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CHICKENS IN THE VEGETABLE GARDEN

Why did the chickens cross the garden?



Why Chickens in the Garden?

- Benefits of chickens in the garden
 - Organic insect control
 - Organic fertilizer
 - Organic weed control
 - Meat with the vegetables



Problems with Chickens in the Garden

- Death loss
 - Skunks, Raccoons, Dogs, Cats, Hawks, Weasels
- Vegetable damage
 - Chickens scratching and eating plants
- Expenses
 - Feed, water, shelter
- Processing/Winter care
 - Broilers need processing
 - Layers need winter feed and care

Project Concept

- Garden fallow area
 - Take 1/3 of garden out of production
 - Grow chickens in fallow area
 - Use portable electric fencing to keep chickens safe and away from garden plants
- Rotate fallow area each year
 - Increase soil nutrients
 - Decrease weeds and insects

Project Overview

- Spring 2009
 - Brood 60 broilers and 10 layers
 - Set up 2 garden enclosures
 - Pre sample soil and weeds
- Spring/Summer 2009
 - Place 30 broilers and 5 layers in each enclosure
 - Grow broilers for 8 weeks
 - Process broilers
 - Post sample soil, weeds, and insects





Soil Nutrients

- Pre- samples
 - Routine plus Nitrogen and Organic Matter
 - Currently being analyzed
- Post-samples
 - Taken after processing

Enclosure #1 had 20% weed cover at chicken placement



Enclosure #2 Weed cover 40% at chicken placement



Control vs Enclosure



Chicken Weed Control

- Weeds controlled well
 - Field bindweed
 - Prickly lettuce
 - Blue grass
 - Storksbill
- Weeds partially controlled
 - Mallow
 - Whitetop
 - Scotch thistle

Pest Control Observations

- Chickens chase anything that moves
 - Ants
 - Worms
 - Caterpillars
 - Grasshoppers
 - Beetles
- Layers forage well
- Broilers forage a little

Remaining Tasks

- Broilers will be processed and weighed at 8 weeks
- Garden show will be produced
- Fact sheet will be produced
- Project will be complete in October

Now you know why the chickens crossed the garden!

