



BACKYARD  
CHICKEN COOPS

# BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO KEEPING CHICKENS

# LET THE ADVENTURE BEGIN!

Animal lovers choose to keep backyard chickens for many different reasons that range from the ordinary to the extraordinary. Many aspiring first time chicken owners become dizzy with excitement when they daydream about opening up their nesting box one dewy morning to collect their daily supply of scrumptious farm fresh eggs.

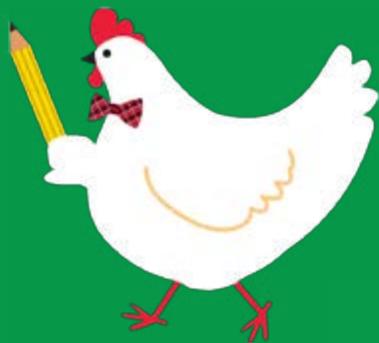
Other more quirky bird lovers might choose to keep pure bred chooks so they can try their luck in the high stakes world of poultry shows. While some Chicken Ladies or Lads simply feel emotionally compelled to adopt battery hens to spare them from the brutalities of factory farms.

What everyone discovers, no matter what their reasons are for keeping chickens, is that chooks are some of the gentlest, sweetest, most loving and easily available pets to keep. Whether you're raising hardy ISA Browns or fluffy Silkies, chickens are always generous by nature, freely offering their kindhearted owners unconditional love, affection and of course, plenty of tasty eggs. You'll never be short of a reason to love your chickens.



# TOP 10 MOST COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT KEEPING PET CHICKENS

Just because humankind has been caring for chickens for thousands of years that doesn't necessarily mean that your average pet lover inherently knows anything about looking after these cute and quirky creatures. If you've never looked after chickens before or you simply need to brush up on the basics, be sure you get off to the right start by giving these top tips a quick read.



## 1. CAN I HAVE JUST ONE CHICKEN?

Chickens are flock birds, they are highly sociable creatures that thrive on the company of their own kind. They love to have [little conversations](#) with one another, alert the flock when they find food or sound the alarm if danger is near.

These flock creatures can even affect each other's physiological behaviour! What does that mean? Well, for example, if one hen starts laying an egg, this may stimulate egg-laying behaviour in the other hens.

Moreover, they'll often all like to use the exact same nesting box. Chickens take social and physiological cues from one another, so, if a chicken is left alone, they begin to lose sense of what they are. Sadly, chickens who live alone tend to have a reduced life expectancy, so it's best to ensure that they have at least one other feathery friend.

We recommend that you start with 3 birds - they'll form their own social hierarchy and will look after each other. Chickens also like to snuggle together [when they sleep](#), so three hens will be nice and cosy.



## 2. HOW MUCH SPACE DO CHICKENS NEED?

Some country chicken-lovers let their flock [free-range](#) across acres of wild terrain, whereas others in cities comfortably house their girls in large coops and runs. Whatever your backyard situation, the important thing to remember is that chickens want as much safe space as you can afford to give them.

However, all chickens will love the opportunity to free-range in a securely fenced backyard during the day or at least a few times throughout the week. Try to establish a routine in which your flock can graze safely and flap their wings in your backyard as often as possible.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Free ranging your girls means fertilised lawns and grub-free gardens! It's a wing-wing situation!



### 3. WHAT DO CHICKENS EAT?

In many ways chickens are incredibly pure and simple creatures that love routine. Your flock will need a regular supply of [chicken feed](#), shell grit and water, which are the cornerstones of every healthy chicken's diet. Ideally the flock will have uninterrupted access to food. Chickens rarely overindulge on feed so there really is no need to worry that your ladies will pack on the pounds.

Chicken Feed Pellets - Pellets are made up of all the things your chook needs to thrive! Ground up grains, seeds, vitamins and minerals are shaped into easy to consume pellets for your flock. Check the ingredients list, but usually this is a suitable cheap option for your girls.

Chicken Feed Lay Mash - Mash feed is a mix of crushed and whole grains and seeds with added vitamins and minerals. It differs from pellets in that it encourages more natural foraging behaviour. Once again check the ingredients list, as some brands use 'fillers' with limited nutritional value.

Shell Grit - [Shell grit](#) aids your chook's digestive system by providing roughage for their tummies and it's a source of calcium - good for the creation of strong and yummy eggs! Younger birds will need finer grit. Hens which free-range a lot tend to pick up most of the grit they need whilst foraging.



## 4. GOOD TREATS AND BAD TREATS

A common misconception is that you can feed your chickens anything. Well, chickens do seem to literally eat anything, but that shouldn't imply that everything they eat is necessarily good for them.

Things like leafy greens, berries and porridge go down a treat for your chickens and contain lots of nutrients to keep them healthy. Chickens will love chowing down on more [indulgent treats](#) like cracked corn, mealworms, yoghurt, bread and pasta, however they can easily lose control and overindulge.

Chicken feed pellets and mash are designed to give your girls a balanced diet. Chickens will naturally supplement their diet with their foraging. If you feed your girls kitchen scraps and treats like [mealworms](#), make sure this food source ends up being no more than 25% of their total daily food intake.

There are some foods that should not be included in a chickens diet. Onions, oranges and tomatoes may sound healthy to us, but they can make your chickens very unwell. Uncooked rice, apple seeds and chocolate are some other no-go chook food types. Always give your kitchen scraps a quick once-over before you let your girls at it.



## 5. HOW OFTEN DO CHICKENS LAY EGGS?

Different [chicken breeds](#) lay at different rates, with some breeds only producing 80 eggs a year and others more than 300 a year. All breeds lay eggs but some have been bred to accentuate certain aspects of their appearance, like their feathers or size, to make them all the more adorable.

Chickens need a good balanced diet with plenty of calcium and water to [lay at their peak rate](#). Temperature extremes, biannual moulting, stress and not enough sunlight are some factors which will affect how many eggs your girls produce. Chickens are incredibly light sensitive and need about 14 hours of sunlight a day to be in top form. They really are early birds! Plush nesting boxes and plenty of perches and lots of friends around them will help your girls lay more eggs too.

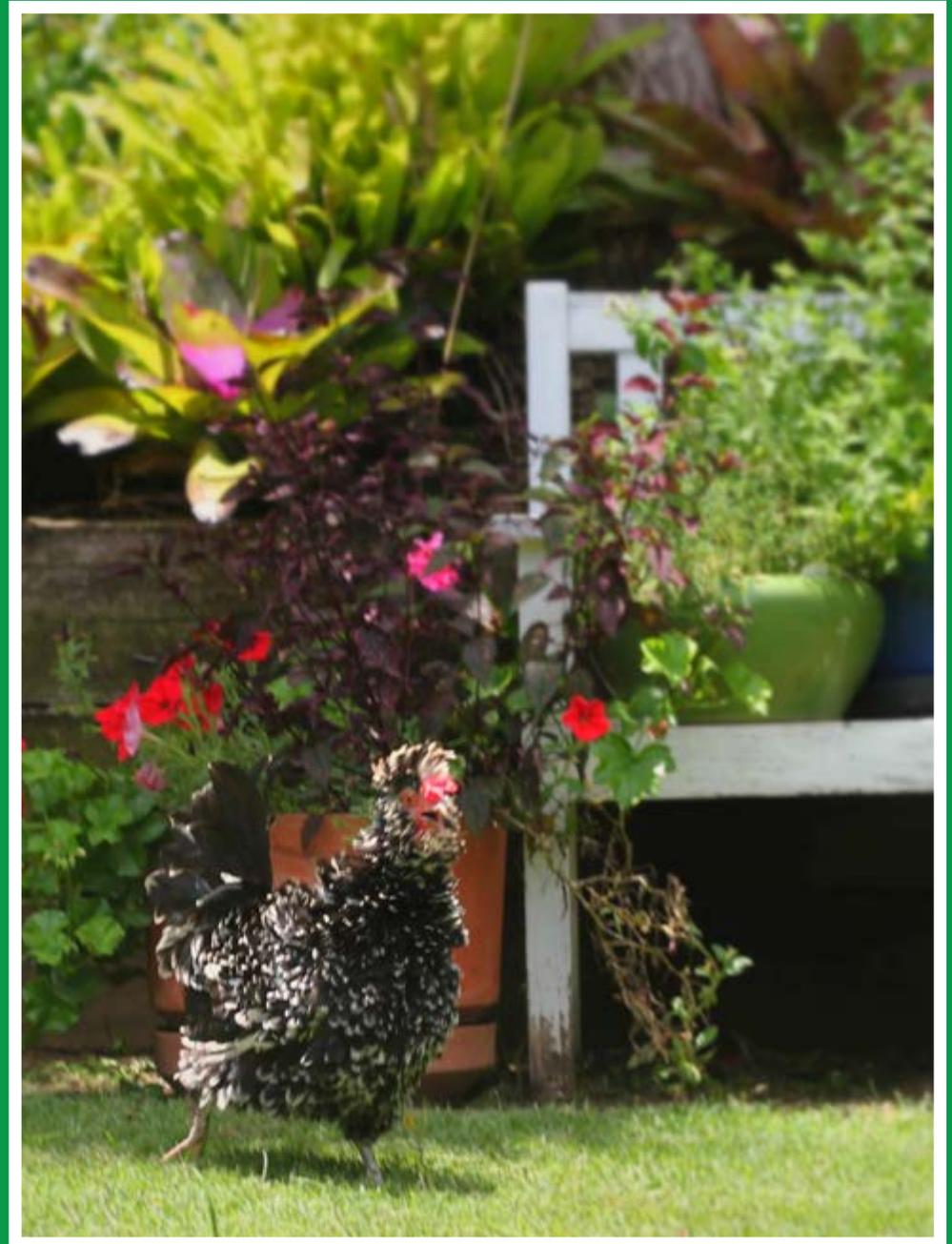


## 6. WHAT KIND OF EXPENSES CAN I EXPECT?

All things considered keeping chickens is exceptionally cheap compared to many other types of domestic pets. After the initial setup cost, the monthly cost is fairly small. Chickens simply need to have a regular supply of feed, water and bedding to live happy-go-clucky lives. For a small flock - feed will be about \$25 per month, bedding \$5-30 per month depending on the type you use. Their health needs average about \$20 per quarter total - for worming, lice and mite treatments and prevention.

## 7. CAN I KEEP CHICKENS IN MY SUBURB?

Every council in Australia has regulations for keeping backyard chickens, which means there are hundreds of slightly different rules and conditions all over Australia. Types of considerations include flock size limits - in accordance to the size and location of the property. There also tends to be criteria surrounding the coop requirements and how it is maintained. Many councils prohibit roosters in suburban areas. To find out what you need to know about keeping chickens in your local area simply call your local council for further guidance.



## 8. WILL CHICKENS MIX WITH MY OTHER PETS AND BE OK AROUND CHILDREN?

Many chicken breeds [like to be handled](#) and become good friends with children. Families like that chickens provide eggs in addition to cuddles. They're also a way for families to reduce their carbon footprint, eating kitchen scraps and providing soil-enriching manure. A small flock of feathered friends can teach your kids responsibility, to respect where food comes from, as well as showing them the circle of life first hand.

Chickens can also live very happily alongside your family's dogs and cats. In the beginning, slow introductions and spending time establishing the relationships and teaching expected behaviours pays off. Often the chickens and other pets become firm friends and genuinely miss each other if separated.



## 9. DO CHICKENS MAKE GOOD PETS?

Specific chicken breeds tend to have very similar temperament traits. However every chicken has its own [personality](#). Moreover, anyone who has kept chickens before knows that every flock has a very complex social hierarchy. Ask any Chicken Lady or Lad and they'll be able to tell you in detail the intricate social maneuvers that take place in their coop on a daily basis.

All breeds of chickens are inherently social creatures. They communicate with each other, develop friends and foes within the flock. That means it isn't uncommon for chooks to engage in dramatic feuds with one another, but by the same token they are able to form close and lasting friendships with their flock allies. The fact that all chickens have delightful, unusual and quirky personalities makes them one of the most fascinating pets to keep in your backyard. It's like having your own TV soap opera taking place in your backyard 24/7.



## 10. IS THERE ANYTHING I NEED TO DO BEFORE I GET MY CHICKENS?

Pet ownership is always an important responsibility that needs to be taken seriously. Chickens are quite a low maintenance pet and do not need a large area or lots of your time. However, consider the holidays you like to take and people you'd ask to step in to top up their water and feed? You might think about making your run larger and getting an extra feeder if you go away lots of weekends.

If you're in a part of Australia where you could have [nocturnal predators](#) (foxes, dogs or quolls) consider taking extra precautions in your coop set up, to stop them from burrowing in. You might want to sit the coop on mesh and set up a motion-sensor light near the coop.



# LAYERS, LOVERS OR DIVAS?

All chickens have unique, quirky and original personalities. One of the great joys of owning a flock of feathery individuals is discovering all the distinct, unusual and charming qualities that make every bird in your flock one of a kind. If you have owned dogs or cats you'll understand what this is like and chickens are no different with their unique personalities.

Whether you're caring for ISA Browns or Plymouth Rocks each breed of chicken has their own funky way of doing things. You'll soon unlock your flock's secrets and discover what makes your chickens tick. Every chook is unique for its own reasons but generally speaking chicken kind can be broken into three fun categories!



# LAYERS

Eggs abound when you've got a flock of dedicated layers. Though all chickens lay eggs, some girls prefer to spend more time in the nesting boxes than others. Any egg-lover definitely needs at least two prolific layers in their coop.



## ISA BROWN - 300 EGGS PER YEAR

ISA Browns are one of the most popular choices for backyard chicken keepers and farmers alike. These girls are hybrids of Rhode Island Reds and Rhode Island Whites resulting in a breed that is widely adored for their resilience, gentleness and their egg-strordinary egg laying talents, which leave all other hens in the dust-bath!



## AUSTRALORP - 300 EGGS PER YEAR

The locally bred Australorps are a favourite in many Australian backyards due to their brilliant black, white or blue plumage, eggceptional egg laying ability and their characteristic happy-go-clucky Aussie attitude. These girls are tough on the outside and soft on inside. Australorps are hardy and cope well with our weather extremes. Their softness stems from their broody tendencies. Aussie, Aussie, Aussie - cluck, cluck, cluck!

# LAYERS



## LEGHORN - 300 EGGS PER YEAR

These Italian egg laying wonders are more energetic than many of their peers. They can be flighty, but are full of vim and make entertaining backyard pets. White Leghorns are adored for their egg popping prowess however sometimes they can get a little skittish. These girls will never be baby in the corner - they're intelligent and will get very excited when they see you.



## RHODE ISLAND RED - 300 EGGS PER YEAR

Chances are if you don't know which chicken is best for your environment a Rhode Island Red will do just perfectly! These chickens lay eggs-tremely well, they thrive in the cold and are generally hardy in every other sense. They are also active foragers, always on the lookout for a tasty treat or garden grub! This breed features heavily in paintings, signs and chickenabilia you might find in homeware stores.

# LOVERS

All chickens are sweet, loving and gentle, but some feathery ladies simply have more love to give than others. Generous, caring and oh-so cuddly, these chickens will flap their way into your heart in no time!



## ORPINGTON - 300 EGGS PER YEAR

Cute, courteous and courtly, Orpington chickens are easily one of the best mother's in the animal kingdom. These regal chooks are maternal by nature and they love nothing more than crawling on top of a nest full of eggs. They'll never shy away from a cuddle or two from their owners too! Need eggs? Orpington chickens will keep you in a constant supply, no questions asked.



## PLYMOUTH ROCK - 200 EGGS PER YEAR

Resplendent in body, mind and soul, Plymouth Rock's are relaxed and reliable chooks that you'll love to love. Their mottled plumage means their often sought for looks alone, but many find they become a positive calming influence on the flock. Affectionate by nature these chilled out mummas are always ready with a kiss and a cuddle when you need it most. Lower your defenses and let these loving ladies soar into your heart.

# LOVERS



## SILKIE - 150 EGGS PER YEAR

Silkie chickens stand out because of their fluffy and puffy plumage, as well as their five-toed feet. Sainly, docile and peace-loving, silkie chickens naturally radiate a feeling of serenity, which makes them perfect for families with young children. Giant fluff-balls, these tranquil ladies do not mind being handled and are generally calm in the presence of noisy children.



## NAKED NECK - 120 EGGS PER YEAR

Naked Neck chickens are famous for having featherless necks, as well as their cool, calm and collected personalities. They cope well in hot areas and when others might shy away from a cuddle, because it's too hot, these girls can still be quite broody. What these ladies lack in conventional standards of beauty they make up for with their lovable personalities.

# Divas

Strange though it may seem, some chickens are simply not that interested in sitting in a coop all day laying eggs. Some chickens like to live the glamorous life. Some chooks are divas at heart, through and through.



## **FRIZZLE - 150 EGGS PER YEAR**

To the untrained eye, Frizzle Chickens may appear like someone who has had an unfortunate blow dry, with their frazzled plumage and short erect bodies, these girls truly are avany garde style icons. Frizzle chicekns are glitzy girls, but are calm relaxed and easy to please, making them a perfect classy addition to any chicken Lady or Lad's backyard. These girls will challenge your pet naming creativity - 'Hennie' is just not going to cut it!



## **POLISH - 200 EGGS PER YEAR**

Polish chickens have exceptional senses when it comes to fashion! These girls are always ready to strut their stuff down the runway. But, be careful, these chicken fashionistas have trouble seeing through the fan of feathers that naturally grow in front of their eyes. Their beauty can also see them picked on a bit by the rest of the flock, and problems can arise if their feathers get too wet. These girls are more high-maintenance than other hens, but owners always insist they're totally worth the effort.

# Divas



## **BARNEVELDER - 200 EGGS PER YEAR**

Barnevelders are exceptionally good looking chooks, with couture-patterned feathers and deep jewel colours, they'd set any runway on fire. These girls are renowned for being a touch on the sassy side and appear to strut when they walk. This breed can be hard to find, but that makes these chook models so much more exotic and precious. Even the most hardened chicken lover will soon become mesmerised by their iridescent green plumage.



## **BELGIAN D'UCCLE - 150 EGGS PER YEAR**

Short and wide these ladies turn heads with their ability to accessorise. Pristine fan-shaped pert tails, Elizabethan ruffled necks, diverse coloured combs and an impressive array of plumage colours. These girls know how to dress to impress! Some of their official colour varieties sound like a cosmetic collection - lavender, porcelain, blue, silver quail, cuckoo, golden neck and mille fleur! Belgian D'Uccles will bring the bling and be the treasured jewels of your flock.

# GETTING READY FOR CHICKENS

Preparing for chickens in your backyard can be very exciting and also a little overwhelming at times. Though it may seem as though there are a million different things to consider before you even get chickens, in reality it is fairly straightforward. That's why we've prepared these handy checklists that systematically go through everything you need to consider before moving a flock of feathery ladies into your backyard.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Don't forget to think of chicken names! The more funny and cute the better!



# WHAT SHOULD I DO FIRST?



Be prepared to commit a small amount of time and love everyday to your flock of cute and cuddly chickens



Buy a strong, secure and well-ventilated coop that will keep your flock safe and happy all year long



Know the City Council regulations for backyard chickens in your area - how many chickens are allowed?



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - It's a good idea to pop over the fence and let your neighbours know that chickens are coming to town. Happy neighbours equal happy chooks!

# WHAT DO I NEED TO CHECK IN MY BACKYARD?



Ensure your chickens have access to some grass and dirt in the backyard for foraging and dust-bathing.



Make sure you have enough free yard space to accommodate a coop, run and room for your chickens to graze.



Is there a spot where your coop can be on solid and level terrain and partially shaded? Under a tree? Near a shed?



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Every new chicken keeper needs to give their backyard a quick scan before their new flock moves in. After all, your backyard will become your flock's home, so you need to ensure that their surroundings are chicken-friendly.

# HOW DO I WORK OUT WHICH BREEDS TO GET?

Picking which chicken breeds your flock will comprise of is a fun part your overall chicken journey. In many ways it is like casting actors in a play or movie. You'll need to decide on the number of chickens you wish to care for, as well as the breed type(s) that will best meet your own eggs-pectations. Here are some key reasons you may have for wanting to keep chickens.



## Eggs

In case you didn't know chickens lay scrumptious eggs!



## Great Gardens

Chicken manure is great natural fertiliser for your garden.



## Sustainability

Reduce your carbon footprint!



## Pets

Chickens are gentle, sweet and friendly creatures that love nothing more than a kiss and a cuddle.



## Education

A great, multi-faceted learning experience for children.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - If the chicken breed is on sale in your local area that is a good indication that it is well suited to your climate

# TOP 10 BACKYARD CHICKEN BREEDS

Research the range of breeds available in your part of Australia and work out if they're a good match for your climate and family. Generally if they're available locally, those chickens will cope with the heat or cold you're likely to experience. We've put together a list of our top 10 backyard chicken breeds to help you decide. Click the link in their name to learn more!

[ISA Brown](#)



[Plymouth Rock](#)



[Barnevelder](#)



[Australorp](#)



[Naked Neck](#)



[Orpington](#)



[Silkie](#)



[New Hampshire](#)



[Frizzle](#)



[Belgian d'Uccle](#)

# DO I NEED TO FREE-RANGE MY CHICKENS?

Generally speaking chickens want to free-range as much as possible. They like to sleep, cuddled together on a perch and put themselves to bed at dusk. In the wild, chickens would huddle together on branch about 1m off the ground. They'll love the cosiness of a dark hutch and will feel very settled going to sleep in that environment.

Chickens are very sensitive to light, so as dawn breaks, they'll naturally want to be out catching the worms! If you're yard is not properly fenced, then an enclosed run will be perfect for your flock to start scratching and foraging for food. That way they'll be safe from foxes and you'll also stop the flock visiting your neighbours before you're out of bed!



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Free ranging your girls saves you money on feed! Ladies like to lunch on garden grubs, weeds and seeds. Just keep your precious flowers and delicious veggies safe behind some Backyard Chicken Coops [poultry fencing](#).



# POULTRY SUPPLIES & EQUIPMENT

Keeping chickens is a breeze if you have the right equipment and supplies to make sure your flock is happy and healthy. Not only will your new chooks appreciate it, but it will make your life as a devoted Chicken Lady or Lad much easier. Have a peck at these essentials for caring for your flock.



# CHICKEN COOPS

A [chicken coop](#) is perhaps the most important piece of poultry keeping equipment every chook-lover will need to own. In an eggshell, a chicken coop needs to keep the flock safe from predators at night, provide them with perches to rest upon and nesting boxes to lay eggs in. More sophisticated chicken coops also have handy features, such as removable cleaning trays that make life easy, inbuilt chicken runs so the flock can always play safe and numerous points of access, so your girls will always be within an arm's reach. Ensuring that your flock has a safe, secure and well-designed coop to go home to every evening is perhaps the greatest gift that any chicken lover can give their feathered friends.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Hose the cleaning trays off over your veggie patch – that way they get a water and manure at the same time!

# CHICKEN RUN

To put it simply a [chicken run](#) is a fenced and enclosed extension that usually connects directly to the the chicken coop. This allows the flock to free-range, forage for food, dust bathe and flap their wings to their hearts content. Active chickens are happy chickens and a chicken run gives the flock the opportunity to exercise, bask in the fresh air and sunlight, absorbing some essential vitamin D.

One of the most important reasons for having a chicken run is to keep your girls safe from predators while they go about their day to day business. Some owners choose to plant flowering bushes, shrubs, herbs, vines and other plants inside the chicken run, as it helps to block the line of sight of potential predators. The plants provide healthy all natural treats for the flock, while also creating a natural shade solution, which is vital during those hot Australian summers. Unless your backyard is totally safe from predators, a chicken run is an essential structure that every poultry lover must own.

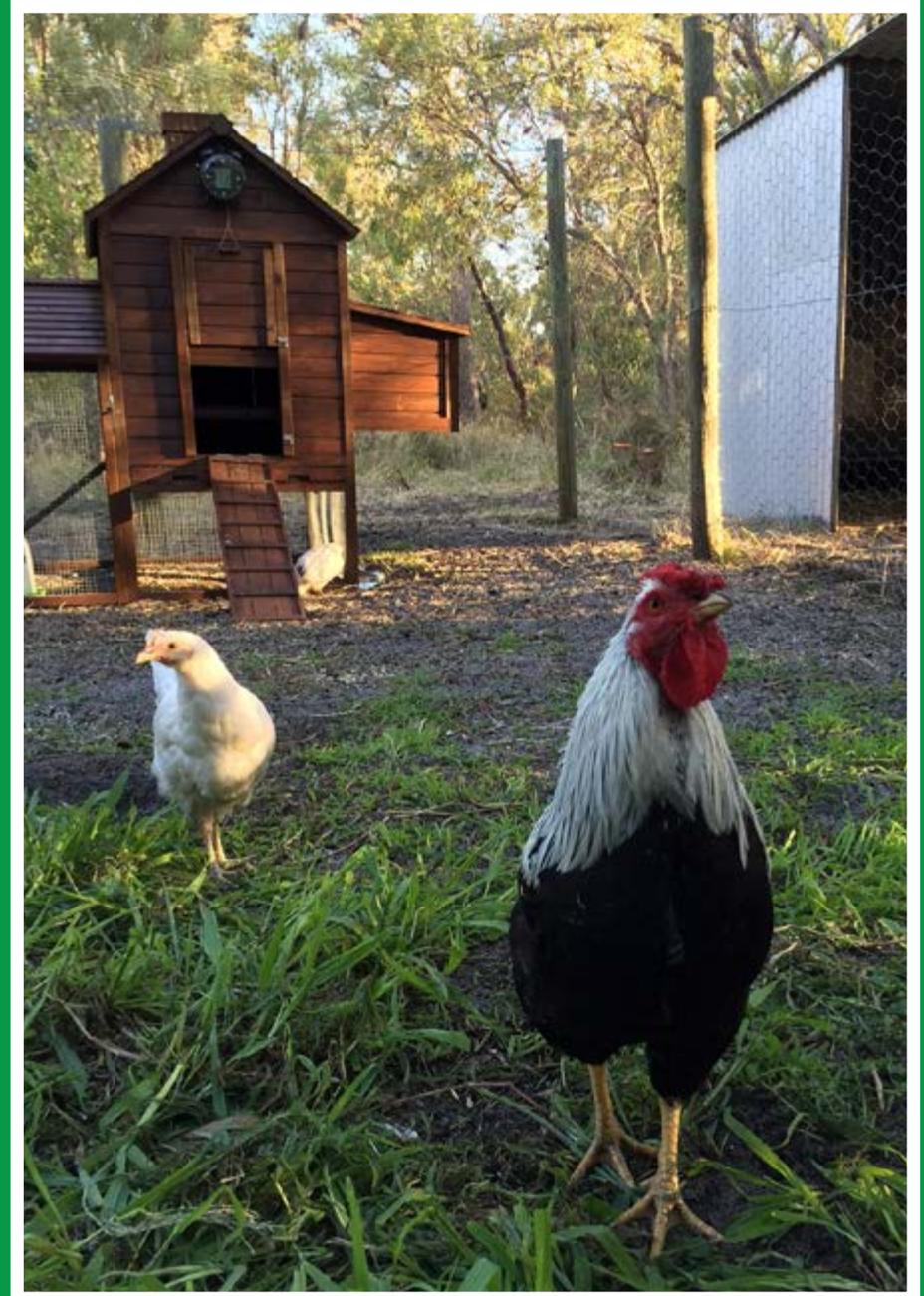


# CHICKEN TRACTOR

In essence a [chicken tractor](#) is a coop on wheels that can be regularly repositioned to different spots in the backyard. A standard chicken tractor comes with either two or four wheels and generally speaking, the more wheels it has the easier it is to move. Keeping your flock in a chicken tractor is one of the easiest ways to disperse their soil enriching manure all over the backyard - and lets the chickens find new colonies of bugs. Some people prefer to keep their chickens in a standard coop at night and move them into a smaller chicken tractor during the day. Though having a chicken tractor on hand is not essential, it is one of the easiest and most flexible ways to house your flock safely.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - move the chickens under shady trees in summer. Move the coop to sunny spot in winter where the girls can warm up!



# COOP SECURITY & PREDATOR PREVENTION

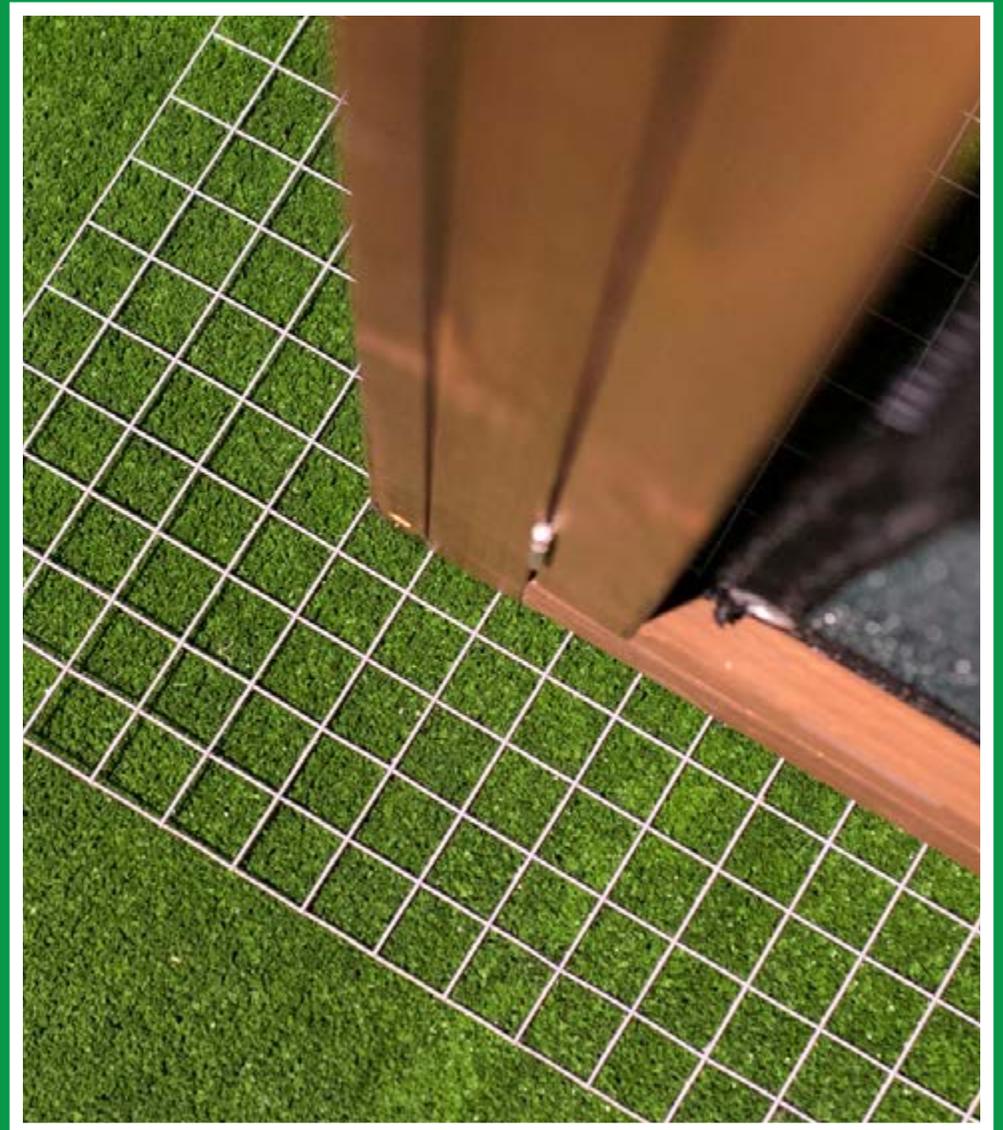
Though there is no substitute for a quality, robust and secure coop there are a range of extra accessories widely available that can help keep your flock safe.

## **Wire Mesh Flooring**

For most backyard chicken keepers wire mesh flooring is an essential accessory. Wire mesh flooring basically creates another obstacle between your chickens and burrowing predators, like dogs, foxes and quolls. Most chicken owners simply roll the wire mesh flooring out on the floor and the weight of the coop holds the material in place. Alternatively, some chook lovers bury the wire mesh flooring a few centimeters beneath the soil so that their flock's feet aren't touching the wire.

## **Sensor Lights**

Sensor lights are another common accessory to help keep your chickens safe. Basically a sensor light scares off predators by flashing a bright light whenever any naughty nocturnal nastiness creeps near the coop. Also, a sensor light is a handy gadget to have if you're the type of chicken owner who likes to say "good night" to your girls after sundown. If you often get home after dusk, a sensor light lets you collect eggs without carrying a torch.



## Automatic Door Openers

Automatic door openers are an ingenious chicken-keeping innovation, which opens and closes the door to your chicken hutch to ensure that your girls get plenty of access to the outdoors during the day, while remaining safe and secure at night. This enables chicken lovers to establish a healthy routine for their flock that promotes optimum egg laying conditions during the warmer months, as well as adding another obstacle against predators all year round. Best of all, you'll be able to stay in bed while the automatic door opener lets your chickens out into the yard or run.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Check out our Protect Your Pets eBook and make sure your girls are safe and sound!



# CHICKEN FEEDERS

A chicken feeder is essentially the vessel that will hold the feed for your feathered friends. One of the major design challenges for most chicken feeders is preventing cheeky chooks from knocking the container over. Chooks love scratching, pecking and exploring the world through the tips of their nails, which often involves knocking, tossing and flipping all manner of things over - including the chicken feeder. A superiorly designed chicken feeder will be both easy for your chooks to eat from but also designed in such a way that will prevent them from tipping it over and creating all sorts of mess and chaos.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Keep your feed secure from vermin by putting it away at night and not throwing feed directly on the ground!



### **Suspended Chicken Feeder**

One of the most popular chicken feeder types is the suspended variety. Basically, a suspended chicken feeder is tied to the roof of the coop and hangs at about the height of the chicken's neck. This is done so that the chooks won't be able to scratch and pull at the base of the chicken feeder and knock it over. They will be able to peck and munch by the chicken feeder with ease and delight. With suspended chicken feeders it is often better to get a rubber made tray, as metal and aluminium trays tend to rust.



### **Treadle Chicken Feeder**

A treadle chicken feeder is a heavy feeding box with a platform mechanism that the chickens stand on, which lifts the lid of the device open so that the chicks can chow down. This is a great innovation as it helps protect the chicken feed from bugs, mice and rats that are often drawn to the delectable scent of the grain. The chickens may have a little trouble working the equipment out at first, so do keep an eye on them to make sure all your girls are having something to eat.

### **PVC Chicken Feeder**

A PVC feeder is constructed out of new or used piping or plumbing. Most PVC chicken feeders are quite large, run along the side of the coop, with an outward turned spout that prevents the feed from falling loose and also inhibits the chickens from scratching the feed out. As these chicken feeders are quite exposed and hold more feed, they aren't the greatest when it comes to deterring grain loving pests from your garden. This being said, they are probably one of the most simple and streamlined chicken feeders available.

# ANiMAL BEDDiNG FOR YOUR CHiCKENS

Animal bedding or floor litter is used in chicken coops to help absorb chicken manure that naturally occurs when keeping chooks, as well as providing comfortable footing for your chickens feet and a soft landing spot for the eggs they will lay. Ensuring that your hen house has plenty of fresh, clean and absorbent animal bedding is one of the best ways you can maintain the health and hygiene of your chickens. Generally speaking animal bedding should be changed whenever you smell a buildup of bad odours or if there are any obvious signs of mess.

To take away the guess work we have compiled a list of different popular types of bedding and weighed up the pros and cons.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Change your bedding regularly! Old soiled bedding can create mould spores and cause health problems for your girls.

## Hemp Bedding

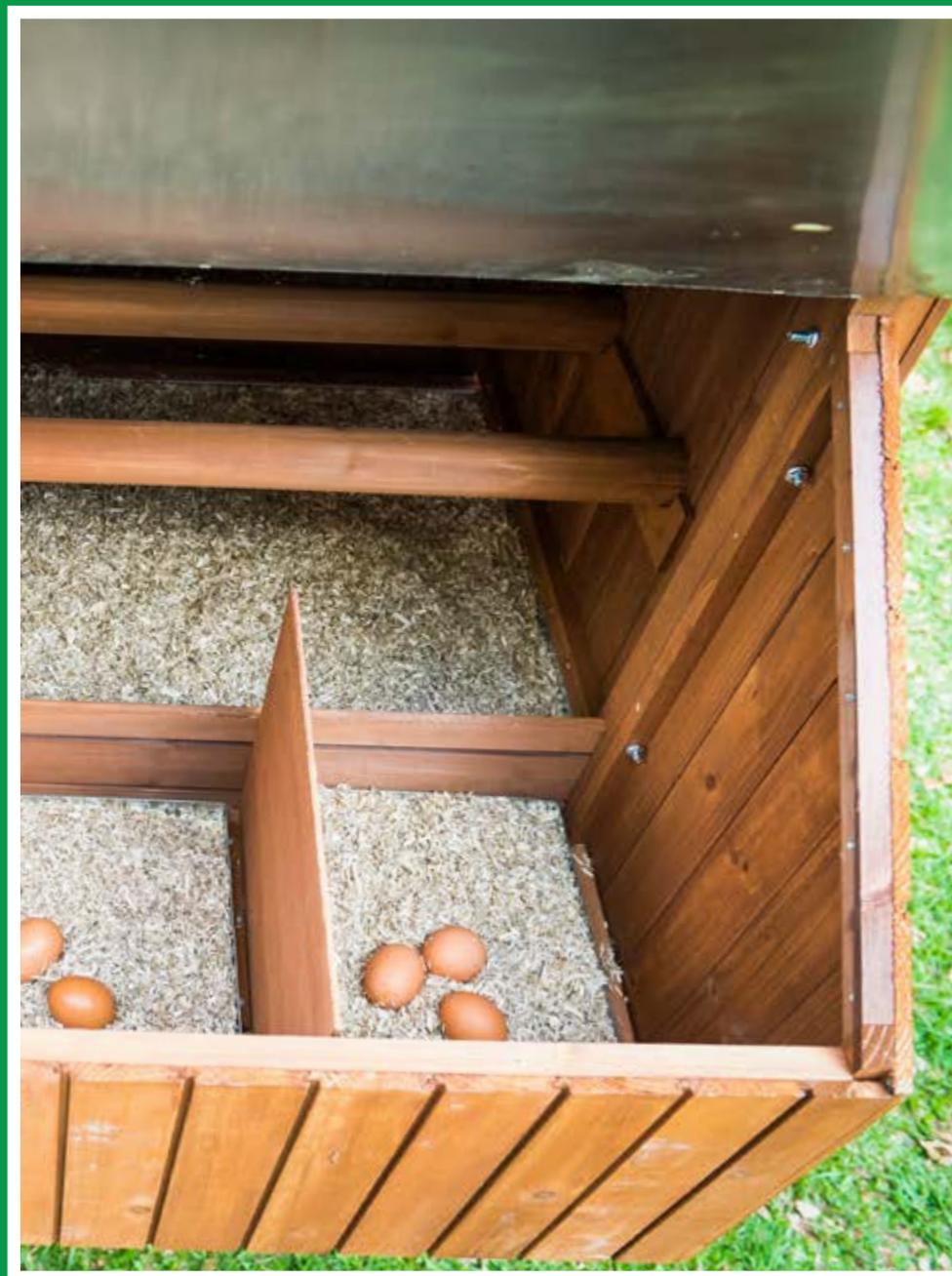
Hemp bedding, made from the hurd of the cannabis plant, is one of the best types of bedding available for any chicken lover. It's an odourless, absorbent and organic product that will not only help keep your coop stay cleaner for longer, but will also act as a natural pesticide, which will keep all sorts of creepy crawlies out of your coop. Though it is on the pricey side compared to other types of bedding it is considered to be the most reliable, long-lasting and effective type of animal bedding on the market.

We love hemp bedding! Why? Well have a peck at these reasons:

- Most absorbent type of bedding on the market.
- Natural pest repellent.
- Great for the garden.
- Less likely to develop dangerous mould spores.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - Your used Hemp Bedding can be put in your compost or thrown straight onto the veggie patch!



## Straw Bedding

There are lots of different straw options available: wheat, oat, barley, rye and so on. Some straws, like wheat and oat, are particularly absorbent, which will make cleaning your coop easier, however, it rarely holds up in the rain and often becomes mouldy, unhygienic and smelly. Straw is reasonably inexpensive but won't last you very long. Also, some animals may try and eat the soiled straw, which can result in illness.



## Leaves

Leaves are a nice natural alternative but they aren't particularly absorbent. Some chicken lovers decide to mix leaves into their preferred choice of animal bedding, to help reduce waste, as well as promoting decomposition. Dried old leaves are incredibly cost efficient, especially if you have a lovely leafy backyard, however they aren't very absorbent or warm.



## Wood Shavings

There are some fantastic varieties of highly absorbent wood shavings available on the market however different varieties do vary in quality. Ideally wood shavings will have been dust extracted, otherwise your flock may experience respiratory issues, due to the excess of sawdust. The aromatic oils in cedar shavings will irritate your girls lungs. Wood shavings are adequately absorbent and hygienic for a reasonable price.



## Sawdust

Sawdust is definitely discouraged by most poultry gurus. Basically, sawdust is dangerous for your flock because it is very powdery and dusty, which can cause respiratory problems for your girls, especially inside a sealed coop. Sawdust isn't particularly absorbent and is also prone to harbour maggots.



**CHOOKY'S TIP** - The more absorbent the bedding, the healthier it is for your girls AND the less you have to change it!

## Newspaper

Newspaper is a popular choice for avid recyclers. Newspaper can be an effective form of bedding, as most animals won't feel tempted to eat it, however the texture of the material isn't ideal, as it will quickly develop mould and be destroyed by the manure. As a temporary solution newspaper isn't a bad idea however it will cause issues in the long run.





If you have prepared your backyard and coop, chosen your chicken breeds and armed yourself with a good foundation of hen-keeping tips - then you're ready to begin your chicken keeping journey!

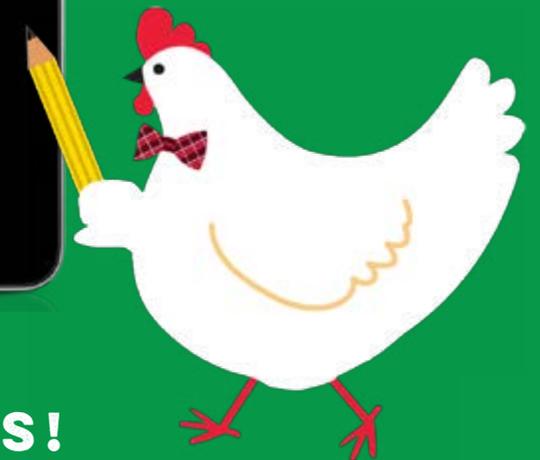
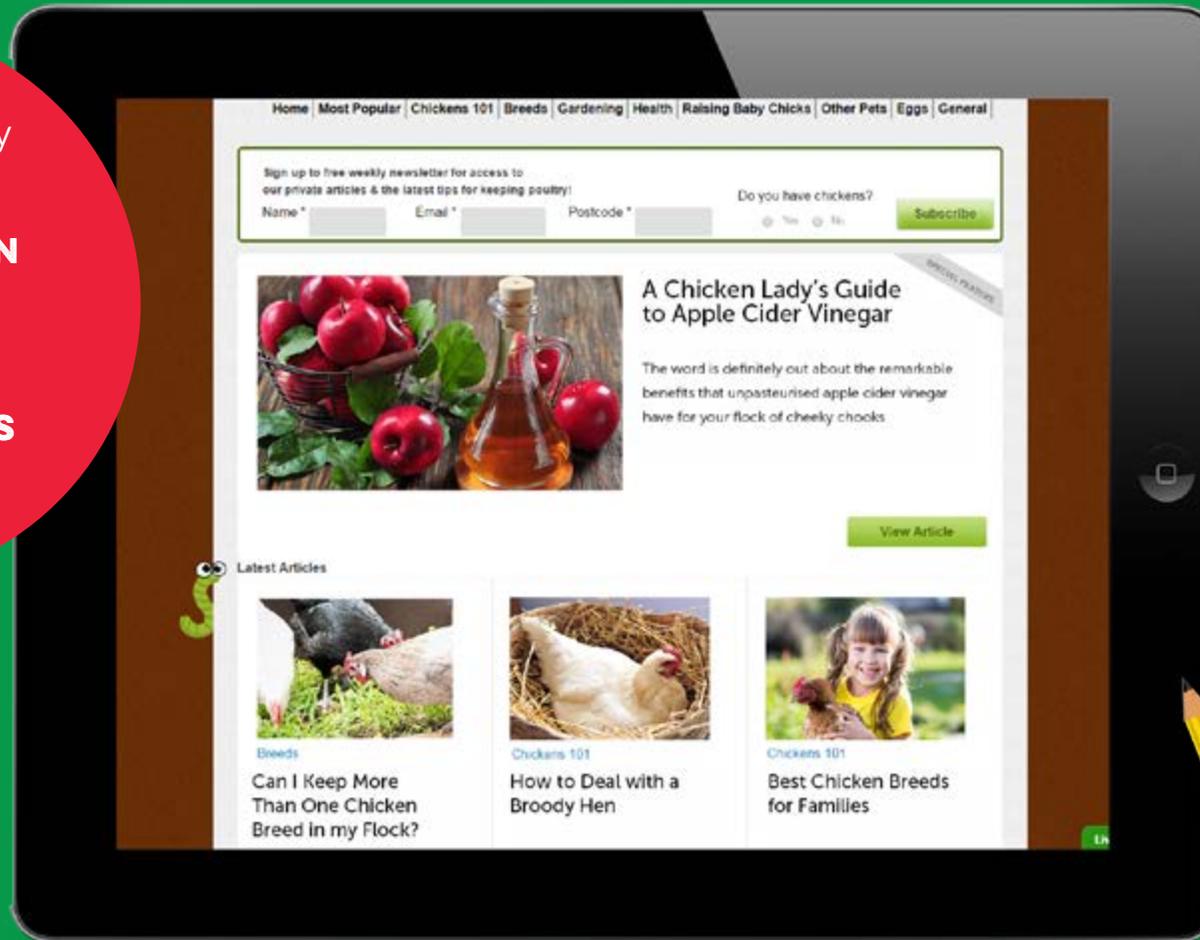
There's no end to the joy and love you will gain from keeping chooks as backyard pets. They will provide you with affection, fill you with wonder and their antics will provide more than a chuckle or two! If you have kids, chickens are a great tool for encouraging responsibility and teaching about nature and lifecycles.



**START YOUR  
CHICKEN  
KEEPING  
JOURNEY  
TODAY!**

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Up to date poultry information for **NEW CHICKEN KEEPERS & POULTRY ENTHUSIASTS** alike!



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**FOR BEGINNERS TO EGG-SPERTS!**

# WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

## OUR CHICKEN HELP GUARANTEE

Need a friend who is a chicken genius? At **Backyard Chicken Coops** we wrangle poultry matters with both hands. Do you have a girl who has gone a little gloomy? Are the foundations of the pecking order beginning to crumble? Or do you simply need to know the difference between chicken crumble and pellets? Don't let your burning chicken questions char on one side. Turn to us and we will be there to have a cluck about the best chook solutions for you. It's our after-sales guarantee to you.



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