

BACKYARD POULTRY KEEPING

The wide-spread interest in backyard poultry keeping has made necessary the distribution of information on poultry houses suitable for the backyard, and instruction as to feeding and the general care and management of the backyard flock.

A Word of Caution

At this time, when so many house-holders are contemplating keeping a few hens in their backyards, a word or two of caution would not be amiss.

The project of keeping chickens in the backyard is all right in so far as the spirit of enterprise is concerned, but the tendency right along has been for the householder, when going in for poultry, to keep too many for the amount of backyard space available. Overcrowding is sure to result in unsanitary conditions, unless the house is cleaned out regularly and the yard dug up quite frequently. The success of backyard poultry keeping depends almost entirely on the amount of time put in on the general care and management of the flock. A few hens properly looked after will supply the family with eggs the year round, whereas the keeping of too many will simply result in unsanitary conditions, dissatisfaction to the owner, and annoyance to the neighbors.

How Many Hens Should Be Kept

We do not encourage backyard poultry keeping on a large scale, even though the space is available. The number to keep will depend on the size of the family to be supplied with eggs, the amount of kitchen waste or garbage available, and the amount of feed the owner wishes to buy. At present prices of feed it is doubtful whether it pays to keep more hens than are required to supply the family needs; this statement, of course, is not intended to apply to farms but to places where the feed must be purchased. In deciding on the size of the flock, two hens should be allowed for each member of the family. While the flock may not keep the table in fresh eggs the year round, still they should lay enough in Spring and Summer that a supply of eggs can be put down in preservative to tide over the period of low production in the Winter, besides laying sufficient for Summer use. The records of the backyard poultry keepers would, however, show that most of them are able to get a fairly high egg yield even in the Winter time. For those who are able to do this, it may be profitable to keep a larger flock and supply fresh eggs to families who cannot keep hens.

Breeds

There are two points to consider in selecting a breed suitable for the backyard. It should be a breed that will stand confinement well, and one that will be economical. The heavier or meat breeds