year old in April. I was a bit OCD about keeping them healthy through their first Indiana winter, but I have discovered something that has helped alot so I would like to pass this on to your readers. My flock is free-range on ½ acre with a cozy coop and lots of vegetation to graze on. Naturally during the winter months there's not much out there to keep them nutritionally fit, so I supplement with a warm mash every evening as they head back to the coop. For 16 birds I mix: 4 cups high protein chicken crumble, 3 cups scratch, 2 cups uncooked rolled oats, and 3 cups cooked soybeans. (NOTE: Soak soybeans overnight and then **boil them over medium heat for at least 45 minutes**. Rinse the beans and store them in an air-tight container in refrigerator). Once the ingredients are mixed together, I pour just enough hot water in to make a warm crumble (don't make it soupy). You can also add any chopped kitchen fruits or veggies at this time. The mixture should easily fall through your fingers. This concoction has kept my girls' protein levels and egg production at almost normal levels. Most importantly my flock is healthy and happy and I feel much more confident as a novice poultry keeper. Keep up the good work and thanks so much for this great newsletter!! Lori Brown Indianapolis, IN

Jeanne : I'm new to keeping chickens out here in rural AZ. The intense heat of summer will be the big test of how good a chicken farmer I'm going to be. I was given 3 mature hens, plus the 9 surviving chicks (after my dogs got done ravaging the flock and before I'd perfected securing my coop, a converted dog kennel with a shade cloth roof, and wrapped on two sides and half roofed with corrugated metal to provide a bit more weather proofing and shade). I was told that the oldest, Biddy, a barred rock was long past her laying days, but she was very nurturing toward the chicks, and she always had a chick under her wings at night while they were growing up. A silkie spent a lot of time hiding in corners from the third hen, but has finally integrated into the flock. I was thinking that I may use Biddy as my sacrificial hen to work with my dogs to learn leaving the hens alone. I'd love to be able to let them free range to scratch around in the horse corral and help control flies there. I'd keep a long leash on the dog, and do some shock collar training, but if the dog got away from me and killed the hen, well she was destined for the stew pot soon anyhow.

Yesterday, I heard a hen announcing after laying, and realize that it was Biddy! I was told that she was at least 5 years old. I'll have to try to keep a closer eye to see if she lays more often, or if this one egg was a fluke. It looks like one of my RIRs is a roo. So far, he's gentle and hasn't tried to crow. So long as he's not going to be a nuisance, he can stay. Otherwise, I'm afraid I'll have another nice bird for dinner. He did reach outside the chain link fencing the other day to give a dog the message to keep away. With five lab / golden retriever dogs, I may never be able to safely turn my hens out. And that would be a shame.



Mal : My chickens wont eat Carex, family of grasses, Very tough grass grown for grown for ornamentation. The pictured variety is very, very tough. My hens initially had a pull at it then walked away. I have just planted another 3 last week due to hens not touching my existing plant. I lost 18 inches off the bottom of my private hedge when keeping them near to the house with limited natural foliage to eat. They did not eat the carex grass though. Mal England

Letter for all those who have loved and lost a 'girl'

From Susan in Melbourne, Australia

Rule 1. Don't name your girls...I started with A for Anita and by the letter T and with only 5 girls to show for the alphabet, I decided it was emotionally safer to just call them 'girls'.

Rule 2. All herding dogs will herd - feather or fur or wool! Be prepared to introduce dogs on a lead and accept that they will have to admire your 'girls' through a fence. It's a very strong instinct to herd/chase and the girls simply don't have the heart for it.

Rule 3. Fences are made to fly over or wriggle under. I have divided my yard nicely with 4 foot lattice fencing. It has created a lovely backdrop for our garden and a freeway for the girls! Yes, I have trimmed a wing on each but they still manage easily to 'bank' over the fence. I am reluctant to totally remove their main defence mechanism for escaping predators including the deaf cat from next door.

Rule 4. Foxes will hunt anytime of the day. My previous hen house was broken into 3 times and each time I reinforced the walls with another layer of wire, then wood. I started to feel like one of the three pigs! Then the fox broke in through the wire roof of the run. I now have a welded mesh house with mesh floor. Most nights, after putting the girls to bed, I let the dogs run around the yard, leaving wet messages on the bushes, etc. This seems to ward off the foxes during the day while we are at work.

Rule 5. Be careful where you bury your dearly departed girls - their sisters have a gruesome tendency to dig them up (or the dog)! Apparently it isn't considered good manners to drop them into your neighbours garbage bin either...oops! (I had run out of ground space)

Rule 6. Your girls will lay way past their 'best by date'. As a result of bonding, feeding and protection, the eggs get bigger and better tasting. Even if they are old and can't lay anymore, they are still eating garden pests and delight in seeing you in the garden. Probably best not to dwell on what goes into their egg production - eewww

Rule 7. Try and go vegetarian for a month a year. It's a good reminder of all the other foods that are out there. It honours and recognises the importance of all life, especially our 'girls'.

Thanks for the newsletter and I love some of the designer hen houses! It's got me thinking about what to design when we move to live at the beach - at least a small surfboard as a ramp up to some beach sheds????!! Susan, Melbourne, Australia and enjoying a beautiful, balmy autumn/fall.

P.S. Has anyone tried using mince/ground beef to continue egg production through the cooler weather and to teach tricks, play 'pied piper' etc???

