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# Free-Range Chicken Gardens: How To Create A Beautiful, Chicken-Friendly Yard



## Synopsis

Many gardeners fear chickens will peck away at their landscape, and chicken lovers often shy away from gardening for the same reason. But you can keep chickens and have a beautiful garden, too! In this essential handbook, award-winning garden designer Jessi Bloom offers step-by-step instructions for creating a beautiful and functional space and maintaining a happy, healthy flock. *Free-Range Chicken Gardens* covers everything a gardener needs to know, from the basics of chicken keeping and getting them acclimated to the garden, to how to create the perfect chicken-friendly garden design and build innovative coops.

## Book Information

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Timber Press; 13559th edition (January 3, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1604692375

ISBN-13: 978-1604692372

Product Dimensions: 8 x 0.8 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.4 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 308 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #96,113 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > Garden Design #74 in Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Birds & Birdwatching > Field Guides #100 in Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Field Guides

## Customer Reviews

Award-winning landscape designer Bloom states that the heart of this book has you look at your garden as a habitat for your flock. Chickens and gardens work together synergistically since chickens reduce weeds and pests, aerate the soil, produce fertilizing manure, and provide food. Bloom and Baldwin's guide to these pets with benefits includes comprehensive information applicable to both small urban and large rural lots pertaining to landscape design, fencing and hardscape materials, chicken-friendly plants, garden and coop designs, and predators. Details on fence fastenings and coop kits, along with numerous illustrations, full-color photos, charts and tables, garden layouts, and useful tips (Cut Miscanthus plants in late winter and use the dried grass as bedding), offer a wealth of practical advice. Beyond that, this how-to presents an ecofriendly, holistic view of human-animal relationships while addressing self-sufficiency and food issues, core

motivations for the burgeoning organic, homegrown movement. --Whitney Scott

“If your garden fantasies involve chickens, Jessi Bloom. . . is here to make those dreams come true. . . . an expert guide for the untutored.” • The New York Times “A manifesto on the many ways to pamper your hens with plants for foraging and shelter, rain-fed water bowls and eco-friendly lawns.” • Sunset “A comprehensive guide from mating to medicine that will particularly help beginners. . . . Bloom makes a persuasive case.” • Publishers Weekly “Numerous illustrations, full-color photos, charts and tables, garden layouts, and useful tips. . . . a wealth of practical advice.” • Booklist “Exquisitely produced and artfully photographed.” • San Francisco Chronicle “Bloom’s obvious enthusiasm for good design and for her birds will inspire both novice and experienced chicken owners to create a garden space for hens and humans to enjoy.” • American Gardener “Complete with gorgeous photos, diagrams, plans, and a very well written and easy to understand approach, you will want to get your hands upon this book if you have ever dreamed of incorporating chickens into your lifestyle.” • Small Town Living “A great basic guide for first-time chicken owners and chicken owner wannabes.” • Horticulture “The only book I have seen that tells you exactly how you can have your chickens AND your garden too.” • Living Homegrown “Solves the dilemma of having free-range chickens and a vegetable garden.” • The Oregonian “Provides a good overview on coop building styles and considerations, very basic chicken care info, do-grow/don’t-grow plant lists for the chicken garden and lots and lots of gorgeous inspirational pictures.” • NW Edible “I’ve had chickens for four years and I wish that I could have had Jessi Bloom’s new book in the beginning.” • Diggin Food

This book combines two of my favorite things: Chickens and Gardening...with numerous photos to drool over! And excellent information and tips! Is it Spring yet??? I can't wait to get out there! I have always been an avid gardener, and the decision to keep a few hens in my yard was a natural extension of that. New to chicken-keeping, with a small flock of 5 laying hens (now 7 months old) in a small suburban, almost urban, backyard, I have quickly become quite passionate about my new hobby! Even though I probably can't let my girls free-range the yard completely, this book has given me many ideas for chicken-friendly plantings and ways to better incorporate my coop and run into

my property. The author lists plants, shrubs and groundcovers that can be grown for food/forage, as well as chicken-resistant plants that can add color to the garden, but are not likely to be eaten or trampled by your hens. This information alone is worth the price of the book. I've not seen a more comprehensive listing elsewhere, and the internet forums are filled with conflicting data/opinions as to which plants are edible or toxic. I'll also be re-seeding my "lawn" areas with what the author calls eco-turf, an ecological seed mix containing clover, that will provide excellent forage for my girls. The color photos throughout the book are so lovely that I know I'll be keeping this book close at hand for the remainder of the winter, as I plan and dream about creating my own, beautiful chicken garden this spring!

Free-Range Chicken Gardens has stunning illustrations that are worth the price of the book, but the text is nearly useless for homesteaders. The author's focus is on mixing chickens with ornamental gardens, and her brief forays into discussing chickens and vegetables leave a lot to be desired. Mostly, she just tells you to fence your flock out of the vegetable garden when there are seedlings or ripening fruit present (which is most of the time if you have an intensive garden of edibles.) She mentions not giving tomatoes and other edibles as treats to your flock if you don't want the chickens to learn to eat these goodies off the vine --- I can tell you from experience that chickens never given tomatoes as treats \*still\* find the garden tomatoes in short order if let out of their pastures. It's also a bit tough to tell which of the plants the author says work well with chickens are ones she's actually tried. In several places, it sounds like she's just repeating conventional wisdom, and from my own chicken experiments, I've discovered that conventional wisdom is often wrong. I would have found it much more helpful if the author had made a point of distinguishing between facts she was reporting from personal experience and those she'd just read. The useful side of the book is the way it considers the garden as an entire ecosystem. She does a good job of telling you which permaculture layers work well with chickens (the tall ones) and which don't (shallow-rooted shrubs, annuals, and herbaceous perennials in the spring). And, as I said before, the photos are beautiful if you want a coffee table book.

For what is essentially a photo book, this doesn't handle being opened very well. I sat down to read my book the day after it arrived. However, about 20% into it my book fell apart. The binding isn't appropriate for this type of book. There isn't enough space between the binding and the content, so you apparently open the book too wide.

Since this is not a seller issue, I will say that the binding on book is horrible. Within an hour of opening this new book, tons of pages have fallen out. I fixed this (as I have book binding supplies) as I just don't care to go through a return process. ... Additionally there are great pictures of coops but none that are not already on pinterest. Plus they don't even give explanation or details of the coops which I find odd. I do like the printing paper and it's full of pictures which is nice.

Excellent. Lots of info. Great pics! I have learned many things and my own gardens are looking great. Unfortunately every chicken is different, mine seem to still pick on things not high on the "preferred chicken plants list" but those plants I'll keep blocked off. One thing I haven't yet read is how deadly the tall ornamental grasses can be for chickens. It can get wrapped up and cause impacted crops. I now have removed all mine from their garden. Thought I'd mention this. So enjoy this book!

This book gives the beginning backyard chicken lover some ideas which are adequate. The pictures are ok, but the quality of the paper in the book is better, would have made this book even better. Content is 'just ok'. I enjoy reading about chickens and gardening both and due to this I gave the book 4 stars based on ease of the read and some of the ideas it gives. There are better books, though, about chickens and gardening. Storey's guide to raising poultry and/or chickens is a great one and Mini Farming (self sufficiency on 1/4 acre) is a beautifully done book with great quality of pages & pictures (both of which have great reviews). If purchased, you'll see what I'm talking about. This book was 'fun reading', though and didn't break the pocketbook.

Before reading this book I thought I was the only one who worried about landscaping my chicken run ! While I don't free range or allow my flock to roam through our backyard or garden, I DO plant things in their run to attract bugs, provide shade and make the run more aesthetically pleasing. I figure the nicer it looks the more time I will want to spend there - which is beneficial to both me and my chickens. This book puts all the information I need in one place. No more bookmarking websites of toxic plants, safe plants, etc. I am in the process of planning my landscaping for this spring and this book has been invaluable in that. Its also a gorgeously photographed book, which makes it a joy to flip through. Highly recommended for those who free range as well as those who just want to spruce up their run area a bit safely. Lisa Fresh Eggs Daily Farm Girl[...][...]

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