

Note taker: Allie Lopez-Swetland (MDAR)

3:10-3:30pm Session 5

Quick Shop 1

Chickens in the City

Leonide Lacet and Margaret Connors from Boston discussed the basics of raising chickens and the latest on zoning for chickens. It is currently illegal to have chickens in Boston. Leonide and Margaret were there to advocate the legalization of having chickens. Each city has its own zoning code allowance and condition. Somerville allows hens with certain conditions. Cambridge does not allow. Hens are included but not part of the legal changes. Article “89” was created and adopted in each neighborhood.

What it looks like: A Jamaica Plain backyarder, for example, has the bottom of a children’s swing set turned into a chicken coop. A Roslindale backyarder, for example, has one coop built on the side of a house. The shed is inside of house. Problems in general are with coyotes and hawks. Chicken breeds that do well in our climate include: Penciled, Hy-Liners, and Rhode Island Reds.

Why keep Hens?

- Food Justice
- Sustainability
- Nutrition
- Connection to nature and each other on food.

Chickens teach us about sustainability:

- Hens eat anything
- Hens clear yards of ticks
- Cock a doo- doo enhances garden compost
- Hens give a present everyday

Nutritional Density (eggs):

- Eggs have 2/3 more vitamin A than conventional eggs and ½ the cholesterol.

Factory Caged vs. Pastured:

There is a big difference. Community Building: Fresh eggs make great gifts, love a productive backyard, kids love chickens.

Factors to weigh in keeping a flock:

- Do you have outdoor space?
- Is that space green, sufficient for 2, 4, or 6 chickens?
- Are chickens right for you? Do you travel often or rarely home?
- Is your soil okay?

Money saved annually:

- Premium eggs cost 4.50 per. dozen
- A two dozen/week equals \$468 per year. One dozen a week about \$234 per year.
- Keeping 4 chickens yields 2 dozen eggs per week.
- Cost of set-up \$60-250 a coop.
- Maintenance \$30-60 per year

Getting Started:

- Newborn in May, at Agways or hatch your own.
- A secure enclosure with a run
- Use hard cloth, not chicken wire, need locks and nesting space
- Chicken feed, buckets, lights

Resources:

- Boston chicken owners www.legalizechickenBoston.org
- Agricultural hall Armory St. JP
- The Boston backyard Poultry Meet-up Group <http://www.meetup.com/Boston> Backyard Poultry
- Legalize chickens in Boston@google groups .com
- Meyer's hatching catalogue

Hens can be fed scraps:

- Can get protein from larval sheddings
- Oatmeal, yogurt, can use white powder on hay-helps with smell
- left over rice, salad
- Necessary to buy food

In general it is expensive and not very profitable. There is more quality than profit and costs for lighting starting in December until the end of March.

Do not use too hot light, it may drop and cause fire on hay. Hens like Christmas lights.

Water will have to be heated.

Audience input: Hens love red food, cabbage and apples. Chickens are great for eating pests in the garden. One person suggested a way to protect chickens, for example: dig dirt around the perimeter of the coop out and place a cloth across the bottom so critters cannot dig there way underneath the coop into the coop.

Most common encounter or arguments with chickens:

The spread of Avian flu, salmonella and transfer of viruses. People are concerned about chickens attracting rodents and about noise and smell.