



Keeping Backyard Chickens

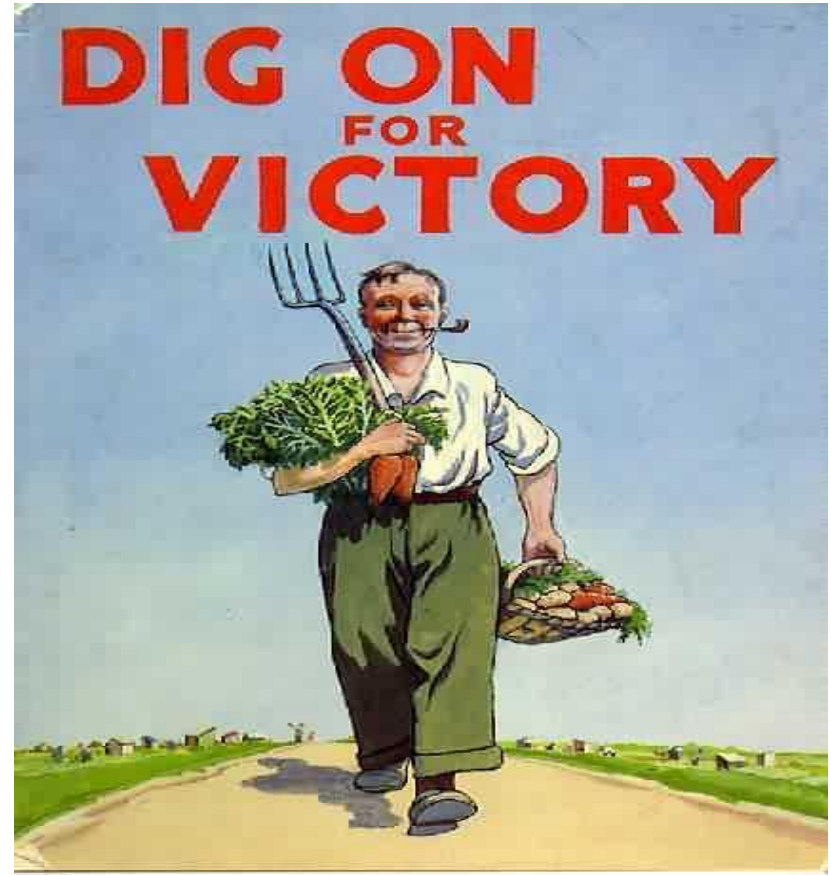
Brandon Merchant

- Owner of Southwest Victory Gardens
- Pima County Certified Master Gardener
- SmartScape Certified
- Former President of Tucson Organic Gardeners

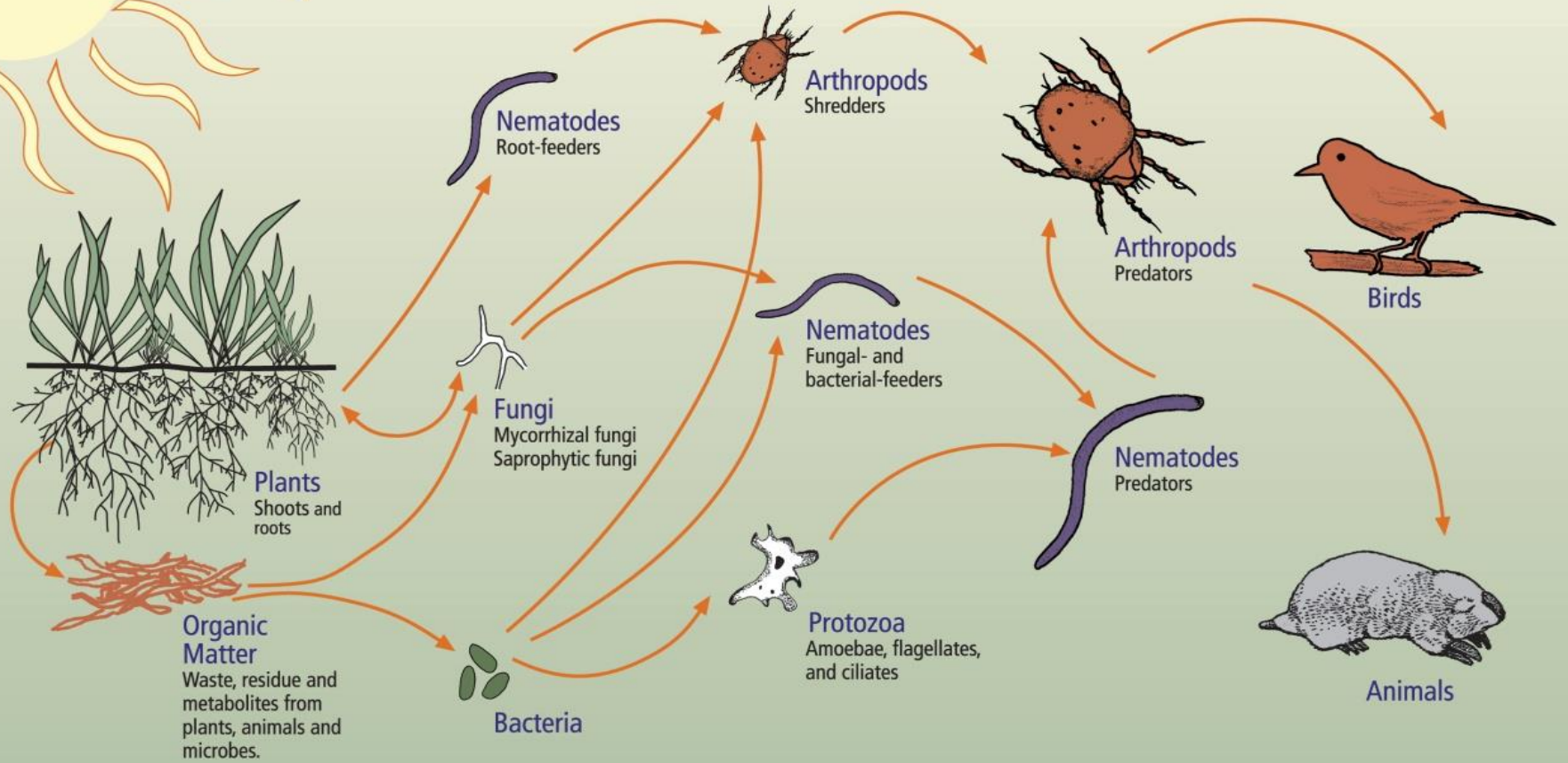


Our Philosophy

- Healthy soils encourage healthy plants
- Healthy plants require fewer pesticides and fertilizers (inputs)
- Garden with our climate not against it
- Reduce water usage
- Limit external inputs
- Encourage a natural ecosystem



The Soil Food Web



First trophic level:
Photosynthesizers

Second trophic level:
Decomposers
Mutualists
Pathogens, Parasites
Root-feeders

Third trophic level:
Shredders
Predators
Grazers

Fourth trophic level:
Higher level predators

Fifth and higher trophic levels:
Higher level predators

Why Raise Chickens?

- Eggs, meat, manure, and more!



Why Raise Chickens?



- “Poultry Predation” will keep insects and weeds to a minimum.

Why Raise Chickens?

- Chickens can be trained to make good pets and are an entertaining backyard amusement.



Why Raise Chickens?



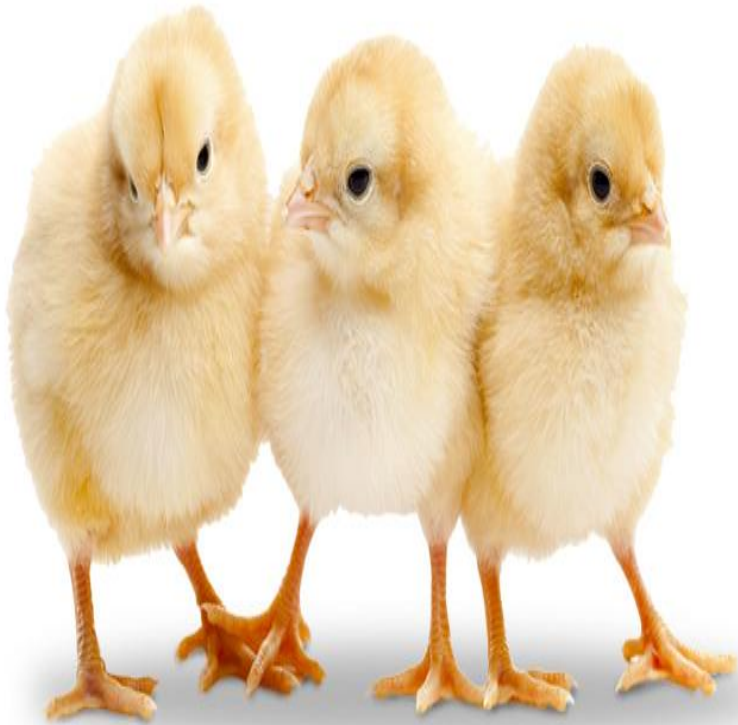
- Excellent Composters. They eat most food scraps and will turn over compost and soil.

Why Raise Chickens?

- Free Fertilizer. Dried chicken manure has an N-P-K value of 2-2-2.



Eggonomics



Baby Chicks – \$3-\$5 per chick for most breeds. Rare breeds significantly more.

Eggonomics

- Brooder, Feeder, Waterer – Free to \$100 for startup supplies.



Eggonomics



- Coop – Free to several thousand dollars. Durable, long-lasting coop can be built for \$400-\$700.

Eggonomics

- Feed – Average sized mature laying birds eat about 3 lbs. of feed each week. Meat birds average about 10-15 lbs. of food per bird over their lifespan. (6-15 weeks)



Ergonomics



- Miscellaneous – Chickens may require veterinary care, nutrient supplements, heating/cooling equipment, and coops can be embellished for aesthetic purposes.

Eggonomics

- Cost of eggs at Farmers Market - \$3-\$7 a dozen.



Keep 'Em Flying



You Can Raise Your Own Chickens

New! Assistance Programs for
The County System of Tennessee



Fowl Disposition

- Chickens are highly social animals. A minimum of 3 chicks per flock is required but more is better. At about 6 weeks your chicks will begin to establish a “pecking order”.



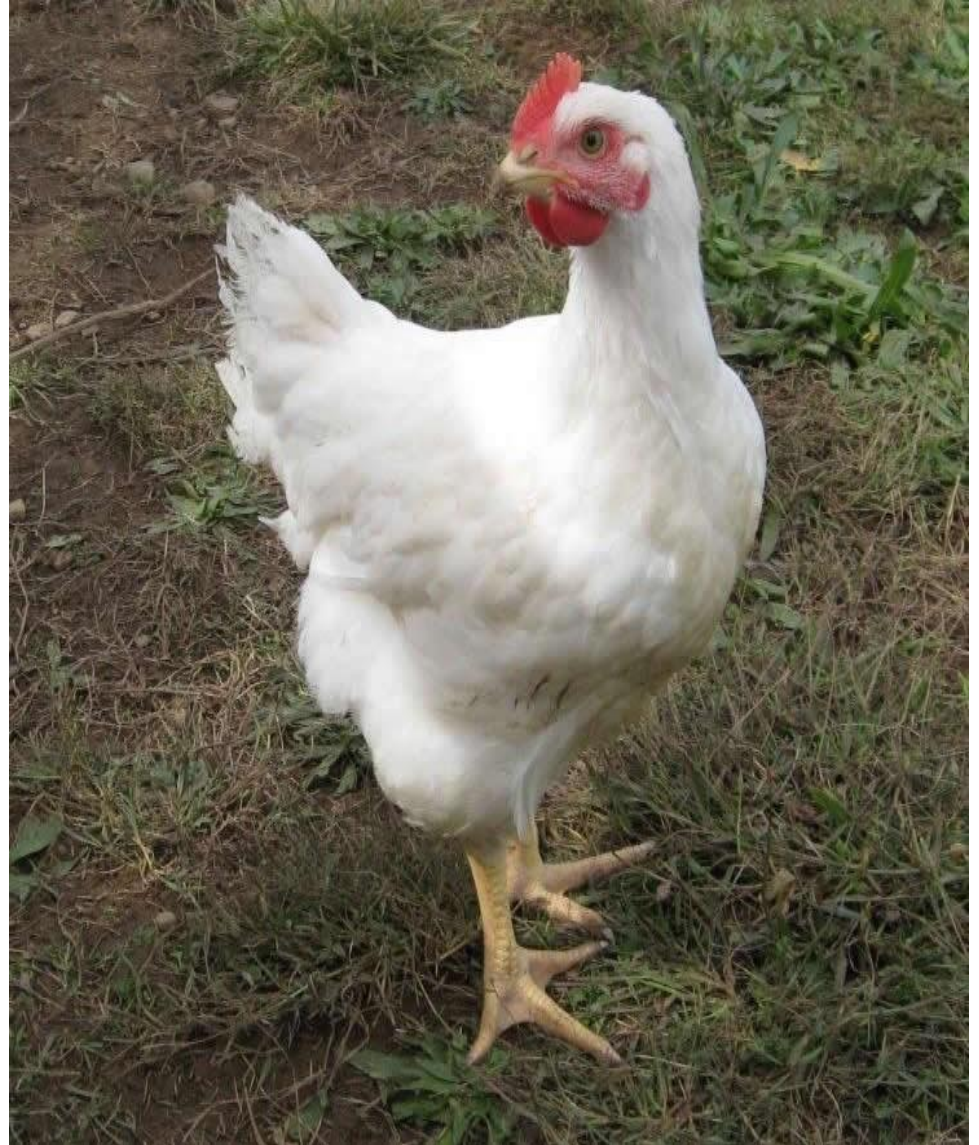
Fowl Disposition



- **Laying Breeds**
 - Smaller bodies, nervous and flighty.
 - Best layers will lay 250-280 eggs a year
 - Begin laying at 4-5 months
 - Less likely to nest
 - Leghorn, Ancona, Ameracuana, Catalana, Minorca

Fowl Disposition

- Meat Breeds
 - Grow rapidly
 - Harvested at 6-15 weeks
 - Broad breasted
 - Easier to clean
 - Cornish, Java, Orpington, Wyandotte



Fowl Disposition



- Dual purpose or *old fashioned* “utility” breeds
 - Plymouth Rock, Rhode Island Red, Hybrid Varieties

Fowl Disposition

- Noisy and Flighty Breeds



Fowl Disposition



- Docile and ornamental breeds
 - Cochin, Silke, Naked Neck, Polish Crested, Seabright, Buttercup

Fowl Disposition

- Aggressive Breeds



Fowl Disposition



- **Broody Breeds**
 - Maran, Orpington, RIR, Welsummer, Wyandotte

Shelter and Coop Design

- Spacious
- Well Ventilated
- Safe



MINIMUM SPACE REQUIREMENTS

		Open House		Confined Housing		Caged	
Birds	Age	sq ft/ Bird	Birds/ sq m	sq ft/ Bird	Birds/ sq m	sq ft/ Bird	Birds/ sq m
Heavy	1 day-1 week	—	—	0.5	20	<i>Do not house heavy breeds on wire.</i>	
	1-8 weeks	1.0	10	2.5	4		
	9-15* weeks	2.0	5	5.0	2		
	15-20 weeks	3.0	4	7.5	1.5		
	21 weeks and up	4.0	3	10.0	1		
Light	1 day-1 week	—	—	0.5	20	25	160
	1-11 weeks	1.0	10	2.5	4	45	290
	12-20 weeks	2.0	5	5.0	2	60	390
	21 weeks and up	3.0	3	7.5	1.5	75	480
Bantam	1 day-1 week	—	—	0.3	30	20	130
	1-11 weeks	0.6	15	1.5	7	40	260
	12-20 weeks	1.5	7	3.5	3	55	360
	21 weeks and up	2.0	5	5.0	2	70	450

*or age of slaughter





Gable Vents

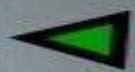


(above)

Hardware Cloth

Ventilation

Openings



2 x 4 Roosts



Communal

Nest

Entrances



Slide Out

Droppings

Board



Food For Thought



- Grit
- Grains
- Greens
- Grubs

Minimizing Heat Stress

- Choose Appropriate Breeds



Minimizing Heat Stress



- Choose Appropriate Breeds

Minimizing Heat Stress

- Increase Ventilation



Minimizing Heat Stress

- Add Watering Stations



Minimizing Heat Stress

- Change Feeding Routine



Resources

- Tucson Clucks
- Local Feed Store
- 22nd St. Ace Hardware
- Reading List
- Tucson Poultry Clubs
- Friends and Family





Thank you!

www.southwestvictorygardens.com/documents