

Poultry Yard.

Green Food for Poultry.

Green food is essential to the well-being of poultry at all seasons of the year. When fowls are limited to confined quarters, this must be supplied to them, artificially, to keep them in good health.

In winter time we can give them cabbages or chopped turnips and onions from time to time; short, late dried hay (or rowen) is very good for a change; corn-stalk leaves, chopped fine, they will eat with a relish.

In early spring time, when the ground first softens from the frost, pasture sods thrown into their pens will be ravenously eaten by them; and as soon as the new grass starts (unless they can have free access to the fields or lawn) they should be supplied with this excellent succulent daily. For the young chickens, nothing is so beneficial and so grateful as a run upon the newly grown grass; and next to this indulgence they should have an ample supply of cut or pulled grass every day.

It should never be forgotten that one of the most important things to be observed towards keeping our fowls in good heart, is the regular supply we should furnish them of green food.—*Ec.*

Advice to Young Poultry Breeders.

After years of care and patient watching, I am prepared to advise all to make up their minds just what they want; to buy as near as they can, and then undertake to work up their ideal themselves. The men who do this are the successful men in poultry breeding as well as in all other branches of business. It is just the same as going to learn any other trade; if you think you are adapted to the carpenter's trade, you should put your whole energies that are not absolutely needed for some other want, into this calling, and not try to learn the blacksmith's trade at the same time. If, after a sufficient length of time, you are convinced that you cannot make a first-rate carpenter, then you may try blacksmithing. If you should find you had made a mistake in selecting from the breeds of fowls those best adapted to your wants, set them aside and try again, always being cautious about making changes.

There are two productions for which fowls are always in demand—laying eggs and for poultry, so it is well to keep the breed in the best condition possible for one or both these branches of business. And if you can at the same time have them please the fancy of the fancier, so much the better, as they make better customers usually for surplus stock than the butcher. In some localities eggs are worth more than poultry, and it is desirable to have them at a particular time of the year. For egg production the non-sitters should be chosen, and they will produce eggs when wanted, and in quantities to suit, if properly fed and otherwise cared for. If early poultry is wanted, the non-sitters of good size are the best to breed from, but if you want to raise poultry to ship in late fall or winter, choose the short-legged Asiatics.

I prefer a short, stout leg on any fowl. The bodies of such fowls may not be so stylish, but they mean business, and I keep fowls for profit. There are several biddies of my acquaintance well up to ten years of age—of various breeds, and cocks five years and more, vigorous as ever. Invariably such are low and broad, compared with what would be called fancy chickens of same breeds by fanciers.—*F. J. Kinney, in Poultry Argus.*

Black Spanish.

There is no doubt but they are among our very best layers. Their eggs are pure, white and large. The Spanish, although claimed to be non-sitters, will often, if allowed to steal away their nests, lay about a dozen eggs, sit, and fetch out a nice lot of chicks. The young Black Spanish chicks are rather tender when quite young, and therefore should not be hatched out until the weather gets warm, so that the chicks can be allowed to run at large; and if they will roost in some tree or hedge, all the better for them, as they will fledge much sooner, and do much better than when penned up with the hen. Although the Spanish fowls have been bred for a number of years, in Canada as well as the States, there are but very few really first-class birds shown at our exhibitions. We are glad to see that a few of the fanciers of the Black Spanish are improving their stock by importing fresh blood from England, and we shall expect to see them improve rapidly for a few years to come.—*Poultry Journal.*

Breed One Variety.

As a rule, we are constrained to repeat what we have hitherto advised, that if poultry fanciers would breed but one variety of fowls, and do that well, they would find it more satisfactory in the end, and quite as remunerative as trying half a dozen kinds, with indifferent results.

Large poultry keepers, located at central points, will always carry different breeds in their more extensive yards, and through careful system they succeed. But for the lesser breeder, or what is generally understood as the ordinary fowl fancier, one variety is sufficient upon a moderate-sized place, however many of that race such fancier may produce.

The inclination to reduce the number of kinds kept by most small poulterers, after a year or two's experience with them, is certain to follow; and the danger of such multiplied varieties getting crossed is too great, ordinarily, while the necessity of preventing this result entails too much trouble and care, usually.

To breed his fowls pure and clean, and to bring his chosen specimens up to the highest requirements of the standard, if he intends to be a competitive exhibitor, is a leading object with such fancier. And if taint occurs among his birds, his whole work is destroyed, his fowls are disqualified and his time and money are lost.

By adhering to the one favorite variety, and improving it constantly through careful selection and skilful mating for "points," whatever his choice may be as to the kind he prefers, he will soon come to be best content with one good breed, while his reputation for reproducing that kind may thus become sooner and more certainly established.

Yet, while we "are free to maintain" that, ordinarily, it is best to keep one variety only, we are not disposed to be dogmatic on this point. All honor to the enterprise and skill of the extensive breeder who is able to manage the breeds well; and if the fancier finds it necessary to indulge in several varieties in order to satisfy his taste, nobody should say him nay. We are merely endeavoring to point out the difficulties and drawbacks in the way of handling several breeds, so that the novice may proceed understandingly from the outset.—*Poultry World.*

Setting Hens—Breaking Eggs in the Nest.

The following very full discussion of the above subject we find in the *Prairie Farmer*, and as it contains some useful hints to poultry raisers, we give it a place:—

A novice, having trouble with setting hens breaking their eggs, wishes to know what to do about it, but she does not give particulars as to how her setting hens are arranged, or what kind of nests they have; so we can answer only in a general way.

Deep nest boxes are sometimes the cause of hens breaking their eggs. Therefore the boxes should be shallow, so that the hens need not jump down on the eggs when going on their nests. This is particularly needful in case the hens are large and heavy. A very good way with such hens is to hollow out a place for the nest on an earth floor, put one layer of bricks around it, and then fill in with a little clean straw or other suitable material. The largest and most clumsy Asiatic will slide into such a nest with as much ease and grace as can well be imagined, and unless she prove to be what some term a "close setter," there will be no danger of her breaking eggs.

By a "close setter" is meant a hen that bears her weight too firmly on the eggs. Some hens have a way of bearing on, or, as it were, closely hugging their eggs, and in this way are often broken. Such a hen cannot be used safely as a setter, for even should she nearly complete her three weeks' task without accidents, she will almost surely kill a large proportion of the chicks just as they are about to emerge from the shells by her close setting.

The setting of imperfect or thin-shelled eggs is sometimes the only cause of the troubles mentioned. Such eggs should not, of course, be used for this purpose at all.

Hens fighting over their nests is another cause, and when this is the case arrangements must be made whereby such fighting can be prevented. It will sometimes be found necessary to keep some of the more quarrelsome hens covered on their nests all the time, except for awhile each day

when they are let off to feed. We cannot always have choice as to what dispositioned hens we are to employ for hatching, but it is well to know which are preferable, in order that the faulty ones may be avoided whenever possible.

In case at any time an egg is broken, the soiled eggs should be carefully washed in warm water and transferred with the hen to a clean nest, which should, of course, occupy the same place as the other. The wetting of the eggs will not injure them at all, but will be a benefit rather, especially toward the close of the period of incubation. It is even well, a day or two before the chicks are due, to dampen the eggs. This may be done by syringing or by placing them for a few seconds in a basin of warm water. We prefer the latter plan.

The inside lining of the eggs sometimes becomes so parched and tough as to make it very difficult for the chicks to disengage themselves, even when the shell is partly chipped. The dampening of the eggs will tend to prevent this, and the chicks will come out promptly, lively and strong.

One object in setting hens on the ground is to secure the advantage of moisture; but where it is more convenient to have the nests on board floors, the dampening of the eggs as mentioned may be made to answer every purpose.

Practical Hints.

Breeders of Game fowls must consider form, size and courage of the first, and markings of feather of secondary importance.

In purchasing Buff Cochins, bear in mind that a clear, even buff, without pencilling of black in the neck or body, is essential to a first-class bird.

Remember that the present fashion demands Dark Brahma cocks with very dark breast and thighs, and in mating up your stock for breeding, aim to produce it.

"Vulture hocks" is the name given to stiff feathers that project below the knees of the fowl. They occur in all of the Asiatic breeds, and are unsightly and objectionable.

Aylesbury ducks with yellow bills, or bills spotted with black, are not what they should be—"a clear, pale, flesh-colored bill is the thing."

See that the main color or ground color of your Houdans is either black or white. Shades of other colors should be avoided.

The comb of a Hamburg cock should set perfectly square on his head, and not lop to either side.

The white in the face of an adult Black Spanish fowl should extend over and around the eye.

White Leghorn fowls with black or red feathers in their plumage are faulty, as are also Leghorn cocks with dropping combs. Such should never be used for stock birds.

Look out for well developed fifth toes in your Dorkings; not little stubs pointing anywhere, but uniform-sized longish toes, pointing towards the body.

Early Chickens.

The season of the year has now fully arrived when breeders ought to have their stock mated and placed in their breeding pens; and whenever a hen shows signs of incubation, no time should be lost in placing eggs under her. The early hatched chicken has many advantages over those of later birth; it should be borne in mind that it is in early chickenhood the frame is made that will hereafter determine the rank of the large birds of its breed. And although feeding has much to do in the production of size and maturity, other things being equal, the early chicken is sure to be the best. It behooves breeders, then, who wish to excel in this respect, to produce early chickens, although at the cost of considerably more care and attention than is necessary in the raising of those of a later period in the season.—*Poultry Chronicle.*

HENS PLUCKING FEATHERS.—Mr. Penny, of London, asks for a cure for his hens plucking feathers. We give the following extract from the *Country Gentleman*: His hens want salt. Give them twice a day, in four parts of wheat bran to one of corn meal, by measure, a tablespoonful of salt in every eight quarts of this mixture, scalded and cooled. The hens are after the salt contained in the minute globule of blood at the end of the quill. Hens fed in this way, or occasionally furnished salt, will never pull feathers. The salt should be dissolved in hot water before mixing with the feed. This is a certain antidote.