

Keeping Hens – An easy guide

What do I need to keep hens?

Dry secure housing is a must. We recommend sawdust or wood shavings for the floor and nest boxes. Straw is not really required unless of course you wish to spoil your birds a bit! A feeder and drinker are essential. Your birds should always have access to water although they will not eat or drink when it is dark so it does not have to be in the hut. A layers pellet or layers mash from a local farm shop is all that is necessary. Keep your egg shells, dry them out and crush them up to give back to your hens. This is a cheap way of giving them grit rather than buying oyster shells. We suggest treats like corn, grain, meal worm and bread are kept as treats and not a daily routine. Over weight birds will not lay as well. Left over lettuce leaves, vegetables and fruit are fine.

How noisy are hens?

Hens are fairly quiet and can be kept in gardens in the towns and city. Obviously it is not advisable to have a cockerel in a built up area or if you have neighbours near you, unless they have agreed to it.

How do I keep my hens safe from predators?

It is crucial that you shut your hens in at dusk. You may not have any foxes around but once you have chickens there is a chance you will! It is not only foxes which have a taste for chickens but Pine Martin, Mink and sometimes Otters and Badgers depending on how hungry they are.

What is recommended for a first time chicken?

We would suggest any hybrid as a good first time hen. Not only do they lay plenty of eggs there are many variety of colours. Many people like to choose 2 or 3 different chickens so that they can be given names as they are family pets too. Pure breeds do not lay as many eggs and are also a bit more expensive.

How many chickens should I get?

This really depends on how many eggs you use per week. Depending on which hybrid you choose you could have between 5 – 6 eggs per week per bird. But usually you find that friends, family and neighbours are keen to take any extra eggs! As they get older they will lay less. It is also a good idea to have at least two birds for company.