

Save time and energy with the fenced chicken coop/garden

By John Silveira

My engineer father was not fond of wasting time or energy. He was always searching for a better, more efficient way to perform chores, especially chores that reoccurred often. Two re-occurring chores he enjoyed were gardening and raising chickens, and he decided that he could make both the gardening and the raising of a chicken flock even more

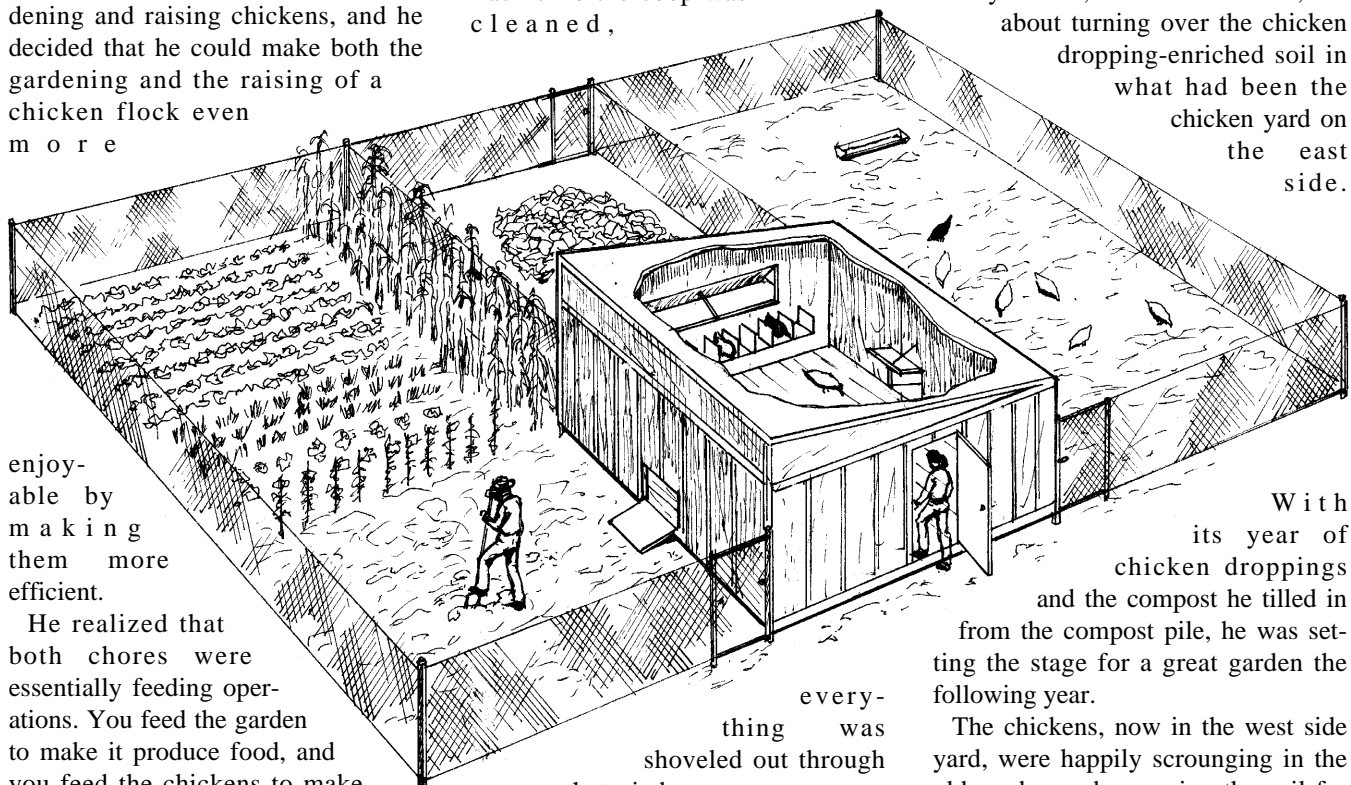
west side. Each door was for the chickens, and they led to separate fenced-in yards.

On the north side of the coop was a regular sized door for us. On the south side was a wide window with a hinged wooden cover. That window looked directly out onto a compost heap. Each time the coop was cleaned,

where he wanted them, he kept predators away from the chickens, pests out of the garden, the neighbors' dogs out of the compost, and they provided a lattice upon which his beans and other climbing plants could flourish.

In the fall, after that year's garden had been harvested, he closed the door on the east side of the coop and opened the west side. The chickens now had the run of the old garden with its remnants of the harvested plants as well as the plants that had gone to seed.

My father, in the meantime, set about turning over the chicken dropping-enriched soil in what had been the chicken yard on the east side.



enjoyable by making them more efficient.

He realized that both chores were essentially feeding operations. You feed the garden to make it produce food, and you feed the chickens to make them produce eggs and, well, more chickens. So he decided that the best way to make both more efficient was to combine them and let them help feed each other.

To achieve this he built his "self-fertilizing" chicken coop/garden. The idea was so simple that he probably wasn't the first person ever to have done it, but I've never seen another one like it.

What he did was build a chicken coop with two small access doors, one on the east side, and the other on the

everything was shoveled out through that window.

That first year the chickens had the run of the yard on the east side of the coop. He kept the access door on the west side closed, and in that yard he planted the family's vegetable garden.

By putting the yards on the east and west sides, he ensured both yards had maximum exposure to the sun. With the coop on the north side, he later told me, he minimized the shadow the chicken house cast over the garden.

Our access to each fenced yard was through a gate in the fence. With the fences, he not only kept the chickens

With its year of chicken droppings and the compost he tilled in from the compost pile, he was setting the stage for a great garden the following year.

The chickens, now in the west side yard, were happily scrounging in the old garden and preparing the soil for next year's garden. It was so efficient that he never found the need to improve upon it, and he kept that engineer efficient chicken coop/garden going for years. Δ

News Flash
In England, a vegetarian organization has declared the chicken to be an honorary vegetable.