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Nature's
Remedy

the garden issue

The Scoop on Chicken Coops
A Look at Creative Gardening
Your Guide to Canning Produce



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Give Chickens a Stylish Place to Roost

Have you been on the fence about keeping chickens? If you live within city limits, you may be contending with a lack of space. Spatial restrictions might seem like a problem until you talk to Dyan Twining who cofounded Dripping Springs, Texas-based Roost & Root with her husband, Montie. The company offers backyard farm and garden lifestyle products. Here she gives the scoop on their deluxe coops that make it easy for chickens and their owners to thrive, no matter the location.



If you live in a densely populated zip code, your coop can adjust accordingly. Other than having a place that is physically safe for your chickens, the structure should be a feature of the yard rather than an afterthought. “When you have acres and acres of land, you can have a coop that’s cobbled together on a corner of the property where you don’t have to look at it every day, but if you live in an urban environment where space is at a premium, you want something aesthetically pleasing,” says Dyan.

A well-made coop ensures your chickens will stick around and be protected from predators, so quality accommodations are key. “There aren’t a lot of domestically made chicken coops—urban or otherwise,” she says. “All of ours are manufactured in the US and made of 100 percent cedar, which is a really good wood for outdoor use. There are no chemical sealers or treatments needed and the materials themselves are pretty.”

Their six classic coop designs are known for rounded roofs that give roosting hens more headroom. Each one also features a nest box for laying eggs and a protected run where chickens spend most of their time. Roost & Root coops accommodate two to twenty-five chickens and the unassembled structure can be shipped directly to you. All it takes to build the kit is a cordless drill.

Hens are relatively easy to keep and don’t ask for much in return. “My husband likes to say, ‘Chickens are really good business partners.’ They do what they’re going to do like sleep in the highest point and darkest part of the coop,” says Dyan. “By and large, chickens are seen as pets to the people who keep them. They’re really low impact; they need food and water and a safe place to sleep. You can certainly interact with them as much as you want, but you don’t have to.”

Their eggs are like a gift that keeps on giving, especially during the pandemic when many learned about the food supply chain the hard way. “In an urban setting, you’re not going to be able to keep

a cow or a pig, but you can keep chickens to know where one item on your plate is coming from,” she says. “People increasingly want to know where their food comes from and they’re tired of being stuck inside staring at a computer screen. Chickens get you outside and they teach kids where something comes from. A few chickens can keep your family in eggs and you know how they’re treated.”

Dyan often talks to potential customers who say one partner wants them, but the other is hesitant. Once they take the leap, they’re smitten. “They call us to say: ‘We sit outside and watch them instead of watching TV. We wish we would have known what they were like. We wouldn’t have waited this long,’” she says.

Chickens can have a calming effect. “They’re not going to sit on your lap, but you can watch them interact with the environment and each other,” says Dyan. “So many sayings come from them like ‘pecking order’ and ‘birds of a feather flock together’ and they’re true to their personalities. As you observe them, there’s a boss, a sweet one, a timid one, and a ‘march to the beat of your own drum’ one.”

They can handle a variety of climates and they’re easy to feed. “If you eat it, your chicken can eat it. They’re incredibly good at recycling food waste and they’re not vegetarians,” she says. Perhaps one reason keeping chickens has gone mainstream is that it’s a doable pursuit. “People don’t need hobbies that take a lot of time,” adds Dyan. “They want hobbies that enrich their life.”

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Photography provided by Roost & Root.

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