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The Purpose Of Nesting Boxes In Chicken Coops

What do nesting boxes in chicken coops actually do, and how big should they be?

We've recently been asked about chicken nesting boxes. What nesting boxes are, what place that they have in the chicken coop and how big they should be.



So let's look at chicken nesting boxes for a moment. As the name suggests nesting boxes are for your chooks to nest in. This means that that is the place where they will lay their eggs, and if you leave the eggs there for them to do so they will sit on them in the hope of hatching some chicks.

Of course the likelihood of chicks hatching depends on whether or not you have a rooster. But the chooks don't know that and they will happily sit on unfertilised eggs if you leave them in the nesting box to build up.

In our view the prime purpose of the nesting box is to give the chicken somewhere that is relatively dark. They seem to prefer nesting in dark places. They can be fussy about where they nest and we find on occasions that they will often nest in some 44 gallon drums that we have outside the chicken coop instead.

Our nesting boxes in the chicken coop that we built have a removable lid. If we leave the lid off some of the boxes they will all try to nest in the box with the lid on.

We also suspect that they prefer nesting boxes that are not only relatively dark but are also quite small. A box that is not much larger than chicken is probably ideal, and if you make it much bigger you will often find that there is another chook in the box trying to lay her egg there as well.

About the most important consideration for nesting boxes is that they be easy to clean, so make sure they have some form of removable lid so that you can lift the lid to clean the box.

If you have a number of chooks make sure that your chicken coup has a number of nesting boxes. That gives them some choice and allows more than one hen to nest at any one time.

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