

Chapter 1 : 12 Things You Should Know About Raising Ducks

Raising ducks is an amazing experience! They are cute and bring a lot of entertainment to the yard. However, ducks are unique creatures. A lot of people think raising ducks and chickens are one in the same.

If so, let me go ahead and encourage you to go for it. I absolutely love my ducks. They are probably the easiest birds we have. In my experience, they have been very resilient to illness, they have great temperaments, are fun to watch, great egg layers, and very low-maintenance. But before you dive into the idea, it is important to do your research. Today, I want to help you understand their nutritional needs. I also have a Mallard in the mix as well. The only drawback to ducks is that they eat a lot! You can just browse through the list and see what is easiest for you to grow or buy and pick what works best for you and your feathered friends. Bird Feed Yes, plain old bird seed will make your ducks happy as can be. But you can also buy chicken feed too. I would go with whichever is the most cost effective. But your ducks will eat scratch-grains or any other grains that you would feed your chickens. Ducks also love layer feed. If you have a female, feel free to give her that extra boost of protein. Cracked Corn I give my ducks whole kernel corn. But people say it is easier for them to digest if it is cracked. It is cheaper too. But it is your call. Whatever you are most comfortable feeding your ducks, please do. But corn cracked or whole is a food they really love. We cannot forget that ducks love bugs. They are not picky. You can bring them any kind of insect, night crawler, worm, or meal worm and they will be happy. The great thing about bugs is that you can actually raise them yourself and not have to pay for them. You can raise your own meal worms as we do right in your own living room. And you can raise your own red worms as well. So whichever worm strikes your fancy to raise, will save you money and your ducks will be thrilled to have. A special note, just be sure your ducks have lots of fresh water. Ducks are messy eaters so their water will require some attention. Your ducks need that fresh water to aid digestion of their food. So just be sure to check them twice daily and freshen their water each time and any time you choose in between. They will thank you for it. Another benefit of having ducks is you can allow them to scratch around in your garden, which will fertilize it, while they find grubs to eat. However, green snacks like weeds, kale, cut grass, etc. Your ducks love them, and they are great for them as well. Fruit Ducks love fruit. Watching them eat it is pretty comical as well. So any extras from your berry patches or orchards can be tossed their way. They will gladly accept it. Fruits such as berries, melons ducks love watermelon rind, seeded fruits, and pit fruits absolutely make their day. Watching a duck eat a strawberry will make your day too. So go ahead and toss them your left overs or items that are a little too ripe for you. It is a wonderful treat to them. Vegetables Your ducks will love your seconds from your garden or even if you just have too much of some things growing in your garden. We do that every year. That is where my ducks come in handy. So vegetables like cucumbers, peas, squash, zucchini, corn, kale, or broccoli your ducks will gladly take off of your hands. Whole Grains Ducks love grains. Ducks gain weight very easily I have that in common with them. So snacks like brown rice, quinoa, oats, and whole wheat bread will absolutely make their day. Protein food I already mentioned that bugs could and should be a part of their regular diet. However, snacks high in protein are a great option as well. When I was researching snacks high in protein for ducks I laughed when the most obvious answer flew up in front of my face—scrambled eggs. It seems kind of odd to feed scrambled eggs to an animal that lays eggs, but many people claim that their ducks love them. That is on the list of things to do tomorrow. Just scramble them up for your ducks. Food Supplements For Ducks Ducks are very simple animals for the most part. They eat a lot but love a variety of things to eat. So that makes feeding them easy enough. Grit If your ducks are anywhere that they have access to dirt then they probably will not need grit. They have a way of finding small pebbles in the dirt and eating them to help grind up their food. You will just need to throw a handful or two in their area once a week. This will ensure that their food will be digested as it should be. You can purchase your grit here or at your local farm supply store. Oyster Shell Okay, so you feed your ducks a well-rounded diet. Yet, their eggs are still coming out pitted or thin shelled. You will need to add some oyster shell to their diet to give them added calcium to strengthen their shells. It can be purchased here or at any local feed store, usually. A small handful of this added to their daily feed, and you will have some strong layers in

no time. If you decide to give snacks you need to be aware of this list. So please do not feed your ducks: This can cause thin-shelled eggs which are not good if you enjoy their eggs. Spinach Spinach is in the same boat as citrus fruit. It too interferes with their calcium absorption which in turn makes for thin shelled eggs. Iceberg lettuce If you feed them iceberg lettuce in small amounts it is okay. However, too much can give them diarrhea which throws their whole bodies off. So give this food with caution. So, unfortunately, all parts of these plants stems, leaves, and fruits are extremely toxic to ducks. Raw, Dried Beans If you want to give your ducks beans, be sure they are fresh or sprouted. If you try to feed them raw or dried beans, it is toxic to them. Just remember when feeding your ducks, it is better to be safe than sorry. So when in doubt do a little research. So when feeding your ducks, I think it is best to give them free choice so they can pick and choose what they want, when they want. Now, ducks are big eaters so I actually feed my 5 ducks through an automatic feeder for their corn. I also give them a 5-gallon bucket of weeds per day. And they are in a shaded, wooded area so they have lots of bugs to choose from on their own. Most people usually give their ducks 2 cups of food per duck about once or twice a day. Believe me, when they are hungry they will quack loudly to let you know. Now, here are the only two items you will really need in order to properly feed and water your ducks. Poultry Feeder This poultry feeder can be filled up and that way you can simply refill when empty. No worries about underfeeding your ducks then. It is also great because it is harder for the ducks to waste and make a mess with their food in this type of feeder. So it works well all the way around. Poultry Waterer You have multiple options for this. You can purchase a poultry waterer preferably the largest one they have because ducks drink a lot. Or you can also make a poultry waterer. Believe you me, if they can get into water, they will do it. So this will help keep their water a little cleaner which means less waste and extra work for you.

Chapter 2 : Hatching Ducks: Brooding Your Own Ducklings (Baby ducks) – calendrierdelascience.com

The Muscovy is a good big duck, the mature drake weighing 10 pounds and the duck 7 pounds, and they are a very hardy, self-reliant breed. The Indian Runners weigh only 4 to 2 pounds at maturity.

This trio of drake and two ducks produced 18 young ducks on their first hatchings. These ducklings are about six weeks old. Photo by Ed Robinson Coop and wire run suitable for hatching and brooding of ducklings with a hen. The bars keep hen confined, but let ducklings get sunlight and fresh air safe from dogs, cats, rats, etc. Top lifts up to allow cleaning, feeding, watering. Only while ducks are sitting on eggs is water for bathing really necessary. Here is cross section of pellet hopper used by commercial duck raisers. It can be made any size to hold from one to several hundred pounds of pellets, thus saving much labor. We got our trio of Muscovy ducks one day when a lady who lives near our Country Bookstore in Noroton, Conn. Knowing that we had a small farm, she thought we might like them. There is a good deal to be said for making ducks your second poultry project, particularly if you have any kind of small stream or pond on your place, although neither is necessary. One of the unusual things about ducks is that they are well adapted to either a small place or to large-scale commercial production. The trio that was given to us has produced over 25 ducklings in the first six months. Incidentally, Muscovy ducks are better eating, we think, than the ordinary Pekin variety that you get in the market. Anyway, ducks do furnish delicious variety for the table. Many people like duck eggs, too, especially for cooking. Ducks require relatively little care and are practically free of disease problems. They are efficient and economical meat producers, gaining weight rapidly even when allowed to forage for much of their food. You can keep a small flock of breeders the year around. You can buy day-old ducklings and brood them like baby chicks, but with less heat and care. Or you can buy duck eggs and hatch them out under hens. If you have a stream or pond, keep a small flock of breeders. You can raise ducks successfully without any water, but they like water to wash themselves in and it is said to be best if the eggs are moistened regularly during the setting. This moistening occurs naturally whenever the ducks return to the nest with wet feathers from bathing. For housing, almost any kind of shelter will do. A small coop with a door would be ideal, because if you want to gather eggs it is a good idea to keep ducks shut in until 9 or 10 a. Supply litter on floor for warmth and dryness. They may produce eggs the year around, heavily from early spring through July. The number of ducklings you let them hatch will be determined by how many eggs they lay and how many you take to eat. One drake for up to five or six ducks is a workable arrangement, but you will probably want to start with a "trio" of one drake and two ducks. A small flock will give you all the ducks that you want. Ducks of most breeds are ready to eat from the age of about 10 weeks on. The commercial raisers force their flocks to a peak of growth and fatness at about nine weeks and then market the whole flock at one time. After that age, the ducks will go into a moult and gain weight very slowly no matter how much they are fed. Your original trio of breeders may be kept for two or three years or even longer, but more probably you will select from your whole flock a new drake and new ducks for breeders every year or two. You will probably want to buy or "swap" in new blood occasionally. There are many breeds of ducks, but the three breeds most suitable for the home flock are probably the Pekin, the Muscovy and the Indian Runner. The Muscovy is the largest, the Pekin next. The Runner lays the most eggs. Neither the Pekin nor the Runner is a good "sitter," and you would probably have to hatch their eggs under hens. A wet mash is sometimes fed, but this is an extra "wrinkle. This is because of the peculiar nasal construction of ducks. They need to be able to get most of their bill in water when drinking. Buying Day-Old Ducklings You can get day-old ducklings through your feed dealer, from a neighbor who raises ducks, or by mail from people who advertise in farm journals. The season when they are easiest to get runs from April through July. By starting a dozen ducklings two or three times during the season, the first batch early in April, you can have a steady supply of eating ducks coming along from mid-June until late fall. And again, of course, if you have a quick freezer, you can have roast duck any day of the year you choose. One is that you obtain the broody hen at just the right time. You should also care for the hen faithfully during the period of incubation. Usually she will stay off only five minutes to eat and drink, then get back on the eggs herself. Dust her well with insect powder at the beginning. You must also be sure the eggs are

moistened sprinkled with water the last few days of the period. A hen can usually hatch only seven to nine duck eggs, because they are so much bigger than chicken eggs. I was wondering, are there buyers out there that will come buy your duck flocks? If so, who are these buyers and contact information? I have 3 muscovy ducks approx. She said the 3 were all girls sisters. Not raising them for food, just pets. They have been a source of entertainment since I aquired them; however, in the last week or so two of the ducks have been fighting actually one is picking on the other. One white duck is pecking at, jumping on, tormenting the other white duck. The dark colored duck is pretty much staying out of it. I feel bad for the poor duck that is being picked on. She hides in a corner all day. By the way, the 3 are also off their feed of mash and mid day meal of two hard boiled eggs, romaine lettuce and chopped tomato which they love. Never had them in the winter before even though here in Mexico our winter is still warm. Should I try to separate them? Thank you so much.

Chapter 3 : The Duck Song | Know Your Meme

Swimming your ducks too early can result in death from chill or even drowning from fatigue. Flight Most commercially grown ducks are too large to maintain flight and will stay around a good source of food, water and shelter.

All we want is our ducks eggs!! But patience is a virtue, right? This has been a weekly routine for the last few weeks. Although it will look like an Easter basket once the girls start laying. We have all different types of ducks so we will have colorful eggs. That is what farming is about right? Having fresh, nutritious, wholesome colorful eggs?!? Every single day I feel like I am a two year old stomping around the farm! I. That was a little exaggeration but it is exactly what is in my mind. In order to do this you will need to pick up your duck and turn her upside down. You will be able to feel the pelvic bones. Please note that no animals were harmed during the photo shoot- only Mountain Man- who was pooped on. This is Audrey our Cayuga. She is NOT laying. Pelvic bones are flexible and can fit 4 probably 5 fingers. There are other factors: Naturally, bigger breeds will have more space between their pelvic bones, so it is best to try to compare birds of the same breed or at least size. Naturally, everyone has different size hands. We have some ducks that are possibly laying!!! Happy checking your ducks to see if they are laying!

Chapter 4 : Feeding Ducks - What Do Ducks Eat and What NOT to Feed

As your ducklings become mature, adult ducks, you'll move them off of chick starter feed and start feeding your ducks grower chicken feedâ€”you probably won't be able to find duck feed. You can supplement this with grains as well as letting your ducks forage.

Contact Author So, you either found a baby duck or multiple baby ducks, or you bought one at a feed store and you need help. I personally found three abandoned ducklings in the middle of a busy intersection and I wanted to share with you how to successfully raise them to adulthood! Ducklings are very possessive. The first thing they see they believe it is their mother. If you are raising multiple ducklings with no mom they will bond together and nothing will tear them apart. If one of your ducklings gets left alone it will quack and peep for hours. If you are only raising one baby duck it will need human bond and become attached to its human handler. Keep in mind if you intend on keeping them as pets or releasing them back in the wild. When they are little ducklings need warmth! Especially, If you only have one. Any heat lamp or lamp will do! Any storage box will do to house your babies until they are older. You can use cardboard boxes too, but they might get wet, you will have to line the bottom of a cardboard box with a thick layer of newspaper. Any container that will house your baby ducklings will need to be lined. Ducks are the messiest animals I have ever had, they poop everywhere all the time! Also, during feeding times, food gets everywhere, make sure you have time to clean up. Ducklings have the biggest appetite in the world. It is quit easy to make homemade duck food or you can buy cornmeal or duck starter meal. Corn meal can be found at any grocery store, but duckling food can only be found in tack stores. Make sure not to buy adult waterfowl food for your baby ducklings because it is filled with medicine. Since, baby ducks have such big appetites it is very easy for them to overdose on any adult bird food. Baby ducklings need a variety of greens and protein in their diet, but it all needs to either be finely chopped or all ground up in a blender. Here are several homemade meals I made my baby ducks on a regular basis. I would blend a little bit of cat or dog food in a blender with and vegetables, romanian lettuce, spinach, brussel sprouts, cabbage, celery, carrots, broccoli and more. Also, you may include fruit, but not too much because it might increase their droppings and is high in sugar. Some fruits to blend into a mixture are grapes, strawberries, apples, bananas, peaches, tomatoes, pears, and more. You could also add eggs for protein. For breakfast lunch and dinner, I would open my fridge and grab any of the above ingredients and throw them all into a blender and feed it to my ducklings. Some meals I would focus more on their veggies and greens and other times on their proteins, and sometimes just blended some apples for a little snack. Duckling starter meal is mainly filled with cereals and corn which is not as healthy as making them homemade meals. It might take a little longer, but in the end it leaves to happier ducklings. Ducklings love water, make sure to keep their water bowls shallow and sturdy. Your ducklings will jump in it every chance they can, and might even get their poop in it. Wet ducklings can lead them to get very cold. Ducklings need water to swallow their food. You MUST provide them water when they are eating. Ducklings can swim at day one. You must supervise them when they are swimming, Fill a small tub with lukewarm water, and you can supervise your ducklings swim. When they are young do not let them swim for to long because their body will get to chilled. After they are done with their swim, make sure to dry them off. Once they get older you can let them swim in an inflatable pool. Once your ducklings get to a couple weeks old you can lets them run free in your backyard. I made my three ducklings an enclosed are in my backyard where they can run free and pick at things on the grand. In the enclosed space I also included a tub that they can drink from and jump into. They also loved to be sprayed with a house. Do not leave your ducklings outside non supervised until they are about a month old. I ended up releasing my ducks into a local lake at three months old. I do not advise you keeping your ducks unless you have a large property for them to roam and a lake. They are very messy animals, and the best place for them would be to live in a lake with other ducks. They adapt very well, so you do not have to worry about them not surviving once you release them back to the wild. Baby ducks are survivors! It looked like he got hit by a car ,or got stuck in a tire. Once I got the 3 of them home, the injured one really picked up energy and turned out to be fine. Probably, he was just a little scared, maybe ran under a car. Remember, these

guys are survivors! Make sure to take lots of pictures of them! They grow so fast! If you have any other questions about raising ducklings comment me below! I would be happy to get back to you. It is not meant to substitute for diagnosis, prognosis, treatment, prescription, or formal and individualized advice from a veterinary medical professional. Animals exhibiting signs and symptoms of distress should be seen by a veterinarian immediately.

Chapter 5 : How to Breed Ducks (with Pictures) - wikiHow

Once your ducks reach laying age (generally around 6 months), crushed oyster shell or eggshell should be provided in a separate container free-choice so each duck can eat what she needs for strong eggshells.

Somerville, AL Okay, here goes. These are some basics on raising ducklings. This is not meant to provide emergency care only very basic information. Be prepared and have everything set up prior to the arrival of the ducklings. Brooder Something as simple as a cardboard box may be used as a brooder. Plastic totes, bathtubs, and wooden boxes can also be used. You can line the bottom of the brooder with plastic sheeting if brooding indoors this will help with cleanup. Put down a layer of bedding several inches thick. Pine shavings or straw are good and readily available. You can add pine pellet horse stall bedding to help with wet spots. Avoid slick material like newspaper. Paper towels can be placed over the bedding for the first few days. Watch the ducklings to ensure they are not eating bedding materials. Wet spots should be removed and bedding replaced every day. If using shavings, avoid adding large amounts while the ducklings are in the brooder as shavings are very dusty. Cedar shavings should be avoided as they can give off fumes due to the heat lamp. Once the temperature in the brooder is the same as the environment inside or outside the heat source can be removed. A thermometer is a great investment for someone new to brooding. The heat lamp should be placed so that the ducklings can get away from the heat if needed. Overheating is just as dangerous as chilling for ducklings. Feeders and waterers should be placed at the perimeter of the heat source. Ducklings may not go to eat and drink if the area is too hot or too cold. Water Ducklings need to have constant access to water whenever feed is available. They need to be able to wash their eyes and nares nostrils to remove dust or debris. A chick waterer can be used for the first week or so but they will quickly outgrow it. Adding large marbles to the base of the waterer will help to keep the babies out of the water. A non-spill waterer can be easily and cheaply made. A gallon milk jug or shallow food storage container can be used. Simply cut a hole at the height of the ducklings back that is large enough for them to fit just their entire head in. These will need to be replaced on a weekly basis as the ducklings outgrow them. A platform can be fashioned out of a container covered in hardware cloth so the splashing of the waterer is contained there. Place the waterer in the brooder in advance so that the water is room temperature. When the ducklings arrive, dip each of their beaks in the water and ensure that they swallow. Ducklings should not be allowed to get and stay wet. Extreme care should be taken in allowing them to swim when young. Ducklings easily tire and can drown even in a small amount of water. A thorough drying is needed if they get wet. Pic of homemade waterer <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/16-oz-container-waterer/>: Size of container, height and hole size will change based on duckling age. This is a 16 oz container and would okay for a few ducklings that are under 2 weeks. However, many of our members think that 2 weeks is too young to reduce the time that food and water are available, and recommend waiting till 6 to 8 weeks. This can be in a crumble form or a mash. Mash should be wet to make it easier to eat. If mash is used, it must be replaced several times a day to prevent spoilage. Care should be taken when feeding a higher protein level feed as physical damage can result. For many people, duck specific feed is not available. Layer feed should NEVER be given to growing ducklings as the calcium level is too high and can result in damage or death. An ideal protein feeding schedule is given in the table below. Again, this is not always a possibility for many people.

Chapter 6 : BackYard Chickens

Hatching duck eggs and brooding baby ducks, called ducklings, is a great way to start your own duck-raising adventure. When raising baby ducks, you can choose Read More Raising Ducks: The Care, Feeding and Raising of Baby Ducks.

Supplies The Basics of Raising Ducks at Home While poultryOne focuses primarily on teaching people how to raise chickens, raising ducks is a very popular component of the poultry hobby. Lately, the popularity of raising ducks has been on the rise. The University of Minnesota says that people raise more than 22 million ducks every year! People raise ducks for many different reasons. Sometimes, they just want a bit of variety in their backyard from the common chicken. Ducks are great conversation starter! Most times, people choose to raise ducks for meat or for eggs. Choosing a duck breed One of the most popular duck breeds is called the Pekin. When people think about raising ducks, they often envision this white duck as the stereotype. However, there are other duck breeds that you can choose from. While Pekins make good layers, the Rouen duck breed is also popular. If you want a self sufficient duck breed, the Muscovy duck does well on pasture. Other duck breeds include ornamental breeds like Wood Ducks or Mandarin ducks; the choice is yours! For more information about breeding duck breeds , visit DuckHobby. Many people choose to start raising ducks by incubating and brooding their own duck eggs and ducklings. You can choose to either have a broody chicken hatch your duck eggs, or you can use an incubator. If you choose artificial incubation, we recommend an incubator that turns the duck eggs automatically. If you choose to have a chicken incubate your eggs, hens make great mothers! One good breed of chicken to consider to hatch your ducks is called the Silkie. Duck eggs take a week longer than chicken eggs to hatch about days. Some duck breeds, such as the Muscovy duck, take longer and begin hatching at about 35 days. The Government of British Columbia in Canada says the following about incubating duck eggs: During incubation the eggs should be turned at least three times daily. Mallard ducks hatch in about Duck eggs are placed in the incubator large end up. The duck brooder should be dry with a soft litter. We recommend corncob litter or wood shavings. To keep your ducklings warm, the brooder should have a watt heat lamp. The lamp should keep the temperature in the brooder at about 90 degrees Fahrenheit. This temperature should be decreased by 5 degrees every week. You can feed your newly-hatched ducklings chick feed. Chick feed is high in protein which will help your baby ducks grow. As your ducklings get older, you can switch the duck feed to grower chicken feed. As for water, you can use a regular poultry waterer as long as the ducklings can submerge their entire beak and head into it. Remember, ducks are waterfowl and need lots of fresh, clean water to be healthy. It is not necessary to give your ducklings a pond or pool to swim in, but they do need deep waterers so they can get their heads wet. This holds true as they become adult ducks. Housing your ducks When raising chickens in a chicken coop, you need to make sure they have adequate space. Ducks need a lot of space, too. This requirement will rise as they get older. Here is a chart that compares the space requirements of ducks with other poultry breeds:

Chapter 7 : A Quick Guide to Raising Ducks | MOTHER EARTH NEWS

Please I want to carry out survey on duck farming about the problem and prospect of duck farming so I want you to help me out in getting up to respondents i.e duck farmers engaging in commercial duck rearing.

After Hatching Hatching, Rearing, and Care of Young Poultry For the small poultry keeper there is the choice of two methods of hatching chicks - natural or artificial. The best idea is to gain experience and confidence in both. Hen eggs take 21 days to hatch, duck and turkey eggs 28 days, most goose eggs 28 - 30 days and Muscovy eggs 35 days. Some very small bantam eggs may be a day early and really large poultry such as Cochins may be a day extra. Natural hatching Natural hatching under a broody hen is the ideal way to raise a few chicks. It is however essentially dependent on having a broody hen at the same time as the eggs you want to set. Silkie crosses make the best broodies; either Silkie x Wyandotte or Silkie x Sussex. A small pen of those can be bred alongside the purebreds. Alternatively they may be purchased around the neighbourhood, although this is less likely than it used to be. The Golden Rules of natural hatching are: Nowadays wooden sitting boxes have given way to disposable cardboard cartons for hygiene reasons, but make sure they are in a foxproof area, in a quiet spot away from other stock. The individual broody boxes should be about 16" 40cm square and lined with short straw or woodshavings hay produces harmful moulds, dusted with a pyrethrum based insecticide and have good ventilation. The broody hen is best taken to the broody box in the dark to keep her sitting and left for a day or so on just a few unimportant eggs to ensure she is still serious. When she has proved herself steady, put the eggs you want to hatch under her very gently, preferably at night, removing the others. If you want to set more than one broody at a time, make sure either that you set the eggs the same day so they all hatch together, or keep the broodies out of sight and sound of each other as the noise of the cheeping will make the other broody get off her eggs if hers are not cheeping. The broody should be taken off the nest once each day to feed, drink and defecate. Roughly the same time each day makes for a quieter bird as she is a creature of habit and may get restless if her regular time has passed. The hen should not be disturbed after the 18th day for chicken eggs and feed and water should be left within her reach but out of the reach of chicks. Try not to disturb her while the hatch is on, tempting though it is to see how many have hatched, as she needs to bond with her chicks and turn her sitting instinct into the more aggressive protective maternal instinct. Put a water container that the chicks cannot drown in pebbles in a shallow dish work well next to the nest so that any early chicks can drink. The yolk sac inside their bodies will sustain them for up to 48 hours, but provide chick crumbs anyway - see Rearing. Artificial hatching This is the use of an incubator to hatch eggs. Small incubators are in regular use with many poultry keepers, the advantage being that incubation conditions are instantly available at the flick of a switch. It saves extra space or pens for broodies and takes little electricity to run. Any dirt on the eggs can be scraped off with a dry potscraper, the ideal being to have clean eggs in the first place. If the eggs do have to be washed use water warmer than they are to ensure the membrane under the shell expands keeping bacteria out cold water makes it shrink, drawing bacteria in plus an approved poultry disinfectant such as Virkon. The same disinfectant can be used with safety to clean out incubators after a hatch. This is most important for the success of future hatches. It seems to be a common misconception that in the UK water needs adding during the incubation process. Fertile eggs which do not hatch are frequently sticky inside as the incubation time has been too humid. Try and site the incubator in a place which does not vary much in average temperature. During the incubation process the eggs must be turned in order for the embryo to develop normally the hen does this naturally. If turning by hand do so at least twice a day and turn the eggs end-over-end so that the chalazae strings which hold the yolk stable do not wind up, potentially damaging the embryo. If the incubator is an automatic turning one, turn off the mechanism 2 days before they are due to hatch, or stop turning them by hand at this time. A little hot water can be added when the eggs start to pip the diamond-shaped start of the shell breaking to keep the membrane moist. The chick pecks its way out of the broad end of the egg by means of the egg tooth which is on the end of its top beak. The egg tooth falls off soon after hatching. Chicks may take two days to hatch or they may all hatch at once. The latter is better, but not always possible. Most small incubators have a window in so that you

do not have to take off the top to see inside. It is better to fill or part fill an incubator, hatch the eggs, clean it out and start again, unless you can set a few eggs each week, transferring those on the 18th day to a separate hatcher which then gets cleaned out each week or after each hatch. This avoids the build-up of harmful bacteria which can adversely affect the hatch. This involves holding a bright torch to the broad end of each egg in a darkened room. If the egg is infertile you will be able to see just the shadow of the yoke. Rotate the egg slightly to make this move within it. If fertile, a spider shape of blood vessels will be seen on one side with the heart beating in the middle. If there is a ring of blood vessels with none in the centre the germ has died. The infertile eggs can be removed and fresh ones added if you are going to use a separate hatcher. Using just one incubator to set and hatch with eggs of different incubation ages is courting disaster as the humidity then becomes wrong for younger eggs if you add water for the hatching ones. Also, hatching eggs produce a huge amount of bacteria, so can infect younger embryos through the porous shell. If you candle the eggs at fourteen days and the embryo is growing as it should, the air sac should have a sharp distinction from the darker remainder of the egg. If only a small dark area can be seen the germ has most likely died and the border between that and the air sac is fuzzy. The air sac gradually gets larger as hatching date approaches and sometimes the chick can be seen bobbing away from the candling light. Rearing - day old to weeks With modern equipment rearing chickens is a relatively easy process for the small poultry keeper to master. If you have a broody hen to do it for you, then all you will need to do is to provide her with chick crumbs, water and shelter against wind, rain, and sun, preferably with a wired over run to start with so that magpies and crows cannot take the chicks. Chick crumbs need to be in a container which she can neither tip over nor scratch out. Water needs to be in a container that the chicks cannot drown in. Put some grain feed for the hen out of reach of the chicks. She may break the grain into small pieces for them. Incubated chicks need a heat lamp to keep them warm, preferably one with a ceramic bulb so that they have heat and not light. This avoids feather pecking as they have natural light and darkness. Some of the lighter or more nervous breeds certainly do better with some hours of darkness. You can also use a large rectangular cardboard box. It needs to be rectangular so that the lamp is at one end and the chicks can regulate their own temperature. Turn the heat lamp on two days before the chicks are due to hatch. If the chicks are too hot they will scatter to the edges, panting. If they are too cold they will huddle in the middle, cheeping loudly. The ideal is to have a small empty circle just under the lamp. Transfer the chicks from the incubator when they have dried and fluffed up. Dip their beaks in the, again, drown-proof water and place them under the lamp. Rearing - 8 weeks onwards People argue when and sometimes if at all chicks should be given perches. As long as the perches are at least 2" 5cm wide there should not be a problem of bent breastbones from perches which are too narrow, and certainly the lighter breeds like perches. A rearing house needs to be large enough so that all the chicks can shelter in it if the weather is bad, plus space for a feeder and drinker. If an adult house is being used, block off the nestboxes with cardboard, as roosting in a nestbox is a habit almost impossible to break later, leading to dirty and partly incubated eggs. Young stock should be kept under observation the whole of their development period. Those with obvious physical defects should be removed. This will mean cleaner houses and more room and for the others to develop satisfactorily. Take precautions by putting cardboard to round off corners when moving stock to new houses so that they do not huddle in corners and smother. Continue to feed best quality rations - see Feeding. Sexing When chick feathers start to drop between 10 and 12 weeks, new, sharply pointed and shiny male plumage will be noticed on the backs of the males. [Click here for diagram](#). Time now to separate the sexes with the cockerels removed to a house of their own. Breeds vary, but it is also possible to distinguish the sexes by headpoints, the cockerels being redder and their heads bigger and bolder than those of the pullets. Again, the legs and feet of males are larger. The plumage method is the most accurate as birds develop at different rates, except for Silkies, where a wait of at least 14 weeks will be necessary in order to determine from comb development which are which. At about five months old it is possible to grade young stock for colour and markings and other breed characteristics. Feeding It is suggested that only balanced feeds from reputable sources are used. Feeding scraps tends to upset the balanced ration which has been proven over many years. This chemical helps to control coccidiosis and build up an immunity to the parasite. Turkey starter crumbs have a higher percentage of protein and are beneficial for the larger breeds. Crumbs should be

fed ad lib in a container with a series of small openings or a swivel top to avoid waste. There should be enough trough space for most chicks to feed at one time to avoid bullying. This can be fed either as pellets or meal. The meal can be fed dry but may be wasteful and also sticks to the beak and as a consequence quickly fouling the water or as a wet mash. When mixed as a wet mash it should have enough water added so that when pressed in the hand and then released it should crumble away. Pellets and dry meal can be fed via ad lib hoppers, but wet mash must always be freshly mixed as it quickly goes rancid. Water and flint grit should be available at all times from hatching onward. Flint grit is needed to assist the gizzard in grinding up the food, especially hard grain. From four weeks before laying commences, oyster shell or limestone grit should be provided to help the formation of egg shells.

Chapter 8 : Duck Farming | Modern Farming Methods

Information on raising ducks for either meat, eggs or just as backyard pets. Know what duck breeds will suit your needs, how to feed, house and take care of your duck. People keep ducks for different reasons.

Both of these books are considerably helpful for beginning duck hobbyists. **Hatching Fertile Duck Eggs:** You will need both fertile duck eggs and an incubator for the duck eggs. A chicken egg incubator is sufficient for hatching ducks. Most duck eggs take 28 days to hatch 7 days longer than hatching chicken eggs. Set the egg incubator to Check the level of humidity in the egg incubator: Some people choose to brood ducklings using a broody chicken hen. Other backyard duck hobbyists like to use a chick brooder to brood their ducklings. Both of these brooding option have their pros and cons. You can use a large cardboard box or a sectioned off piece of a room. To keep your ducklings warm in the duck brooder, you can use a commercial brooder heater or a watt brooder lamp. Such a setup should be sufficient to brood up to 25 ducklings. You can also use a commercial hover brooder used for brooding chicks. It should be noted that, because ducklings are larger than baby chickens, such a brooder setup can only fit around half of the amount of chicks. Your new ducklings need about six square inches of brooder space, which should be increased to 12 square inches of space as they get older. Adjust accordingly as the ducklings mature into adolescent and adult ducks. Ducklings need to be bred for about six weeks after the duck eggs have hatched. The amount of time needed in a brooder is shorter during warmer months, such as June and July. How do you feed ducklings? Baby ducks eat a lot as they grow! While brooding your ducklings, feed them unmedicated chick started for the three week. After that, move your baby ducks to a poultry grower feed. The chicken feed you feed your ducklings should be unmedicated and formulated for ducks. Water should be available for your ducklings at all times after hatchingâ€”they are, after all, waterfowl!

Chapter 9 : calendrierdelascience.com – Beginner's Guide to Raising Backyard Ducks

How to Raise Ducks. In this Article: Hatching Duck Eggs Caring for Ducklings Caring for Ducks Reasons for Raising Ducks Community Q&A Once you decide to raise ducks, you need to be dedicated to their care and well being, and the task is not necessarily a simple one.

Know what duck breeds will suit your needs, how to feed, house and take care of your duck. People keep ducks for different reasons. Some keep ducks for breeding, others keep ducks for the meat or duck eggs, or both. Others may keep ducks to keep down the fly population on a farm that has livestock, and others may not even know why they are keeping ducks, except for the pleasure they bring to the family and their farms. Keeping a duck is like any farm animal, you have to give thought to where they will be housed, their safety from predators during the day, swimming facilities, food and health, and any offspring that might come about during their duration. Ducks live for a number of years, but of course that can differ from species to species and whether they live in captivity or in the wild. On average, however, a duck will live around 15 years. A Pekin duck will live years, a Mallard years and Muscovy ducks years. How long do duck eggs take to hatch? For most ducks, your eggs will take 4 weeks to hatch. This is the time where ducks appreciate water where they can frolic in, as the moisture from their feathers seems to be important for egg setting. If you are keeping Muscovies, Muscovy ducks take 5 weeks to hatch. What do baby ducks eat? Ducklings, or baby ducks should be fed a commercial duck starter which should be pelleted rather than given as a mash. They can also be given fruit and vegetable scraps but these must be cut up really small for the ducklings. They also enjoy insects and worms. Do not feed them onions, rice, whole grain, dry bread or wild or caged bird seed. What is a group of ducks called? If ducks are on the water they are known as a raft, a paddling or a bunch of ducks. If ducks are in flight they are known as a brace, a team, a bed, a flight or a flock of ducks. You can also get a badling of ducks. Ultimately, your choice when raising ducks, will come back to the question you should be asking yourself, right from the start; "Why do I want to keep ducks? When and Where to get your day-old Ducklings Ducklings are easily sourced through a neighboring farm, breeder or your local feed dealer. The best time to get your ducklings in would be from April through to July. If you want to raise ducks for meat then you would need to decide on the number of ducklings you will need to buy for your operation. But on a small-scale, getting in 1 dozen ducklings 3 times a season you could start eating duck from mid-June through to late fall. Ducklings are hardy to raise, and need 3 weeks of artificial heat before you can put them to pasture. However, due to the large size of the duck eggs a chicken can only comfortably sit on duck eggs. You will need to make sure that the eggs are sprinkled with water regularly, especially towards the last few days. They lay around eggs a year but produce more heavily during spring and summer. Some will say that the Campbell Khaki duck is the better layer, but they are probably even in egg production. The Campbell is a placid bird with fair mothering instinct, whereas the Indian Runners are a little nervous but make excellent mothers. Duck Breeds for Meat If you are raising ducks as meat birds Aylesburys, Pekins , Rouens and Duclairs make good table birds weighing in at kg for an adult Aylesbury drake. However, neither Pekins or Runners make good sitters, and you are probably better off with Muscovy ducks or Aylesburys, my personal favorites, as they are good dual purpose birds. Muscovy drakes will weigh 4. However, they are a bit flighty, so it is prudent to clip one of the wings regularly. Just remember to keep the right ratio of ducks to drakes if you are breeding ducks. One drake to 2 ducks to start with or one drake for every 5 or 6 ducks will keep him happy. If you do keep ducks for meat, make sure that you like duck! Even 1 duck can hatch 25 - 30 ducklings in a season, as they hatch ducklings twice a year. If it is your aim to raise ducks for meat then you will be provided with tasty duck meat from spring until late fall. You can start slaughtering your ducks after week 9 or Usually but week 10 they are fat enough, but you will need to determine this by examining your ducks carefully. However, something else to consider here is that at about this time your ducks will start to moult. If you are allowing your ducks just to forage for food without any additional feeding your ducks will take a lot longer than 9 or 10 weeks to gain weight for slaughter. Duck Breeds for Eggs and Meat If on the other hand, you are raising ducks for both meat and eggs, the dual-purpose Aylesburys win hands down, producing about eggs a year and have the advantage

of having a placid nature too. If space is a premium then you should be looking at smaller breeds like Elizabeth ducks, or the Black East Indian Ducks. There are also bantam ducks now, the Silver Appleyard is one such example, as is the Miniature Crested duck. They are also best bought as pairs as single pet females often fly in spring to find a mate. It is wiser to buy them as ducklings. As they grow up in familiar surroundings they are less likely to fly away as adults. However, if you can put up with that, the advantages of having them there in your veggie patch eating cutworms, caterpillars, slugs and snails far outweighs the slight damage to your vegetables by having them there. In addition, they will be leaving behind their manure which is high in nutrients and nitrogen which will go back into the soil. Ducks will also have a go at eating any fallen fruit in your orchard and this is a good thing too, because any fruit flies that may think of laying eggs will soon be preyed upon by your resident ducks. You may also like to supplement their diet with chopped tomatoes, hard-boiled eggs and earthworms. However, foraging for food is not enough for a duck if you want it to be a good layer, and to be a fat bird for your table. You will need to feed your birds twice a day; early morning and late afternoon. Give each adult bird g of a good grain mix. This can consist of corn, wheat, barley and flaked oats. All will be warmly welcomed by your ducks. From time to time add cut up spinach and leafy greens to their diet if they are not getting that already from your veggie patch. Stale bread can also be given as a treat from time to time. So raising ducks successfully means that you will have to give them access to a small pond or the like. Make sure that they have enough water to swim and play in, and where possible it should be cleaned out once a week and filled up again with clean water. Sinking an old plastic clam sandpit that your children have out grown is one way of recycling and providing water for a couple of ducks. However, any pond built for your ducks must be constructed in such a way that all ducks and ducklings can get out easily. Therefore slanting the clam sandpit slightly allows for the ducks to get out safely. If ducks are unable to get out of the pond that you have created, they will tire themselves in trying to get out, and will in fact drown. Drinking water for ducks must be provided at all times, and kept clean. Ducks like to put their whole bills into the water to drink, and therefore the water needs to be at least 4 inches deep for adult ducks and at least 12 inches across. This means that any fencing should be high enough to prevent a fox from jumping over or even climbing over - yes foxes can climb fences! And the fence should be buried at least cm below the soil line to prevent him from digging his way into the duck pen. The duck house should be sturdy, well-ventilated but not draughty. It should be water-tight and the opening should be facing away from the prevailing weather. Litter should be placed on the floor and removed once a month and included in your compost heap. Nesting boxes can be placed whereby they can be opened from the outside, which is very convenient for those collecting the eggs. Unlike chickens, your ducks do not need perches. The crystals line the gut of the duck preventing any parasites from sticking to it. Another excellent additive is a capful or two of cider vinegar. However, if you are adding cider vinegar to the water, make sure that the water is in a plastic container, and not a metal one, as the vinegar will cause the metal container to leach. A small amount of garlic given to your ducks from time to time is also a preventative against worms and parasites. Your birds should be housed in sanitary conditions that are well-ventilated but not draughty. They must be released from their duck house every day. These should be cleaned weekly. Like all birds they can also be susceptible to mites and worms, and should be treated for these accordingly. Any serious illness should be attended to by your local vet. They eat the snails, slugs and other nasty bugs in your veggie garden without destroying your greens. In addition, they provide great farmyard manure to enrich your soil. Depending on the breed, you will be provided with a clutch of duck eggs on a regular basis, and a bird or two will grace your dinner table from time to time. The humble duck is a very worthwhile farm animal indeed!