



KEEPING CHICKENS

BASICS FOR BEGINNERS



BASIC NEEDS

- Shelter from wind, sun and rain
- Somewhere to roost
- Dust to bathe in
- Food
- Clean, fresh water
- Dirt to scratch in
- Bugs to chase and eat
- Protection from predators
- Protection and treatment from parasites
- Bedding and a safe place to lay eggs
- Daily care

HOW MANY CHOOKS CAN I HAVE?

On a suburban block you can generally keep up to 6 poultry without a permit. Poultry includes chooks, ducks, turkeys and geese.

Please note that local laws can vary Council to Council, so check the requirements for your local area.

ENCLOSURES MUST:

- Be fox proof
- Be accessible and constructed of suitable material for cleaning
- Be kept clean and free of odour at all times
- Be constructed and maintained to prevent vermin
- Not impact neighbouring or nearby properties.

FOX PROOFING

Be warned – there are more foxes in the inner suburbs than there are out in the bush. To keep chooks safe, a wire skirt around the base of the enclosure will help stop foxes digging under, and enclosing the top of the run with wire will stop chooks being preyed on from above (as well as keeping out pest birds).





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FOOD – WHAT DO CHOOKS EAT?

- Seeds and grains
- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Meat offcuts
- Bugs and worms
- Egg shells, shell grit
- Poultry pellets / specialty foods
- Pollard mash with vitamins can help them in winter
- Chooks can and will eat breads and cereals, desserts, cakes and more – please remember that these foods can be unhealthy for them and make an informed decision.



CHOOK WISDOM

- Fill bedding with sprigs of lavender and rosemary to keep away mites
- Use an all in one topical mix such as ivermectin to treat worms and surface parasites (your vet can make you up a mixture)
- Chooks are a prey animal, so they need bushes to hid under to feel safe, and if they are sick, they won't show their symptoms until they are very unwell.
- Chooks get heat stressed very easily. In summer, ensure they have cool areas, access to dirt to bathe in, cool water kept in the shade, a cross breeze to allow them to cool down, and vegetation to seek relief under.
- You can feed eggs and eggshells to chooks. If a chook is eating its own eggs, it is a symptom of being deficient in something (usually protein).

WHICH BREED TO CHOOSE?

There are hundreds of breeds of chooks. Smaller gardens are best suited to smaller breeds like bantams, families tend to love the gentle nature of silkies, and if it's lots of eggs you want, there are Isa Browns, Rhode Island Reds and more. All breeds have their pros and cons – it's about choosing the right breed for you.

WHERE TO BUY CHOOKS

You can purchase chickens from a range of places including produce store, pet shops, RSPCA and other animal shelters, individual breeders (Gumtree etc), specialty breeders (agricultural shows), markets and more.

Some farms arrange large scale chook rescues as well including Edgars Mission and Crystals Barnyard pets.

Be mindful when buying young chickens that you know the sex, as many a wayward rooster has ended up in the suburbs due to mistaken identity!

