

**PLACE YOUR
ORDER!**

We can special order many chicken breeds during the peak season! Ask a sales associate for an order form.

ORSCHELN[®]
FARM & HOME

Choosing the right
CHICKEN BREED

With hundreds of chicken breeds available, choosing the right one for you can be overwhelming. It's easy to get caught up in the interesting names like Silkie and Cockoo Moran, or the beautiful feather plumes, or the color of the eggs. But before you choose your flock based on aesthetics alone, you should first consider what breeds will work best in your climate, space available, and what you want out of your chickens.

Chicken breeds can be broken down into three categories: layers, meat birds and show birds. If you want farm fresh eggs, look for a laying breed. If you want fresh chicken for dinner, look for a meat breed. If you want chickens for companions, or for livestock shows, you want a show bird. Seems easy enough, right? Keep in mind, some breeds fall into more than one category, and it's ok to mix breeds to have a nice well-rounded flock.

Space and climate will also effect your chickens. Some breeds require more room than others, and some are able to fly over low fences. While most breeds are fine in almost any climate, there are a few that require warmer or cooler temperatures to thrive.

Ready to dive into the details of chicken breeds? Check out the chart below to build the perfect flock for you.

Did you
KNOW?

Brown and white eggs have the same nutritional value. Some chickens such as the Ameraucana breed lay blue/green eggs. Chickens with white ear lobes lay white eggs and chickens with red earlobes lay brown eggs.



EGG LAYERS

Raising your own egg laying chickens is a wonderful adventure. Whether your motivation is fun, profit or superior nutrition, a backyard chicken flock can provide meat and eggs for your family year round. There are several chicken breeds that make the best egg laying chickens. In general, female chickens, called pullets, will start laying eggs at about six months of age. However, if they reach this age during the cold winter months, they may simply wait to lay until springtime.

Getting started: The first step to raising your own egg laying chickens is to prepare a chicken coop, scratch yard and run for your flock. Chickens need a safe, dry place to lay eggs as well as roost at night. Chicken coops can be

made from purchased lumber, scrap materials, or recycled doors and scrap metal. They can also be bought new online and at Orscheln Farm & Home stores. If you decide to build one yourself, a good set of chicken coop plans is a huge money-saver. Even if you plan to let your chickens free range your yard during the day, you need a safe pen to contain them when you're gone or if they face danger from local dogs, cats or other predators.



White Leghorn

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Choosing the breed for your egg laying chickens,

unless you inherit peeps or hens from someone else, is next. Commercial egg layers are bred for production and will lay the most quantity and often the largest eggs. They are quite reliable, and most lay almost daily. Other egg layers, including some heirloom breeds, are slightly less productive but may be more fun to raise due to their varied coloring, personalities and egg colors and sizes. In addition to brown and white egg layers, some – such as Easter Egg chickens – lay green or blue eggs, and others are pink hued. When ordering egg laying hens you will be able to choose based on the color of eggs as well as the breed.

Once your laying hens are safely housed in a coop protected by chicken wire, and your pullets reach maturity, you will see your efforts pay off in the form of eggs. You should plan to gather the eggs a couple times a day to prevent breakage by the chickens. Do not wash the eggs, as they are protected by a thin layer on the shell that keeps the egg fresh. If dirty, wash the eggs immediately before use.



Egg laying chickens are quite useful as they contribute to the family larder. Because of their gentle natures, they also make wonderful pets. Backyard chicken flocks are reappearing across the country as families work to improve their diets and become more self-sufficient.

Top EGG LAYERS

- White Leghorn
- New Hampshire
- Australorp
- Rhode Island Red
- Sussex
- Buff Orpington
- Wyandotte
- Plymouth Rock
- Delaware
- Ameraucana



Black Australorp

MEAT BREEDS



Cochin

Interested in raising chickens for meat? Some of the meat breed names include, Cornish, Cochin, Marans, Dorking, Plymouth Rock and tons of others. Take into consideration there are some additional steps – for processing the birds when they are fully grown to market size.

Raising meat birds is very different from laying hens. You'll have a lot more (usually at least 50 or more, although you could just raise a few) fast-growing birds, which means a lot of poop to deal with but plenty of fertilizer for the garden.

There are 3 types of meat birds. Broilers, Roasters and Capons. Each of these birds are ready for butcher at different ages. The Broiler birds are usually young and tender and can be male or female. Roasters are allowed to get a bit older and usually weigh about 7 pounds when they are butchered. Capons are birds which are surgically castrated at an early age. Capons are plumper, juicier and more flavorful compared to any commercially grown bird.



Barred Plymouth Rock

Chicken has become the most sought after meat in the marketplace. Raising your own birds can save you a few bucks at the grocery store. Even more satisfying is the great sense of accomplishment that comes with raising your own food from egg to dinner table and providing this healthy meal to your family.

As long as you give them the proper care and feeding, the birds you raise will taste better

than store-bought, contain little or no chemicals or hormones, and live happier lives. Chicken is a very healthy meat. It has considerably less fat and calories than other commercial meats. The white breast meat contains even fewer calories than the dark leg and wing meat with almost half the fat. White chicken meat is nearly twice as high in niacin as dark chicken meat but the dark meat offers almost three times as much zinc and iron. You can cut the fat from chicken even further by removing the skin before cooking, where much of the saturated fat is located.



Raise
**YOUR OWN
MEAT**

If you want to become more self-sufficient and put healthy meat on your dinner table, raising chickens is a great way to start!

MEAT OR EGG BIRDS

Meet the **RHODE ISLAND RED**

The Rhode Island Red was developed on Rhode Island, Massachusetts USA around the 1890s. Crossing a large variety of other breeds including the Buff Cochins, Langsh, Black Red Malay, Hamburgh and Rose combed Leghorns together created the Rhode Island Red. The Rhode Island is another bird created for both meat and eggs, to satisfy the demands of the American population. The Rhode Island Red is possibly the best-known breed in the world today. The Rhode crossed with a Sussex forms the basis of most of our present day hybrids.

While most often an honor saved for either a majestic or physically beautiful wild bird, the Rhode Island Red Chicken is actually the state bird of Rhode Island. It was given this honor by the state government during the early 1950s.



Compromise is often a bad thing but in the case of dual-purpose chickens it is a sensible and practical idea for the home flock. There is nothing more satisfying than watching a flock of robust hens roaming about the farm chasing butterflies in late summer or sucking up earthworms after a rain. They are inexpensive to purchase, reasonable to maintain, and fun to watch. In return you are rewarded with eggs that have bright orange stand-up yolks and a freezer stocked with fryers and roasters that you know were organically grown in a natural environment.

For an excellent egg producer there are several production breeds available but they tend to be scrawny and would make a lousy meat bird.

Likewise, there are some amazing meat chickens but their egg-laying ability has been sacrificed in the intensive breeding for feed to weight conversion ratios. This is where the dual-purpose chicken comes in. It is not the best in either category but quite acceptable in both. They tend to be healthier overall and more “normal” in chicken behavior than some of the highly bred production breeds. This is an ideal solution for a family wishing to supply their own needs and to make a small income selling eggs to the community. The climate you live in will make an impact on the decision as well. Some birds prefer a warmer climate while other will survive wonderfully in the colder climates. Plymouth Rock and Rhode Island Red all like the warmer weather. Rhode Island Red, Orpington, Plymouth Rock and Wyandotte all like the colder weather.

The best breeds for the dual-purpose flock are generally from the American Class. This class includes the Delaware, Rhode Island Red, Plymouth Barred Rock and New Hampshire. For continuous winter laying success Orpingtons, Australorps and some White Rocks are great. These all lay brown eggs. Pick a few from several different breeds and see what works best for you.

Having a flock of dual-purpose chickens is a good, common-sense addition to any homestead. They supply the owner with eggs and meat, not to mention bug control, rich manure and general entertainment. Raising them keeps alive the breeds that are being neglected for more efficient single-purpose factory production breeds. In a time when faster, bigger, more is always better, the old-fashioned dual-purpose chicken stands out as an exception that wins all around.



Plymouth Rock Rooster

EXHIBITING BREEDS

These chickens are found in a variety of colors and patterns. Some have long tail feathers like the Phoenix, some have soft plumages such as the Silkies, others have unique

Leghorn Rooster



markings or “feather-do’s” like Polish. Some show chickens are the same breeds as your backyard flock. You can show all breeds of chickens that are represented in the APA Standards (American Poultry Association).

Poultry Shows (the chicken portion) are divided into Bantams and Large Fowl. Some breeds have both categories and are shown separately.

The next step is breaking them in to classes. Classes for large fowl are named after their area of origin. You have the American Class, Asiatic Class, English Class, Mediterranean Class, Continental Class and an All Other Standard Breed Class. Bantams are named after physical characteristics. These characteristics include Game Bantams, Single Comb Clean Legged, Rose Comb Clean Legged, All Other Comb Clean Legged, and Feather Legged classes. Every breed will be listed in only one class.

There are several breeds within each class. Breeds will differ in size, shape, feather characteristics, combs and other areas. They also differ in their origin. Some were meat production, some egg production, others from Asian or European fighting cock stocks. There are a few breeds developed for their ornamental qualities. Some breeds have different colors and patterns.

Phoenix



WHO SETS THE SHOWING STANDARDS?

The American Standard of Perfection, which is published by the American Poultry Association, gives the specifics for each breed. The individuals who keep birds for showing are called fanciers. Show birds are judged on shape, color, patterning, comb configuration, number of toes and shape of earlobes.

POPULAR SHOW BREEDS:

- Old English Game
- Rhode Island Red
- Silkies – ornamental
- Black Australorp
- Phoenix- ornamental
- Plymouth Rock
- Polish - ornamental
- Leghorn

HERE'S A GUIDE TO HELP YOU CHOOSE!

We offer a wide variety of poultry breeds. Here is a list of some of the breeds we carry and a chart that will help you choose the breed that's right for you.



	CLIMATE	EGG PRODUCTION	MEAT PRODUCTION	FLIGHTINESS	BROODINESS	SHOW BIRD
COCKOO MARAN	Cold	Medium	High	Average	Average	Yes
CORNISH CROSS	Cold/Heat	Low	High	Calm	Seldom	No
BROWN LEGHORN	Cold/Heat	High	Low	Average	Seldom	Yes
AMERAUCANA	Cold/Heat	Medium	Low	Average	Seldom	No
BANTAM	Cold	Low	Low	Calm	Frequent	Yes
BARRED PLYMOTH ROCK	Cold/Heat	High	Medium	Average	Seldom	No
NEW HAMPSHIRE RED	Cold/Heat	High	Low	Average	Frequent	Yes
WHITE PLYMOTH ROCK	Cold/Heat	High	High	Average	Seldom	No
BLACK AUSTRALORP	Cold/Heat	High	Low	Calm	Average	No
BUFF ORPINGTON	Cold/Heat	Low	Low	Calm	Frequent	No
RHODE ISLAND RED	Cold	High	Medium	Average	Seldom	No
WHITE LEGHORN	Cold	High	Low	Flighty	Seldom	No
SILVER LACED WYANDOTTE	Cold	High	Low	Calm	Frequent	Yes
BLACK JERSEY GIANT	Cold	Medium	Medium	Calm	Average	No
SALMON FAVOROLLE	Cold	High	Medium	Calm	Frequent	Yes
SPECKLED SUSSEX	Cold/Heat	High	Low	Average	Frequent	Yes
WELLSUMMERS	Cold	Medium	Low	Average	Average	No
POLISH CRESTED	Cold/Heat	Medium	Medium	Calm	Seldom	Yes

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