



The nesting area must be...

- A place where the hens want to lay their eggs
- Accessible to egg collectors
- Easy to clean

Otherwise hens will lay on the floor. There, the eggs are likely to be soiled, cracked and hard to reach.

Occasionally, hens hide their eggs and nests. Finding eggs a week or two after they have been laid can be a less than pleasant experience.

When to use nest eggs?

- To persuade hens to lay eggs in a nesting box (and not elsewhere).
- To discourage egg eating by hens, a bad habit that can spread rapidly.

Placing a nest egg to encourage the hen to lay in the correct area.

Getting hens to lay in a nest box...

Q. What if the hens don't lay in the nesting box?

A. Consider these changes:

- Many hens prefer a nest with other eggs in it. Try placing a ceramic or wooden nest egg in the box.
- Place a comfortable amount of bedding in the nesting box (straw, grass hay, wood shavings, sawdust).
- Locate nests in darker areas. Hens prefer to nest where they feel less visible to predators.

Q. Where and how high should I set up the nest box?

A. Place them so both you and your birds have easy access to the boxes. Some folks think a corner or the dark side of the coop is preferred by chickens.

Not less than 2 ft above the ground for the base of the nest is a height most can reach easily. Egg-stealing pests (rodents, skunks, snakes) also have a harder time reaching this height.

Q. What material should I use?

A. We've used metal and wood boxes for decades with hundreds of indoor and outdoor chickens. But we prefer plastic because:

- Plastic does not rot.
- Plastic is easier to clean.
- Plastic has no seams or cracks, reducing risk of mite or lice infestations.
- Plastic has no sharp edges and does not splinter.

Q. Should I use bedding?

A. With a roll-out tray, you may have to initially use bedding. After the hens learn to lay in the box (with a tray), gradually remove the bedding.

When not using the roll-out tray, we prefer straw or hay—both stay in the box better than wood shavings.