

# Our Henhouse

When the children were little, the henhouse was a living school. Many of life's lessons were experienced here~~the birth and death of chickens, the pecking order and bullying, healthy vs. sick chickens, the biology of the daily egg laying, hens vs. roosters, reproduction, bug infestation, responsibility and the care and keeping of something other than yourself.



The henhouse aka the poultry palace is located next to the garden. Any unused greens or vegetables are readily consumed by our chickens. Attached to the back of the hen house is approximately 400 sq. feet of secured, shaded space to free



range.







Henhouses need appropriate ventilation due to the ammonia released with chicken poop. We have 3 doors, 4 windows and the eaves have screened circular holes, allowing for plenty of fresh air.



It was important to me for this structure to be attractive. The decorative chickens on the front door are made from a composite poly-resin stepping stones. My husband cut the "chicken on a nest" out with a jigsaw and then mounted them on the entry door.





The rooster decoration above the front door adds a bit of whimsy.





I designed this 6' x 9' structure to house both young, mature and ailing chickens. The mirror layout, both in the henhouse and the outdoor space, allows me to separate the hens if necessary. There is a pecking order and being hen-pecked is not fun. Typically the older, bigger chickens will dominate the younger ones. When we introduce new chickens to the

flock, we separate them until they are the same size as the existing chickens.







Upon entering, the center section is allocated for feed, hay, and egg collection. There are 4 drop down panels to gather eggs from 8 collection boxes.





LIFE AT  
*Bella Terra*





Miscellaneous items are stored in this cute box hanging on the wall.





I add dried herbs to the hay in the laying boxes. This [Chicken Confetti](#) is made by one of my favorite bloggers, Lisa from [Fresh Eggs Daily](#). Not only is it pretty but helps relax the chickens and repels bugs. Another chicken favorite is [Grubbies](#)~~think of it as treats for the hens. This dried black fly larvae provides protein and the chickens LOVE it!





The other side of the nesting boxes (access from the side doors) looks like this. At night the chickens roost on the bar located below the boxes. The small door near the floor allows the chickens to come in at night and roam freely in the outdoor area during the day.





Even though we live in the 5th largest city in the U.S., our neighborhood has foxes, coyotes, owls and other wildlife. The small black box attached to the sign below, emits 2 red blinking lights at night. These solar [Nite Guard](#) devices frighten predator animals away. We have several of these placed around the henhouse. They seem to work ~~so far, so



good.



Having chickens (and one duck) provides us with many blessings. For me, this is my chicken church. When I feel



stressed or overwhelmed, a trip to the henhouse is a bit of a therapy session. The hens are always happy to see me. A handful of Grubblies and I am their best friend. Opening the door to the nesting box generally provides me a gift of a warm, freshly laid egg. It is the simpleness of it all. The smell of hay, the gentle clucking sounds...our henhouse and its residents are a gift that keeps on giving.

If you are considering your own flock, I strongly recommend it. Small hen houses are readily available and a few chickens can provide your family with food, valuable lessons and a restorative place for you.

*Mary*