Transcript: The EASIEST Way to Build a Chicken Coop with Automatic Food and Water

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**[00:00:02]** [Music]

**[00:00:26]** hey everybody welcome back to another

**[00:00:27]** Nature's always right video today is

**[00:00:30]** very exciting day we're going to check

**[00:00:31]** out my chicken Co finally I'll be

**[00:00:33]** showing you guys all the different

**[00:00:35]** features that make it work all the

**[00:00:36]** automatic systems that make it very easy

**[00:00:39]** and low maintenance to raise chickens

**[00:00:42]** and everything involved in the design of

**[00:00:44]** my Coupe so I designed and built this

**[00:00:45]** Coupe about 2 years ago now and it's

**[00:00:47]** been in use ever since then and I've had

**[00:00:50]** anywhere from 15 to 20 chickens in this

**[00:00:53]** CP uh this Coupe is 12 ft wide by 20 ft

**[00:00:59]** long um almost 250 square ft um on the

**[00:01:03]** bottom floor here they also have this

**[00:01:05]** outer run out here that I used for them

**[00:01:08]** I'm actually going to be changing that

**[00:01:09]** soon um but I had a little outer run you

**[00:01:12]** may have seen it in some of my older

**[00:01:13]** videos when I had some beer netting that

**[00:01:15]** was running and that was at my actual

**[00:01:17]** fence but you know now with the market G

**[00:01:19]** Garden running so well I can't have the

**[00:01:22]** chickens escaping anymore and I actually

**[00:01:24]** got approved by my landlords to build a

**[00:01:26]** couple more beds here so I developed

**[00:01:29]** this coupe with efficiency in mind and

**[00:01:32]** not wanting to have to do a lot of work

**[00:01:35]** for my chickens I've been raising

**[00:01:36]** chickens for a little over 3 years I've

**[00:01:39]** used different types of coups seen

**[00:01:41]** different coups online you know

**[00:01:43]** researched other designs from a lot of

**[00:01:45]** different people and basically I kind of

**[00:01:47]** just piece together the best from all

**[00:01:49]** the different coups that I've seen

**[00:01:51]** integrated it in with a lot of my

**[00:01:53]** natural design techniques

**[00:01:55]** permaculture and what I need to have

**[00:01:57]** happen here on the farm making soil

**[00:02:00]** recycling all of my waste so let's go

**[00:02:02]** check out some of the features that make

**[00:02:03]** this Coupe solo maintenance and easy and

**[00:02:07]** I've got videos all about how to make

**[00:02:09]** each one of these systems so that you

**[00:02:11]** guys can do it for yourself as well so

**[00:02:13]** probably one of the first things you

**[00:02:14]** noticed on my Coupe is these large tubes

**[00:02:16]** here and these are actually filled with

**[00:02:19]** food I have a video about how to build

**[00:02:20]** these for your chickens there's a few

**[00:02:22]** different types of automatic systems

**[00:02:25]** this one has worked extremely well for

**[00:02:27]** me largely because it's vertical and is

**[00:02:30]** fed by gravity it's all made with like

**[00:02:32]** gutter pieces and they love using it and

**[00:02:34]** they cannot spill any of their grain out

**[00:02:37]** because of the way I've built this so be

**[00:02:39]** sure to check out my video so inside

**[00:02:41]** here I just use a funnel when I about

**[00:02:43]** every 12 to 15 days they get another 50

**[00:02:46]** lb bag of food and it goes into all

**[00:02:49]** these tubes so I'm only coming out once

**[00:02:51]** every couple weeks to feed them now the

**[00:02:54]** other thing you're probably hearing is

**[00:02:55]** them clicking all over these and this is

**[00:02:57]** an automatic watering system built from

**[00:02:59]** from PVC and poultry nipples those are

**[00:03:03]** those things that you see them clicking

**[00:03:06]** this is an awesome little system it's

**[00:03:08]** all hooked up to a 55gal drum that also

**[00:03:13]** collects rainwater here in San Diego we

**[00:03:15]** do not get a lot of rain so any little

**[00:03:18]** bit I like to capture so about 6 months

**[00:03:21]** out of the year I don't have to add in

**[00:03:23]** city water this is where they lay the

**[00:03:25]** eggs so this is their nesting

**[00:03:28]** boxes and in side of here I've got five

**[00:03:31]** different nesting boxes they're about 12

**[00:03:33]** or 14 in in width for your chickens

**[00:03:36]** depending on the breed you want a 12x 12

**[00:03:39]** x 12 little box here for them uh to make

**[00:03:42]** it really nice and comfortable I didn't

**[00:03:44]** teach them the lay here they knew to lay

**[00:03:46]** here because it's at a high point and

**[00:03:49]** because they want a cool dark protected

**[00:03:53]** area it's protected on all sides except

**[00:03:56]** the front there here's a few eggs that

**[00:03:57]** they laid today okay and it's really

**[00:03:59]** really simple guys you know for my latch

**[00:04:01]** here I just have a little draw straining

**[00:04:02]** with a screw just have an easy latch

**[00:04:05]** like that and now it's nice and locked

**[00:04:08]** so it's nice and safe so very simple egg

**[00:04:11]** laying system someday I'd love to have

**[00:04:13]** something where they lay the egg and it

**[00:04:16]** rolls out into a collection center

**[00:04:19]** because as some of you chicken razors

**[00:04:21]** know occasionally they'll break them or

**[00:04:23]** you know sometimes they'll actually kick

**[00:04:25]** out their nest out of the way and if

**[00:04:28]** sometimes they'll lay an egg directly on

**[00:04:29]** the wood and it'll crack so having the

**[00:04:32]** nesting boxes be going a slight slope

**[00:04:34]** and having it roll back into an

**[00:04:35]** automatic catcher would be a really cool

**[00:04:37]** feature and I hope to create that

**[00:04:39]** someday that's what they use for like

**[00:04:42]** the commercial poultry setups or if

**[00:04:44]** you've ever seen Jill ceton Style

**[00:04:45]** Chicken tractors they use that all right

**[00:04:48]** let's go inside to see some other

**[00:04:50]** features but first check out this

**[00:04:52]** passion fruit this has been in the

**[00:04:54]** making for a long long time it's been

**[00:04:56]** growing well over a year now and this is

**[00:04:58]** another passion fruit I just put up and

**[00:05:00]** I've got a video about planting these

**[00:05:02]** and how to take care of passion fruits

**[00:05:03]** as well this actually is going to be a

**[00:05:05]** giant shade structure for the chickens

**[00:05:08]** that's also going to provide really

**[00:05:10]** delicious fruit passion fruit is one of

**[00:05:12]** my favorite fruits it's extremely

**[00:05:13]** nutritious and it also sells very well

**[00:05:16]** at the markets so it's going to be a

**[00:05:18]** great one it's one of my favorite for

**[00:05:20]** planting here in San Diego it's just a

**[00:05:22]** spectacular one that loves the weather

**[00:05:24]** here and now in the summer these guys

**[00:05:26]** get incredible shade from it okay just

**[00:05:28]** for the door here guys very

**[00:05:30]** simple I've got a latch on the interior

**[00:05:33]** that's really important because these

**[00:05:35]** girls will try to escape and ravage my

**[00:05:38]** garden so the entire bottom of the coupe

**[00:05:40]** here is lined with wood as you can see

**[00:05:43]** and on the ground there's a foundation

**[00:05:45]** of stone and I actually got this Stone

**[00:05:48]** from the Nick door neighbors over here

**[00:05:49]** they just had a ton laying over there

**[00:05:51]** asked the neighbor and he allowed me to

**[00:05:52]** use it this was a very cheap way of

**[00:05:54]** keeping the wood off the ground so that

**[00:05:57]** it doesn't rot and it will last a lot

**[00:05:59]** longer I actually didn't treat any of

**[00:06:01]** this wood because I didn't want any

**[00:06:02]** chemicals in or around my chickens I'm

**[00:06:05]** also turning all this into soil I never

**[00:06:07]** wanted paint to flake off into my Coupe

**[00:06:10]** you'll also notice I put like this is a

**[00:06:12]** giant piece of shade cloth here 95% this

**[00:06:14]** was because it was getting so hot in the

**[00:06:16]** summer the chickens really needed some

**[00:06:18]** more shade also they kick up a lot of

**[00:06:20]** dust which was sending some dust out

**[00:06:22]** into my crops a little bit and I wanted

**[00:06:25]** to make more of a partition between the

**[00:06:27]** crops and the chickens so there wasn't

**[00:06:29]** really any cross over between them they

**[00:06:30]** were just two separate systems not

**[00:06:32]** influencing each other that has worked

**[00:06:34]** extremely well now looking at the actual

**[00:06:36]** chicken Coupe here you guys can see once

**[00:06:39]** again I've got up on blocks am a huge

**[00:06:42]** fan of vertical coups for many reasons

**[00:06:46]** and I just would recommend everyone

**[00:06:48]** build a coupe like this where it's off

**[00:06:49]** of the ground because as you can see

**[00:06:53]** there's a lot of action going on under

**[00:06:55]** here this provides a lot more square

**[00:06:58]** footage to the birds cuz they can go

**[00:06:59]** under this coue as well and what I've

**[00:07:02]** done is provided all of their food their

**[00:07:04]** water and their supplements under the

**[00:07:07]** coupe so for chickens the most important

**[00:07:09]** thing is to keep them cool they can

**[00:07:11]** withstand very cold temperatures but

**[00:07:14]** they cannot overheat they cannot sweat

**[00:07:18]** and if it's really hot you'll even see

**[00:07:20]** them pant like a dog they'll have their

**[00:07:21]** mouth half open and breathing heavily

**[00:07:24]** and if you see your chickens doing that

**[00:07:26]** that means they're overheated so this

**[00:07:27]** allows them to have a 100% % shade at

**[00:07:30]** all times they can just go underneath it

**[00:07:33]** it allows protection from the rain when

**[00:07:35]** they need it it also provides shade for

**[00:07:37]** the food and the water those are the

**[00:07:38]** reasons why I love vertical coups and

**[00:07:41]** there's one more special reason so now

**[00:07:44]** uh the supplements here I just have

**[00:07:46]** hanging this is typically what people

**[00:07:48]** will feed their chickens with and so

**[00:07:50]** every day they'll have to come out and

**[00:07:51]** put new food or new water uh putting

**[00:07:54]** water in these is also insanitary a lot

**[00:07:57]** of times the chickens will somehow poop

**[00:07:58]** in them or you know different wild birds

**[00:08:02]** can drink from it and that could cause

**[00:08:06]** disease it is possible I don't use any

**[00:08:08]** of these hangers that's why I love using

**[00:08:10]** my feeding systems they're cleaner more

**[00:08:12]** efficient and save me a ton of time if

**[00:08:14]** you added up the 5 minutes it takes to

**[00:08:16]** fill up water and food every single day

**[00:08:18]** for your chickens you know that adds up

**[00:08:20]** pretty quick to a lot of time anyways

**[00:08:22]** this supplement here I think it's called

**[00:08:24]** like chicken grits I forgot what they

**[00:08:25]** call it but it's basically just a bunch

**[00:08:27]** of little stones and Pebbles uh that is

**[00:08:29]** SW followed by the chicken and goes into

**[00:08:31]** their organ called the crop is an organ

**[00:08:35]** that actually will grind up seeds and

**[00:08:38]** grass and things that we as humans

**[00:08:41]** actually can't digest but they have this

**[00:08:43]** special organ that allows them to do

**[00:08:45]** that so in nature they'll just swallow

**[00:08:46]** these little Stones I have this here for

**[00:08:48]** them in case they need it if they don't

**[00:08:50]** have this or they don't have access to

**[00:08:51]** small stones um they can can cause

**[00:08:54]** massive digestion issues and actually

**[00:08:55]** could they could die I believe they

**[00:08:57]** would get constipated because they just

**[00:08:59]** can't grind up that material and pass it

**[00:09:01]** through that their digestive system so

**[00:09:03]** this stuff uh is actually called I think

**[00:09:04]** it's called pigeon grit something like

**[00:09:06]** that but it has charcoal it has the

**[00:09:08]** little rocks it has maybe potassium a

**[00:09:12]** couple other Rock supplements for them

**[00:09:14]** it's it's just good stuff and then I add

**[00:09:16]** in uh oyster shell as well oyster shell

**[00:09:19]** is super important for Birds because if

**[00:09:21]** they don't supplement their calcium they

**[00:09:24]** can actually start eating their own

**[00:09:26]** eggshells to try and acquire calcium so

**[00:09:28]** that they're a to lay their eggs not

**[00:09:31]** having enough calcium Source in their

**[00:09:32]** diet can cause weak shells and not well

**[00:09:35]** formed shells as well so supplementing

**[00:09:38]** with oyster shells really important and

**[00:09:40]** having these little rocks is also

**[00:09:42]** important for your chickens very cheap

**[00:09:44]** supplement for them the next gigantic

**[00:09:47]** benefit to having a raised Coupe is it's

**[00:09:50]** more ergonomic so as you can see got my

**[00:09:52]** two Double Wide Doors here it opens up

**[00:09:54]** the entire inside of the coupe and what

**[00:09:56]** it allows me to do is just put my

**[00:09:58]** wheelbarrow under here

**[00:09:59]** and then I can rake out all of their

**[00:10:02]** bedding straight into a wheelbarrow and

**[00:10:04]** then take it out of here to make soil

**[00:10:06]** I'm never having to bend over to do that

**[00:10:08]** right on the bottom floor of the coupe I

**[00:10:10]** have a solid bottom because when I rake

**[00:10:13]** this out I wanted it to be very easy as

**[00:10:15]** long as I got straw in here I have no

**[00:10:16]** problem with any dampness or wetness

**[00:10:18]** from the manure into the wood some

**[00:10:20]** people will have chicken wire on the

**[00:10:22]** bottom of their their cages and that's

**[00:10:25]** good for increased irration but for me

**[00:10:28]** it's kind of annoying cuz I want to rake

**[00:10:29]** this out easily and it makes it more

**[00:10:31]** difficult that is another option you may

**[00:10:33]** want to consider if you want more

**[00:10:35]** ventilation okay then up here these are

**[00:10:37]** called the roosts and these roosts are

**[00:10:40]** where the chickens will sleep they like

**[00:10:43]** to be at the highest place in the coupe

**[00:10:46]** so that's where they'll be I put them

**[00:10:48]** all at the same level you'll notice

**[00:10:50]** chickens are famous for the pecking

**[00:10:53]** order for having extreme hierarchy and a

**[00:10:56]** way to kind of prevent them attacking

**[00:10:58]** each other and making things nicer for

**[00:11:00]** them is to have all the roofs at the

**[00:11:02]** same height that way there isn't a bird

**[00:11:04]** trying to get at that highest point to

**[00:11:05]** secure their dominance you know they can

**[00:11:07]** have more of their dominance fights out

**[00:11:09]** here for food and other things otherwise

**[00:11:12]** they just you know especially when you

**[00:11:13]** introduce new new Birds they'll just

**[00:11:14]** Peck the heck out of each other I've had

**[00:11:16]** great results with keeping the roost all

**[00:11:18]** at the same height you'll also notice I

**[00:11:20]** used 2x4s for my roosts now many of my

**[00:11:23]** breeds are big ones so I've got the

**[00:11:26]** Rhode Island whites and then I have the

**[00:11:28]** black Jersey Giants the blue wi Dot and

**[00:11:30]** The Bard rocks are my smallest and then

**[00:11:33]** the rodon red there is in a medium size

**[00:11:36]** so I've got all different sizes of birds

**[00:11:39]** they all do well with the

**[00:11:41]** 2x4s and the reason I went with 2x4s and

**[00:11:44]** not an oak rounded dowel like you may

**[00:11:46]** see other people use is because I read a

**[00:11:49]** study online was an actual scientific

**[00:11:51]** study studying the bird's feet and how

**[00:11:53]** they respond to these different type of

**[00:11:55]** roosts As I understood the study

**[00:11:58]** essentially the argument they are making

**[00:12:00]** is that the structure of the chicken's

**[00:12:02]** foot isn't such that it works well with

**[00:12:05]** those oak and dowels typically you'll

**[00:12:07]** see those oak dos with uh in bird cages

**[00:12:10]** with cocka teals and other like pet

**[00:12:12]** birds and those birds have a different

**[00:12:14]** type of leg structure those birds

**[00:12:17]** actually have a kneecap that locks into

**[00:12:20]** place so for those oak and dowels that

**[00:12:22]** those are great for them cuz they can

**[00:12:23]** wrap around and then lock their knee but

**[00:12:26]** chickens don't have that ability their

**[00:12:28]** knees don't do that they actually will

**[00:12:30]** if you see them they'll sit down on

**[00:12:32]** their hind legs and they'll even they'll

**[00:12:34]** spread their legs across the whole piece

**[00:12:36]** of wood and then kind of wrap their toes

**[00:12:38]** over the edge and that's how they grip

**[00:12:40]** on for me these 2x4s have had great

**[00:12:44]** results for all the different breeds

**[00:12:45]** that I mentioned I've never had

**[00:12:47]** bumblefoot I've never had any other

**[00:12:48]** issues with these chickens whatsoever

**[00:12:51]** having said that I have seen chickens

**[00:12:54]** raised with the oak dowels they also

**[00:12:57]** didn't have any feet problems take

**[00:12:59]** everything I guess with a grain of salt

**[00:13:00]** you know I think either works for me

**[00:13:03]** though I will continue to use the 2x4s

**[00:13:05]** or a 2x3 might be even better for those

**[00:13:08]** small smaller or mediumsized breeds I

**[00:13:11]** think that'd be a little bit more ideal

**[00:13:13]** ideal for their foot size but a Road

**[00:13:15]** Island uh white or a black Jersey Giant

**[00:13:17]** I think they kind of benefit from that

**[00:13:19]** larger 2x4 size and even they'll even go

**[00:13:23]** up see this Ridge right

**[00:13:25]** here some of them will sit on that

**[00:13:27]** vertical Edge so it's kind so you can

**[00:13:29]** even give them options which I really

**[00:13:31]** agree with as well some of the smaller

**[00:13:33]** birds may prefer to sit on this Edge

**[00:13:36]** because their feet are a little smaller

**[00:13:38]** okay let's talk about something else in

**[00:13:39]** your design as I mentioned before heat

**[00:13:43]** and keeping heat out is one of the big

**[00:13:45]** factors that kills chickens well there's

**[00:13:48]** another factor that plays into that and

**[00:13:51]** that's ventilation so ventilation is

**[00:13:54]** important to get rid of excess heat it's

**[00:13:57]** also important because your chickens

**[00:14:01]** will drop a lot of manure here overnight

**[00:14:04]** and that creates a large ammonia buildup

**[00:14:07]** if you didn't have good ventilation in

**[00:14:08]** here and you didn't clean out your

**[00:14:10]** manure it would actually kill your

**[00:14:11]** chickens from toxic exposure to ammonia

**[00:14:14]** so you don't want to do that so having

**[00:14:17]** good ventilation really important also

**[00:14:19]** cleaning out your Coupe for me I found

**[00:14:21]** that I only need to clean this out about

**[00:14:23]** once a month if I'm adding straw to this

**[00:14:27]** about once a week cover covering up the

**[00:14:29]** next layer of manure the layers of

**[00:14:31]** manure always covered by a layer of

**[00:14:32]** straw I've noticed that the ammonia

**[00:14:35]** actually stays trapped inside of the

**[00:14:37]** straw and actually kind of you know some

**[00:14:39]** of that composting process is going on

**[00:14:41]** so it's kind of locking it in and not

**[00:14:43]** much is really off gassing that's what

**[00:14:46]** I've noticed that's worked well for me I

**[00:14:48]** also have very good ventilation you know

**[00:14:51]** I will poke my head in here to make sure

**[00:14:52]** everything's okay doesn't smell too much

**[00:14:54]** and the chickens even will come here

**[00:14:56]** through here and mix their manure into

**[00:14:58]** the bedding getting rid of some of that

**[00:15:00]** ammonia as well that's another thing to

**[00:15:01]** keep in mind now how much ventilation do

**[00:15:04]** you need a good formula is just you need

**[00:15:06]** one square foot of ventilation per bird

**[00:15:11]** that you have so I've got a few

**[00:15:12]** different types of ventilation in here

**[00:15:14]** so I've got this side vent here I've got

**[00:15:16]** that back window there that is just

**[00:15:18]** hardware cloth this is one of the

**[00:15:20]** biggest ways that you'll be able to get

**[00:15:22]** ventilation is to actually just have an

**[00:15:24]** open side to your Coupe that's going to

**[00:15:26]** give you a ton of square feet another

**[00:15:28]** way to square fet is actually to drill

**[00:15:30]** in some large holes now you want to

**[00:15:34]** calculate the square footage because

**[00:15:35]** that's not actually that many square

**[00:15:36]** feet but what it does do is give a lot

**[00:15:40]** of air movement and at the top here I've

**[00:15:43]** also got another crack vent right there

**[00:15:47]** so you'll notice that all around the top

**[00:15:48]** of my

**[00:15:50]** Coupe there's

**[00:15:52]** ventilation and what that is allowing is

**[00:15:55]** a lot of air flow at the top there

**[00:15:57]** cooler air is able to enter from the bot

**[00:15:59]** bottom and then since most of the air

**[00:16:02]** holes are at the top it's actually going

**[00:16:03]** to flow to the top and out and keep the

**[00:16:07]** air very fresh in here and nice and I

**[00:16:09]** tried to place all of the air holes

**[00:16:12]** quite above and away from the roosts one

**[00:16:15]** of the things you want to avoid is

**[00:16:17]** giving uh an a draft near the chickens

**[00:16:20]** they don't want wind blowing on them

**[00:16:22]** constantly especially in winter so

**[00:16:23]** you'll notice all around I don't have

**[00:16:26]** anywhere where that's going to be

**[00:16:27]** occurring to them so that's that's

**[00:16:29]** something else that you really want to

**[00:16:30]** consider obviously a watertight roof as

**[00:16:34]** well and this roof is actually made from

**[00:16:36]** recycled material this roof was made

**[00:16:38]** from an old shed that was here on the

**[00:16:41]** property left by the previous owner what

**[00:16:43]** we did was just combined two pieces of

**[00:16:45]** it screwed it together with some

**[00:16:46]** watertight screws we put some cocking in

**[00:16:50]** the different holes on the roof I put

**[00:16:52]** down a a very thin sheet of plywood then

**[00:16:55]** I put down this roof liner and then I

**[00:16:57]** put all that on top of a frame that is

**[00:17:00]** supporting the roof so it's all made

**[00:17:03]** from recycled material even this back

**[00:17:05]** wall you can kind of see it's made from

**[00:17:06]** different pieces it's recycled all these

**[00:17:09]** 2x4s on the main frame though those are

**[00:17:11]** all new pieces here's an example you can

**[00:17:13]** see those support pieces so the roof is

**[00:17:15]** just bolted into those support pieces

**[00:17:16]** and that's it and this Coupe is actually

**[00:17:18]** strong enough that I can stand up inside

**[00:17:20]** of it here's the bottom I reinforced it

**[00:17:24]** here's the

**[00:17:26]** legs very simple now other feature of

**[00:17:29]** this Coupee is having an automatic

**[00:17:33]** chicken door and this thing is actually

**[00:17:35]** solar powered and it runs off of a

**[00:17:38]** battery and a timer there's a solar

**[00:17:41]** charger right there and the solar panel

**[00:17:44]** and

**[00:17:45]** basically the panel charges this battery

**[00:17:49]** and the battery powers that piston so

**[00:17:52]** that at a certain time when I tell the

**[00:17:55]** timer it will actually close and open

**[00:17:59]** this door and the door just runs on a

**[00:18:01]** simple little rail system that I built

**[00:18:04]** out of wood so this thing just goes up

**[00:18:07]** and down really

**[00:18:09]** simply I actually am not using this

**[00:18:12]** hardly at all anymore because I don't

**[00:18:13]** let the chickens free range anymore I

**[00:18:15]** used to let them go out in the yard and

**[00:18:17]** then at night they would come in by

**[00:18:19]** themsel come up to the roost the door

**[00:18:22]** would close and I would never have

**[00:18:24]** anything to worry about so when setting

**[00:18:25]** up your door if you're using a piston

**[00:18:28]** system like this the most important part

**[00:18:30]** is the rail system getting that to fit

**[00:18:32]** in there really smoothly not letting it

**[00:18:35]** bind these pillars stop it from going

**[00:18:37]** the side to side these stop it from

**[00:18:39]** going forward and I left it loose so

**[00:18:42]** that there's no resistance that's going

**[00:18:44]** to damage the Piston motor up here you

**[00:18:47]** can see I've got a little piece of wood

**[00:18:49]** there that keeps it out away from being

**[00:18:52]** totally flush so that it'll move up and

**[00:18:56]** down smoothly but now that I have

**[00:18:59]** a different situation my Market Garden

**[00:19:01]** fully built out and they're mostly

**[00:19:03]** living in here I'm not actually using

**[00:19:05]** this anymore so I'm probably going to

**[00:19:06]** convert it and actually use that solar

**[00:19:09]** panel to charge my cordless drill

**[00:19:11]** instead but this is an amazing feature

**[00:19:13]** this is something I wanted to learn more

**[00:19:14]** about how to set something up like this

**[00:19:16]** learning about solar energy as well how

**[00:19:18]** to charge a battery and now I have some

**[00:19:20]** of those basic skills but this is a

**[00:19:22]** really awesome thing to have for your

**[00:19:24]** Coupe especially if you don't want to

**[00:19:25]** deal with waking up early or coming out

**[00:19:28]** late at night to shut the door that's

**[00:19:30]** why I really like having a really large

**[00:19:32]** Coupe that I can just let them hang out

**[00:19:33]** in and I they just come in and out of

**[00:19:36]** that door every night and I don't have

**[00:19:37]** to close anything or open anything for

**[00:19:40]** them so that's how I've gotten around

**[00:19:41]** that for myself if you can't get around

**[00:19:44]** that then having an automatic door is a

**[00:19:46]** great way to save yourself the time and

**[00:19:48]** trouble of opening and closing the door

**[00:19:49]** for them um and there's even a simpler

**[00:19:51]** system that just runs on a on a string

**[00:19:53]** it's just like a timer box like this

**[00:19:54]** that runs on a string and it just pulls

**[00:19:56]** it up and down it's another really

**[00:19:58]** simple system I've seen a friend use as

**[00:20:00]** well okay so the next thing to talk

**[00:20:02]** about in this Coupe is my ladder I

**[00:20:05]** recommend keeping these ladder pieces

**[00:20:07]** really close together about you know

**[00:20:10]** every 3 in because the chickens will

**[00:20:12]** really slip and slide on this wood and

**[00:20:15]** giving them some more places to put

**[00:20:16]** their feet will really help them I

**[00:20:18]** actually added more so they're not

**[00:20:19]** slipping they could hurt their foot so

**[00:20:21]** my favorite feature about this ladder is

**[00:20:23]** I can remove

**[00:20:24]** it I came up with this idea because I

**[00:20:27]** wanted to

**[00:20:29]** make it really easy to clean this Coupe

**[00:20:31]** out so I want to be able to take the

**[00:20:33]** ladder out of here and and make it easy

**[00:20:35]** on myself so here's the little design I

**[00:20:37]** came up with so I just built this little

**[00:20:39]** block piece here like

**[00:20:41]** this and then I constructed a little

**[00:20:44]** triangular piece and attached it and

**[00:20:47]** then those just lock in like this and

**[00:20:49]** then it's really secure I've got this

**[00:20:51]** door so if I ever wanted to fully lock

**[00:20:53]** them in I can do that but nowadays I

**[00:20:56]** just keep it completely open but it's

**[00:20:58]** still still very nice you want to have a

**[00:21:00]** way to completely enclose your Coupe if

**[00:21:02]** you ever need to or you've got really

**[00:21:04]** hardcore Predator pressure this is just

**[00:21:06]** a little Roost I built for them they

**[00:21:08]** love having extra places to jump and

**[00:21:10]** play

**[00:21:11]** on and they even jump on this as well so

**[00:21:14]** I've got a video about how how I built

**[00:21:16]** this and how I Ed this be sure to check

**[00:21:18]** it out basically this is just another

**[00:21:19]** little area where I make compost

**[00:21:22]** specifically for the chickens I'll build

**[00:21:24]** the pile let it heat up then I let them

**[00:21:26]** tear through it and mix it and eat

**[00:21:28]** whatever they want want so this is

**[00:21:29]** another great idea for helping to

**[00:21:31]** supplement your chicken feeds and to

**[00:21:33]** help you create more soil it's also

**[00:21:35]** another fun structure for them to jump

**[00:21:36]** on and and have fun on anything that

**[00:21:38]** they can get high up on they they really

**[00:21:40]** enjoy that now we got this crazy box

**[00:21:43]** with this tube what is that so this is a

**[00:21:46]** little bit gross this is an ongoing

**[00:21:48]** experiment that has been somewhat

**[00:21:50]** successful I'm still trying to get it to

**[00:21:52]** work but what this is is called a

**[00:21:53]** soldier fly larvae bin and I'll be

**[00:21:56]** putting out a video about how I built

**[00:21:58]** this box and how to start them how to

**[00:22:00]** raise them fairly soon so I'll be sure

**[00:22:03]** to tune in for that but basically what

**[00:22:05]** these guys are are a way to feed your

**[00:22:07]** chickens really high quality protein and

**[00:22:10]** fat for free these guys can live off of

**[00:22:14]** kitchen waste meat manure they can live

**[00:22:16]** on milk dairy they can really eat

**[00:22:18]** anything and they're really

**[00:22:20]** non-pathogenic as well then once they're

**[00:22:23]** ready uh they've gotten big enough

**[00:22:25]** they've eaten enough they'll actually

**[00:22:26]** walk up this ramp and fall right through

**[00:22:29]** that hole into the tube that I showed

**[00:22:31]** you out to the chickens and then the

**[00:22:33]** chickens get grubs just a really cool

**[00:22:36]** feeding system that I'm working on and

**[00:22:38]** hope to have really operational this

**[00:22:41]** year and then next spring be able to

**[00:22:43]** really give you guys all the info and

**[00:22:44]** and how to set one of these up yourself

**[00:22:46]** so one of my big goals with this chicken

**[00:22:48]** cop was to to show how easy and

**[00:22:50]** efficient you could make a cop how how

**[00:22:52]** much little work you you'd have to do

**[00:22:55]** and what's really cool is that these

**[00:22:57]** chickens have been able to provide me

**[00:22:59]** enough compost for the last year and a

**[00:23:00]** half on my small farm that I haven't had

**[00:23:03]** to buy it ever since you saw that cover

**[00:23:04]** crop episode where I spread out soil out

**[00:23:06]** here that's almost I don't know it's

**[00:23:08]** probably cling it on 2 years ago now

**[00:23:11]** ever since then I have not bought any

**[00:23:13]** more outside compost to make my starts

**[00:23:16]** and to feed my beds out here so it's

**[00:23:18]** pretty cool and I've proven it now that

**[00:23:21]** you can actually run a small farm or a

**[00:23:24]** large garden like this only on

**[00:23:28]** compost beneficial teas and other

**[00:23:32]** natural nutrients cover cropping these

**[00:23:34]** systems so that was one of my goals with

**[00:23:36]** this chicken Coupe very happy to say

**[00:23:39]** that it is possible the other goal with

**[00:23:41]** this Coupe is to prove that you can

**[00:23:43]** raise chickens essentially for free

**[00:23:45]** without having to buy Grain feed now

**[00:23:48]** I've had a lot of other things to do so

**[00:23:49]** I haven't gotten as close as I've wanted

**[00:23:51]** but that Soldier fly is a big part of it

**[00:23:54]** and then incorporating some other

**[00:23:55]** systems such as meal worms um acquiring

**[00:23:58]** ing restaurant waste and other free

**[00:24:01]** inputs uh that can feed the soldierly

**[00:24:03]** the meal worms and the chickens directly

**[00:24:05]** themselves so that's something I'm

**[00:24:07]** always working on and trying to get

**[00:24:09]** better at so that um we can show some

**[00:24:12]** really interesting ways to recycle waste

**[00:24:15]** and feed chickens for very low cost

# Full Text (without timestamps)

[Music] hey everybody welcome back to another Nature's always right video today is very exciting day we're going to check out my chicken Co finally I'll be showing you guys all the different features that make it work all the automatic systems that make it very easy and low maintenance to raise chickens and everything involved in the design of my Coupe so I designed and built this Coupe about 2 years ago now and it's been in use ever since then and I've had anywhere from 15 to 20 chickens in this CP uh this Coupe is 12 ft wide by 20 ft long um almost 250 square ft um on the bottom floor here they also have this outer run out here that I used for them I'm actually going to be changing that soon um but I had a little outer run you may have seen it in some of my older videos when I had some beer netting that was running and that was at my actual fence but you know now with the market G Garden running so well I can't have the chickens escaping anymore and I actually got approved by my landlords to build a couple more beds here so I developed this coupe with efficiency in mind and not wanting to have to do a lot of work for my chickens I've been raising chickens for a little over 3 years I've used different types of coups seen different coups online you know researched other designs from a lot of different people and basically I kind of just piece together the best from all the different coups that I've seen integrated it in with a lot of my natural design techniques permaculture and what I need to have happen here on the farm making soil recycling all of my waste so let's go check out some of the features that make this Coupe solo maintenance and easy and I've got videos all about how to make each one of these systems so that you guys can do it for yourself as well so probably one of the first things you noticed on my Coupe is these large tubes here and these are actually filled with food I have a video about how to build these for your chickens there's a few different types of automatic systems this one has worked extremely well for me largely because it's vertical and is fed by gravity it's all made with like gutter pieces and they love using it and they cannot spill any of their grain out because of the way I've built this so be sure to check out my video so inside here I just use a funnel when I about every 12 to 15 days they get another 50 lb bag of food and it goes into all these tubes so I'm only coming out once every couple weeks to feed them now the other thing you're probably hearing is them clicking all over these and this is an automatic watering system built from from PVC and poultry nipples those are those things that you see them clicking this is an awesome little system it's all hooked up to a 55gal drum that also collects rainwater here in San Diego we do not get a lot of rain so any little bit I like to capture so about 6 months out of the year I don't have to add in city water this is where they lay the eggs so this is their nesting boxes and in side of here I've got five different nesting boxes they're about 12 or 14 in in width for your chickens depending on the breed you want a 12x 12 x 12 little box here for them uh to make it really nice and comfortable I didn't teach them the lay here they knew to lay here because it's at a high point and because they want a cool dark protected area it's protected on all sides except the front there here's a few eggs that they laid today okay and it's really really simple guys you know for my latch here I just have a little draw straining with a screw just have an easy latch like that and now it's nice and locked so it's nice and safe so very simple egg laying system someday I'd love to have something where they lay the egg and it rolls out into a collection center because as some of you chicken razors know occasionally they'll break them or you know sometimes they'll actually kick out their nest out of the way and if sometimes they'll lay an egg directly on the wood and it'll crack so having the nesting boxes be going a slight slope and having it roll back into an automatic catcher would be a really cool feature and I hope to create that someday that's what they use for like the commercial poultry setups or if you've ever seen Jill ceton Style Chicken tractors they use that all right let's go inside to see some other features but first check out this passion fruit this has been in the making for a long long time it's been growing well over a year now and this is another passion fruit I just put up and I've got a video about planting these and how to take care of passion fruits as well this actually is going to be a giant shade structure for the chickens that's also going to provide really delicious fruit passion fruit is one of my favorite fruits it's extremely nutritious and it also sells very well at the markets so it's going to be a great one it's one of my favorite for planting here in San Diego it's just a spectacular one that loves the weather here and now in the summer these guys get incredible shade from it okay just for the door here guys very simple I've got a latch on the interior that's really important because these girls will try to escape and ravage my garden so the entire bottom of the coupe here is lined with wood as you can see and on the ground there's a foundation of stone and I actually got this Stone from the Nick door neighbors over here they just had a ton laying over there asked the neighbor and he allowed me to use it this was a very cheap way of keeping the wood off the ground so that it doesn't rot and it will last a lot longer I actually didn't treat any of this wood because I didn't want any chemicals in or around my chickens I'm also turning all this into soil I never wanted paint to flake off into my Coupe you'll also notice I put like this is a giant piece of shade cloth here 95% this was because it was getting so hot in the summer the chickens really needed some more shade also they kick up a lot of dust which was sending some dust out into my crops a little bit and I wanted to make more of a partition between the crops and the chickens so there wasn't really any cross over between them they were just two separate systems not influencing each other that has worked extremely well now looking at the actual chicken Coupe here you guys can see once again I've got up on blocks am a huge fan of vertical coups for many reasons and I just would recommend everyone build a coupe like this where it's off of the ground because as you can see there's a lot of action going on under here this provides a lot more square footage to the birds cuz they can go under this coue as well and what I've done is provided all of their food their water and their supplements under the coupe so for chickens the most important thing is to keep them cool they can withstand very cold temperatures but they cannot overheat they cannot sweat and if it's really hot you'll even see them pant like a dog they'll have their mouth half open and breathing heavily and if you see your chickens doing that that means they're overheated so this allows them to have a 100% % shade at all times they can just go underneath it it allows protection from the rain when they need it it also provides shade for the food and the water those are the reasons why I love vertical coups and there's one more special reason so now uh the supplements here I just have hanging this is typically what people will feed their chickens with and so every day they'll have to come out and put new food or new water uh putting water in these is also insanitary a lot of times the chickens will somehow poop in them or you know different wild birds can drink from it and that could cause disease it is possible I don't use any of these hangers that's why I love using my feeding systems they're cleaner more efficient and save me a ton of time if you added up the 5 minutes it takes to fill up water and food every single day for your chickens you know that adds up pretty quick to a lot of time anyways this supplement here I think it's called like chicken grits I forgot what they call it but it's basically just a bunch of little stones and Pebbles uh that is SW followed by the chicken and goes into their organ called the crop is an organ that actually will grind up seeds and grass and things that we as humans actually can't digest but they have this special organ that allows them to do that so in nature they'll just swallow these little Stones I have this here for them in case they need it if they don't have this or they don't have access to small stones um they can can cause massive digestion issues and actually could they could die I believe they would get constipated because they just can't grind up that material and pass it through that their digestive system so this stuff uh is actually called I think it's called pigeon grit something like that but it has charcoal it has the little rocks it has maybe potassium a couple other Rock supplements for them it's it's just good stuff and then I add in uh oyster shell as well oyster shell is super important for Birds because if they don't supplement their calcium they can actually start eating their own eggshells to try and acquire calcium so that they're a to lay their eggs not having enough calcium Source in their diet can cause weak shells and not well formed shells as well so supplementing with oyster shells really important and having these little rocks is also important for your chickens very cheap supplement for them the next gigantic benefit to having a raised Coupe is it's more ergonomic so as you can see got my two Double Wide Doors here it opens up the entire inside of the coupe and what it allows me to do is just put my wheelbarrow under here and then I can rake out all of their bedding straight into a wheelbarrow and then take it out of here to make soil I'm never having to bend over to do that right on the bottom floor of the coupe I have a solid bottom because when I rake this out I wanted it to be very easy as long as I got straw in here I have no problem with any dampness or wetness from the manure into the wood some people will have chicken wire on the bottom of their their cages and that's good for increased irration but for me it's kind of annoying cuz I want to rake this out easily and it makes it more difficult that is another option you may want to consider if you want more ventilation okay then up here these are called the roosts and these roosts are where the chickens will sleep they like to be at the highest place in the coupe so that's where they'll be I put them all at the same level you'll notice chickens are famous for the pecking order for having extreme hierarchy and a way to kind of prevent them attacking each other and making things nicer for them is to have all the roofs at the same height that way there isn't a bird trying to get at that highest point to secure their dominance you know they can have more of their dominance fights out here for food and other things otherwise they just you know especially when you introduce new new Birds they'll just Peck the heck out of each other I've had great results with keeping the roost all at the same height you'll also notice I used 2x4s for my roosts now many of my breeds are big ones so I've got the Rhode Island whites and then I have the black Jersey Giants the blue wi Dot and The Bard rocks are my smallest and then the rodon red there is in a medium size so I've got all different sizes of birds they all do well with the 2x4s and the reason I went with 2x4s and not an oak rounded dowel like you may see other people use is because I read a study online was an actual scientific study studying the bird's feet and how they respond to these different type of roosts As I understood the study essentially the argument they are making is that the structure of the chicken's foot isn't such that it works well with those oak and dowels typically you'll see those oak dos with uh in bird cages with cocka teals and other like pet birds and those birds have a different type of leg structure those birds actually have a kneecap that locks into place so for those oak and dowels that those are great for them cuz they can wrap around and then lock their knee but chickens don't have that ability their knees don't do that they actually will if you see them they'll sit down on their hind legs and they'll even they'll spread their legs across the whole piece of wood and then kind of wrap their toes over the edge and that's how they grip on for me these 2x4s have had great results for all the different breeds that I mentioned I've never had bumblefoot I've never had any other issues with these chickens whatsoever having said that I have seen chickens raised with the oak dowels they also didn't have any feet problems take everything I guess with a grain of salt you know I think either works for me though I will continue to use the 2x4s or a 2x3 might be even better for those small smaller or mediumsized breeds I think that'd be a little bit more ideal ideal for their foot size but a Road Island uh white or a black Jersey Giant I think they kind of benefit from that larger 2x4 size and even they'll even go up see this Ridge right here some of them will sit on that vertical Edge so it's kind so you can even give them options which I really agree with as well some of the smaller birds may prefer to sit on this Edge because their feet are a little smaller okay let's talk about something else in your design as I mentioned before heat and keeping heat out is one of the big factors that kills chickens well there's another factor that plays into that and that's ventilation so ventilation is important to get rid of excess heat it's also important because your chickens will drop a lot of manure here overnight and that creates a large ammonia buildup if you didn't have good ventilation in here and you didn't clean out your manure it would actually kill your chickens from toxic exposure to ammonia so you don't want to do that so having good ventilation really important also cleaning out your Coupe for me I found that I only need to clean this out about once a month if I'm adding straw to this about once a week cover covering up the next layer of manure the layers of manure always covered by a layer of straw I've noticed that the ammonia actually stays trapped inside of the straw and actually kind of you know some of that composting process is going on so it's kind of locking it in and not much is really off gassing that's what I've noticed that's worked well for me I also have very good ventilation you know I will poke my head in here to make sure everything's okay doesn't smell too much and the chickens even will come here through here and mix their manure into the bedding getting rid of some of that ammonia as well that's another thing to keep in mind now how much ventilation do you need a good formula is just you need one square foot of ventilation per bird that you have so I've got a few different types of ventilation in here so I've got this side vent here I've got that back window there that is just hardware cloth this is one of the biggest ways that you'll be able to get ventilation is to actually just have an open side to your Coupe that's going to give you a ton of square feet another way to square fet is actually to drill in some large holes now you want to calculate the square footage because that's not actually that many square feet but what it does do is give a lot of air movement and at the top here I've also got another crack vent right there so you'll notice that all around the top of my Coupe there's ventilation and what that is allowing is a lot of air flow at the top there cooler air is able to enter from the bot bottom and then since most of the air holes are at the top it's actually going to flow to the top and out and keep the air very fresh in here and nice and I tried to place all of the air holes quite above and away from the roosts one of the things you want to avoid is giving uh an a draft near the chickens they don't want wind blowing on them constantly especially in winter so you'll notice all around I don't have anywhere where that's going to be occurring to them so that's that's something else that you really want to consider obviously a watertight roof as well and this roof is actually made from recycled material this roof was made from an old shed that was here on the property left by the previous owner what we did was just combined two pieces of it screwed it together with some watertight screws we put some cocking in the different holes on the roof I put down a a very thin sheet of plywood then I put down this roof liner and then I put all that on top of a frame that is supporting the roof so it's all made from recycled material even this back wall you can kind of see it's made from different pieces it's recycled all these 2x4s on the main frame though those are all new pieces here's an example you can see those support pieces so the roof is just bolted into those support pieces and that's it and this Coupe is actually strong enough that I can stand up inside of it here's the bottom I reinforced it here's the legs very simple now other feature of this Coupee is having an automatic chicken door and this thing is actually solar powered and it runs off of a battery and a timer there's a solar charger right there and the solar panel and basically the panel charges this battery and the battery powers that piston so that at a certain time when I tell the timer it will actually close and open this door and the door just runs on a simple little rail system that I built out of wood so this thing just goes up and down really simply I actually am not using this hardly at all anymore because I don't let the chickens free range anymore I used to let them go out in the yard and then at night they would come in by themsel come up to the roost the door would close and I would never have anything to worry about so when setting up your door if you're using a piston system like this the most important part is the rail system getting that to fit in there really smoothly not letting it bind these pillars stop it from going the side to side these stop it from going forward and I left it loose so that there's no resistance that's going to damage the Piston motor up here you can see I've got a little piece of wood there that keeps it out away from being totally flush so that it'll move up and down smoothly but now that I have a different situation my Market Garden fully built out and they're mostly living in here I'm not actually using this anymore so I'm probably going to convert it and actually use that solar panel to charge my cordless drill instead but this is an amazing feature this is something I wanted to learn more about how to set something up like this learning about solar energy as well how to charge a battery and now I have some of those basic skills but this is a really awesome thing to have for your Coupe especially if you don't want to deal with waking up early or coming out late at night to shut the door that's why I really like having a really large Coupe that I can just let them hang out in and I they just come in and out of that door every night and I don't have to close anything or open anything for them so that's how I've gotten around that for myself if you can't get around that then having an automatic door is a great way to save yourself the time and trouble of opening and closing the door for them um and there's even a simpler system that just runs on a on a string it's just like a timer box like this that runs on a string and it just pulls it up and down it's another really simple system I've seen a friend use as well okay so the next thing to talk about in this Coupe is my ladder I recommend keeping these ladder pieces really close together about you know every 3 in because the chickens will really slip and slide on this wood and giving them some more places to put their feet will really help them I actually added more so they're not slipping they could hurt their foot so my favorite feature about this ladder is I can remove it I came up with this idea because I wanted to make it really easy to clean this Coupe out so I want to be able to take the ladder out of here and and make it easy on myself so here's the little design I came up with so I just built this little block piece here like this and then I constructed a little triangular piece and attached it and then those just lock in like this and then it's really secure I've got this door so if I ever wanted to fully lock them in I can do that but nowadays I just keep it completely open but it's still still very nice you want to have a way to completely enclose your Coupe if you ever need to or you've got really hardcore Predator pressure this is just a little Roost I built for them they love having extra places to jump and play on and they even jump on this as well so I've got a video about how how I built this and how I Ed this be sure to check it out basically this is just another little area where I make compost specifically for the chickens I'll build the pile let it heat up then I let them tear through it and mix it and eat whatever they want want so this is another great idea for helping to supplement your chicken feeds and to help you create more soil it's also another fun structure for them to jump on and and have fun on anything that they can get high up on they they really enjoy that now we got this crazy box with this tube what is that so this is a little bit gross this is an ongoing experiment that has been somewhat successful I'm still trying to get it to work but what this is is called a soldier fly larvae bin and I'll be putting out a video about how I built this box and how to start them how to raise them fairly soon so I'll be sure to tune in for that but basically what these guys are are a way to feed your chickens really high quality protein and fat for free these guys can live off of kitchen waste meat manure they can live on milk dairy they can really eat anything and they're really non-pathogenic as well then once they're ready uh they've gotten big enough they've eaten enough they'll actually walk up this ramp and fall right through that hole into the tube that I showed you out to the chickens and then the chickens get grubs just a really cool feeding system that I'm working on and hope to have really operational this year and then next spring be able to really give you guys all the info and and how to set one of these up yourself so one of my big goals with this chicken cop was to to show how easy and efficient you could make a cop how how much little work you you'd have to do and what's really cool is that these chickens have been able to provide me enough compost for the last year and a half on my small farm that I haven't had to buy it ever since you saw that cover crop episode where I spread out soil out here that's almost I don't know it's probably cling it on 2 years ago now ever since then I have not bought any more outside compost to make my starts and to feed my beds out here so it's pretty cool and I've proven it now that you can actually run a small farm or a large garden like this only on compost beneficial teas and other natural nutrients cover cropping these systems so that was one of my goals with this chicken Coupe very happy to say that it is possible the other goal with this Coupe is to prove that you can raise chickens essentially for free without having to buy Grain feed now I've had a lot of other things to do so I haven't gotten as close as I've wanted but that Soldier fly is a big part of it and then incorporating some other systems such as meal worms um acquiring ing restaurant waste and other free inputs uh that can feed the soldierly the meal worms and the chickens directly themselves so that's something I'm always working on and trying to get better at so that um we can show some really interesting ways to recycle waste and feed chickens for very low cost