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Cheating on a Chicken Coop: 8 Cheap Ideas to House Your Backyard Hens and Save Money

R.J. Ruppenthal

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Brand New: Save Money on a Chicken Coop!

[Note: This is a short "idea" book, not a set of building plans. Wherever possible, I have included links to simple building instructions for these ideas online, but you'll need to be somewhat creative with the materials available to you. If you're ready to save some money on a coop and start thinking outside the box ('outside the coop'), then please read on!]

You're thinking of getting some chickens to lay eggs in your backyard. And then you look at the price of chicken coops. Holy manure! $900 for a fancy box? What are they thinking? You decide that maybe you can make your own chicken coop on the cheap. So you download some free building plans.

Browsing through the coop plans, your eyes fix on the simplest hen house design. Okay, you're thinking, that might be doable...in about five weekends. Then you read on and realize you don't own a table saw... and you've never even heard of an auger bit. So you put your coop-building project on the back burner for awhile. This is a real shame, because you'd love to have chickens.

It shouldn't have to be this way. Somewhere between the overpriced, readymade coops and the major DIY construction projects is a middle ground. I wrote this short book to introduce you to some functional alternatives: coops and non-coops made of affordable materials that are fairly simple to create (even for a non-builder like me).

Contents Include:

1. Cheaper Alternatives
Skipping the High Cost Chicken Coops

2. The 8 Things Every Chicken Coop Needs
Add Them To Any Structure and You Have a Coop

3. A-Frame Chicken Ark
A Functional and Affordable "Normal" Coop

4. Garden Hoophouse
Really Simple and Dirt Cheap

5. Chicken Box
Minimalist Design for Non-Builders

6. Go Native
Use Local Materials

7. Repurposing Big Ticket Items
Curbside Treasures and Old Vehicles

8. Making a Small Bantam House From a Wine Barrel, or Pickle Barrel
How About a Garbage Can?

9. Converting a Doghouse, Shed, Storage Area, or Extra Room
Building a Roosting Room in Your Garage

10. The De-Constructed Coop
Letting Them Figure It Out

The coops in this book will never look like a $1500 gingerbread house, but they are as clean and functional as any other design. Making use of available structures and affordable materials, they keep costs and prep times to a minimum. Most importantly, your back yard chickens will have everything they need and will be thrilled with what you give them. As you know, happy chickens lay lots of eggs!

This is an idea book, not a set of building plans. However, for many of these coop designs, you will find links in this book to step-by-step online instructions, building plans, "how to" videos, and photographic slideshows depicting coop constructions and conversions. The others have pictures, descriptions, and hopefully will inspire you to go out and customize your own simple version of what you see. If you know how to cut wood with a handsaw and screw in a screw, I think you'll be just fine. These designs are about as stripped-down as any designs can get.

Just Say 'No' to Overpriced Coops

There are better alternatives, and I think you'll find a few of them in this book. If you can't afford an expensive chicken coop and aren't handy enough (or don't have time) to build a typical hen house from scratch, then welcome to the club. I hope this short book will give you some fun ideas that are practical enough to use. Most importantly, this book should help you think 'outside the coop' so you're not boxed in by expectations. As long as you include The Eight Things Every Chicken Coop Needs (covered in the book, along with 8 different coops), then you can call any contraption a coop and your chickens will be very happy to live there.

Hop on for the ride. It costs less than $4 and it might well save you $400.

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