



## FUN STUFF



Throughout the years I have enjoyed a rich variety of activities and experiences. One of my favorites has been to create a great annual vegetable garden. Not so good with flowers, I found that vegetables, herbs, and fruits sort of came naturally and there have been many enjoyable years of canning, dehydrating and freezing yummy things to eat. Every year I try to find one thing I've never grown before just so I can say I did it. Most have turned out well, and I have to say that growing yams nearly as long as your arm was probably one of the most interesting. Homegrown things sure taste different than store-bought!



Oh now my grandboys love Grammie's dried "apricot candy". These dandies were as big as baseballs and sickening sweet. Nothing like it in any grocery store.



Pumpkins galore for the DIL to take to the grandboys' school for decorating in time for Halloween. They also made fantastic pies.

A few years ago I stood out in the garden among the lush plants and wildlife pondering pest control. I was tired of icky garden pests, and tired of using harmful pesticides. The natural predator bug routine just about wiped out my pocketbook. It was while searching the internet for an alternative method of pest control, I happened across the notion of chickens. Holy cow, chickens? They were kidding, right?

After looking into the Municipal Code for my city and finding that we were allowed to have up to 10 of these fluffy creatures, I got so excited my head was in the clouds for months planning a decent coop and what kind of chickens I should put in it. I couldn't believe I was about to become a chicken mom; no way! Chickens eat every bug on the planet, they give you food every day, they make fabulous fertilizer for the garden, and the most unexpected of all..... they make great pets! I immediately bought a one-way ticket for this ride.



There's much more to the story between the time chickens became a part of my life and today, but that emotional roller coaster story can be shared another day. Today I just haven't enough time or words to tell you how much pleasure my nine hens give me everyday. Warm, cuddly, talkative, loyal and hilarious are they, and voracious eaters with mostly good manners. There are no roosters, so there's pretty much no noise to speak of. Best thing I ever did was to get chicks.... and learn how to make soap!

Here are a few pictures of my babygirls and where I spend much of my time when I'm not in the kitchen making soaps.



Inside the henhouse, Tubby is trying to figure out why there's a cat in HER house ...While she's trying to lay an egg no less! Lizzie doesn't care, she's exploring.

There is nothing on this earth that tastes as good as a fresh egg. Making scrambled eggs from eggs that are still warm from the nest is awesome. It just doesn't get any better than this.



Ants and earwigs make mighty tasty treats for snacky hens!



On patrol doing what they are hired to do. Go get those bugs!



Out in the garden, Lizzie watches over the girls so they don't get into trouble.



But trouble is what Lizzie gets when she insists on bringing her mouse catches out in front of the girls for lunch. She has been forced to share on several occasions.



And then there are the little ones. Tubby takes very good care of her chicks as she teaches them how and what to eat.

As they grow, she can take them outside for some outdoor lessons. And Lizzie will be sure to watch.



Then they grow up so fast. Soon we will have additional eggs! Oh Yes!



Continuing to integrating new girls into the flock after mom leaves them on their own isn't always easy for the newcomers. They must always respect the big girls' place on the roost or suffer the consequences. The big girls like to be in on the rear right in front of the mirror...remind you of anybody we know? New pullets are one white Delaware sandwiched between two Barred Rocks.

If you find yourself wondering about the phenomena of poultry pets, then I encourage you to check out [www.BackYardChickens.com](http://www.BackYardChickens.com). They have everything you need to know about raising and caring for these wonderful animals. Warning: Chickens are addicting. Proceed with caution!