

Barling Poultry

Newsletter

January 2011



Winter care of Hens

We do get asked if hens need heating (or blankets) in the winter. They are hardy and their feathers provide a lot of insulation. Besides they snuggle up to each other on the perch. Things you should consider are;

Water: Often water freezes so you can use a washing up bowl when the temp drops. Easier to top up with hot water to melt the ice (ordinary drinkers can split when they freeze).

Feed: Give some corn as late as possible before the hens go to bed, as corn produces heat when digested but keep to layers pellets during the day.

Mud: The biggest problem! Often easier to top the bedding up with some dry material twice a week (wood pellets are extra absorbent).

Raise your own Table birds *(photo on left)*

Spring will soon be upon us, and as usual we are getting lots of calls from people wanting to raise a few chickens for the table. We all know the appalling conditions supermarket chickens are raised in. By raising your own you know the better life they have led. We prefer Hubbards, which are bred as table birds and we have these available as day-old chicks. Other breeds you may have heard of, like Cobbs, tend to sleep in their feed trays and hardly move around whereas Hubbards like to free range. Amazingly these are ready for eating at just 12-14 weeks (more amazing is that supermarket chickens are ready after just 5 weeks of intensive feeding 23hrs a day). We are always happy to show you how to dispatch and prepare them when you are ready.



Benefits of raising your own;

- You know they have had a good life!
- The chicken taste is wonderful, it will be full of Omega 3 and essential amino acids and be low in fat and free on antibiotics (so the opposite of chicken bought in supermarkets).
- If you think it is cruel to raise your own birds to eat AND you still eat chicken, remember that the reason you can buy them for £2.99 is because they are kept 40,000 to a unit that never has the bedding changed since they are a day old, has no windows and where 1/3 of them will be unable to walk without pain due to lameness and overcrowding (and 5% just die within those 5 weeks due to the living conditions – that's 2,000 of the 40,000).

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Compost

Or why chicken poo is best!

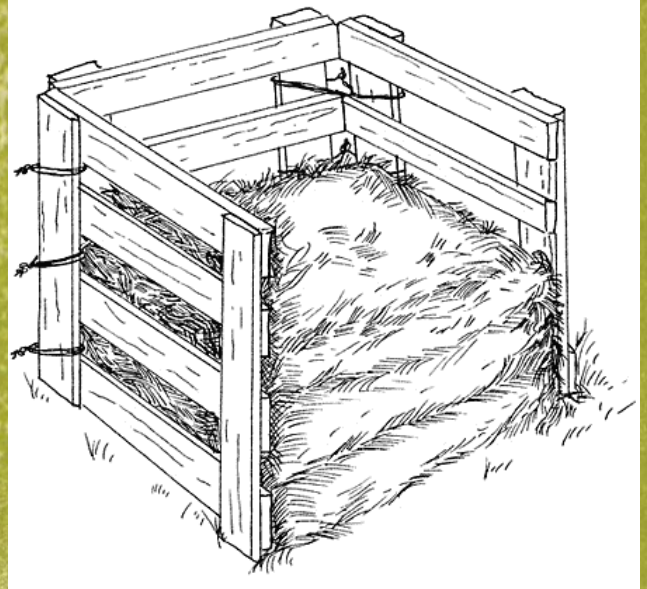
Any experienced gardener will tell you that chicken manure is simply the best material to use in your garden, from planting seeds, to transferring to larger pots, to boosting established plants, bushes or trees.

Rich in nutrients, particularly high in nitrogen, the key thing to remember with chicken poo from your housing, is that it must be allowed to compost for 12 months before you use it. Otherwise, it is too strong and will actually damage or even kill most plants. The simplest and cheapest way to do this, is to get hold of some pallets (free in most high street skips) and tie these together as shown opposite. In, say, January start putting all your old bedding etc into it for the whole year, but have a second built ready.



The following January you can start filling the second one, so that you can leave the first one for a year. Then you can use the compost from the first one over the following year so it should be empty by Christmas when you can start all over again! You can add in your own grass cuttings and food waste in layers.

Why not swap bags of your valuable compost with neighbours or friends for things they have produced?



Composter using pallets and rope

Don't forget to check out our free leaflets that provide helpful info at <http://www.barlingpoultry.co.uk/factsheets.htm>

Leaflets on;

Introducing New Hens,

Hen FAQ's,

Hen Health,

Raising Chicks,

Feather Loss,

Worms, and

Red Mites...



Hybrids

Remember that hybrids are breeds of hens that have been crossed so create healthy hens that lay lots of eggs all year long (pure breeds tend to stop laying during the Winter). We try to have different types and colours of hybrid hens available all year. We often have the traditional brown hen (Warren, Goldline etc) which usually go into the battery farm system. Sadly these have had their beaks trimmed when they were a day old before we get them. This awful practice is to stop hens pecking each other in crowded battery farms.

We also have regular deliveries of hybrid hens during the year but these do go very, very quickly. Please contact us to order and pay for these as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.

First batch of hybrid hens for 2011 due early to mid-February...

Hens for 2011

(always good to add to your flock)



Fertile eggs

February 14th traditionally sees the start of the breeding season, and we will have fertile eggs available from then. This year we have the following breeds available;

- ❖ White Silkies
- ❖ Black Silkies
- ❖ Exchequer Leghorns
- ❖ Lavender Leghorns

Above pure breed eggs available at £1.25 each

Blue and Green eggs £1 each

General Mixed eggs for 75p each

Ideal for your incubator or broody hen! Remember come Spring you can often 'encourage' a hen to go broody by making a nest with 6 or 7 golf balls in it, left for a few days to a week (we are happy to take back cockerels).

Jo and Stewart would like to wish everyone a very Happy and Healthy New Year!

Next Month..

Order your day-old Pekin ducks, new info leaflet on Mycoplasma, using lime to clean the ground, hen treats, feeding ducks in Winter, artificial light,

"It's a poultry matter"

Barling Poultry
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