

Getting hens to lay in a nest box

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.

(below) Placing a nest egg (sold at right) to encourage the hen to lay in the correct area.

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

- A.** Consider these changes:
- Try placing a ceramic or wooden nest egg in the box (*sold below*).
 - Place a comfortable amount of bedding in the nesting box. Remove after they start consistently laying in the box.
 - 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 boxes?

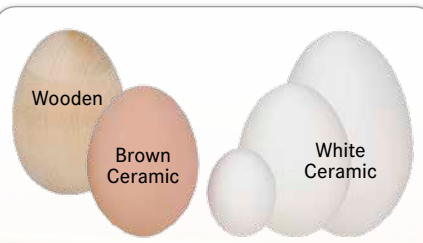
- A.** Place them in corners or dimly lit areas of the coop, but make sure both you and your birds have easy access to the nest. 2 ft high at the base of the nest is reachable for birds. Egg-stealing pests also have a harder time reaching this height.

Q. What material should I use?

- A.** We've sold or used plastic, metal and wood boxes over the years, with hundreds of chickens. Plastic is preferred because:
- Plastic does not rot.
 - Plastic is easier to clean.
 - Plastic lacks seams and cracks, reducing risk of mites or lice.
 - Plastic has no sharp edges and does not splinter.

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



Wooden Nest Egg
Discourages egg eating (hens can't break it). Wood.
Chicken Egg, 0.20 lb #530137

Brown Ceramic Nest Egg
Has look, weight and feel of a real egg—so much so that we advise marking these eggs before you put them in a nest. Kiln-fired brown ceramic.
Chicken Egg, 0.10 lb #530136

White Ceramic Nest Eggs
For geese (3"); chickens (2.25"); quail (1.25"). Kiln-fired ceramic.
Goose Egg, 0.15 lb #530147
Chicken Egg, 0.1 lb #530138
Quail Egg, 0.03 lb #530148

