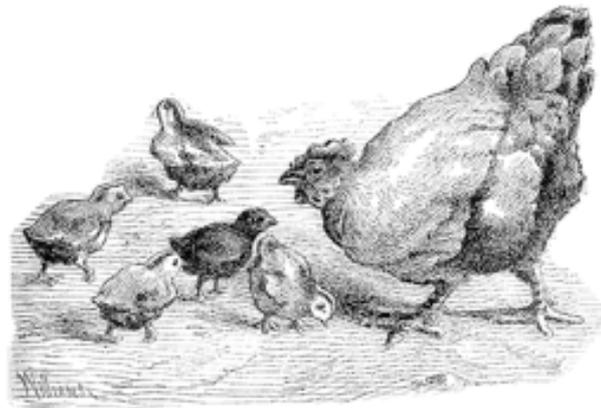


Keeping Poultry
November 2009
Blacktown Council Workshop

7th



Benefits of keeping poultry

- Eggs
- Consumers of kitchen scraps
- Poultry manure
- Compost makers
- Entertainment and pets
- (Maybe even meat)

What size birds to choose Bantam or full-size

- Bantams eat less
- Require less yard space
- More egg per chook size than large birds
- Large breeds eat more
- Need more yard space
- Compact soil more
- Lay large eggs
- Commercial breeds, cross breeds, purebreds & availability – 280 eggs p.a. v 180 p.a. purebreds
- What age to purchase – lay about 18 months old.

Once chooks are on your agenda, what comes next?

- Check your local council's requirements – hygiene, fences, noise, smell, flies & rodents
- Decide how many birds to buy, consider space, egg production, social needs of the birds (two or three hens, one is lonely, 12 is a chook family – too many for a backyard).
- What age should the new family members be – day old chicks to point of lay pullets? Chicks need warmth for five weeks, but cost less, pullets cost more and are about to lay eggs.

Housing requirements

- Draught free in winter, cool in summer, dry in rain (large dog kennels, old cubby houses, aviaries, or custom-made chook palaces), about .5m² floor space per bird.
- Pant at 28° C, at 40° C panting cannot cool them – mist it not already humid.
- Perch to roost on, timber size of a rake handle; height appropriate to breed's, usually about 1 m, about 23 cm perch per bird. Perches same height prevents jostling/pecking order.
- Nest boxes from old lawnmower catchers, nice soft enticing bedding eg dry grass or straw, preferably up off the ground about 75 – 100 cm, in a darker corner. Fake eggs help!
- Yard to scratch and hang out in daytime, well mulched, sun in winter, shade from summer heat (tree, choko vine, shadecloth etc).
- Predator proof fence up to 2 metres high, roof over yard if necessary.
- Ground-level predator exclusion (fox, python, blue tongues) 10-15cm in the ground, flaring outwards.

- *Water dish or bowl/s that cannot be tipped over in hot weather.*

Chicken tractors

- *Moveable chicken tractor may also be suitable*
- *Needs to be predator proof – foxes, dogs, large cats*
- *Covered sleeping/nesting end with perch and bedding materials*
- *Size appropriate for size and number of birds – bantams or large fowl*
- *Good way to prepare the garden for planting*
- *Suitable for smaller backyards or rented properties*

Feeding

- *Mixed grain, layer pellets, chicken mix*
- *Vegetable scraps (kitchen, canteen, work etc)*
- *Kitchen scraps – love meat – protein for egg production*
- *Green pick – Grass*
- *Shellgrit and/or egg shell – crushed*
- *Fresh water*
- *Garden forage or lawn grazing*
- *Feed to be eaten in 10 to 15 minutes or else too much.*

Health

- *Worming– garlic or cider vinegar (before full moon) or commercial wormers (withholding periods). Mix in with mash. Herbs like wormwood to brush against. Worms in moist bedding, litter, killed in hot weather or hot composting of bedding.*
- *Pests in hot humid weather. Pestene for lice, Vaseline for scaly leg. Stress, heat, cold, predator attack, old age, overcrowding contribute to sickness.*
- *Commercial chooks vaccinated (incl Mareks disease, fowlpox), purebreds often not.*
- *Loss of appetite, lethargic, moping about, messy pants.*
- *Keep yard tidy, dry to prevent disease and pests – bedding into compost or garden.*

Plants for Poultry

Comfrey, parsley, garlic, wormwood, southernwood, tansy, feverfew, yarrow, thyme, spinach, strawberries, raspberries, peas, seedlings.....

Where to buy

- *Commercial hatcheries eg. Barthers*
- *Backyard breeders*
- *Agricultural shows have breeders who will have stock for sale*
- *Internet*
- *Produce or feed stores*

More Info

- *Recommended book: “Backyard Poultry – Naturally”*
- *Internet*
- *Permaculture friends*
- *Australasian Poultry Magazine*
- *Yellow pages – poultry breeders etc*

Poultry Health

Nettles and whey in mash

Fresh or sour milk each morning (unpasteurised) 500 ml for 10 adults

Garlic at 1 or 2 cloves per bird.

Cold extract of garlic – stand crushed garlic cloves in ½ cup water for 6-8 hours, administer to each bird with eyedropper. Place in water before full moon, remove non-garlic water. 1 kg garlic per 50L of water. Miss a week repeat. Repeat in three months. Chopped garlic tops can be fed – watch sulphur in eggs!

Anti worm recipe:

1 handful of wormwood and tansy tips

1 comfrey leaf

1 cup crushed oats or barley

1 clove of crushed garlic

water to make a gluggy porridge.

Feed this to each bird as the only food each second day for three days, a little grain on alternate days.

Other anti worm herbs are horseradish, elder, cotton-lavender, rue (fresh or dried leaves) hyssop, goat's rue, bramble, Pacific coral tree, white cedar, onions, grated or cooked carrot, wormwood tips, dried and powdered flowering wormwood tops, tansy flowers and seeds, mustard and pumpkin seeds, nasturtium seeds, apple cider vinegar in drinking water.

External parasites

Preening, dust baths.

Pinch of sulphur per bird in feed. Perches of camphor laurel repel lice, neem leaves or brachen in nests.

Plants to grow near chooks: *Tansy, fennel, southernwood, wormwood, stinking Roger. Camphor laurel shavings, Oregon shavings in bedding.*

Dust birds with dried powdered aromatic herbs (rosemary and wormwood), derris dust, Pestene rotenone powder, and essential insecticidal oils (pyrethrum, quassia solution).

Scaly leg: *Vaseline and sulphur – heat and mix, 200g to 1 tablespoon.*

Kerosene and raw linseed oil in equal parts.

Cooking oil with drops of kerosene, tea tree, eucalyptus or sassafras oil.

Cooking oil with crushed white cedar flowers soaked for a few hours.

Neem extra spray.

Diarrhoea

Worm flock with garlic, preventative of weekly garlic water.

Dill and charcoal.

½ teaspoon slippery elm with yogurt powder/brewer's yeast, pour slurry down bird's throat.

Chickens with diarrhea is usually coccidiosis – dry bedding, clean cool water, treatment of boiled rice with honey and milk, cooked arrowroot, grated raw apples, fresh or dry bilberries