



## Hawthorn Hill Poultry - Breed Overview

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Thank you for considering Hawthorn Hill for your purchase of quality poultry. This breed summary is intended to provide some additional information to help make your experience a positive one!

Deciding on a breed is one of the first and most important steps after making the decision to raise heritage chickens. There are dozens of possibilities and it is important to choose one that will best meet your needs and expectations. If breeding for conservation is your goal, it is highly recommended to choose only one breed so you can put your time and resources into building your flock before branching out. If you keep a mixed flock you'll have more freedom to keep hens of different breeds and varieties. The following is a brief summary of what can be expected from Hawthorn Hill's well-established poultry strains.

### White Chanteclers

White Chanteclers are my most practical breed, and a perfect choice for those interested in self-sufficiency. These are TRUE dual-purpose heritage farm fowl which strike an excellent balance between egg production and meat qualities. Chanteclers gain weight fast so are ready for butchering earlier than most pure breeds, at around 20 weeks. The white feathers pluck cleanly for an attractive table bird. These clever, independent birds are highly regarded for hardiness; in fact, cold weather-tolerance was intentionally built into the breed since its inception in 1908. I find they have excellent fertility and hatchability. As a result of over a decade of focused breeding selection, my hens now rarely take time away from laying to go broody. While they don't enjoy being handled or fussed with, they will tolerate it. Roosters are respectful to people, but tend to be territorial. Young cockerels can be raised together successfully, but it's best to keep only one mature rooster per hen pen.

### Buff Orpingtons

Grand and golden...Buff Orpingtons are always eye-catching, whether at a prestigious show or out in the yard. They are a beautiful option for those interested in a heavy, calm breed for their farm or yard. The hens will produce enough eggs to keep most owners satisfied, although Orpington hens take more time to reach point of lay and may take a longer break between laying cycles than other, more prolific pure-breeds. Cockerels grow well, finish up huge and are excellent for slow roasting! Allow them 28 weeks to reach a good butcher size, and they will continue to grow and fill out for several weeks after that. HH Buff Orpingtons are well-known in exhibition circles, and regularly place at the top of their class.

### Blue & Black Cochins

While Cochins are mainly considered ornamental, my strains are very comparable to Orpingtons in egg and meat qualities. Both hens and roosters are sweet-natured, never in a hurry and tend to be under your feet looking for attention. Being a less active breed, they willingly tolerate a smaller enclosure, making them a perfect choice for urban chicken-keepers. Cochins are giants in the chicken world and grow to a massive size with an abundance of soft fluff that makes them appear even larger. Nevertheless, their gentleness makes them a great introduction to poultry for adults or youth. Unlike some exhibition lines, my Cochins remain very successful natural breeders. It's not uncommon for mature Cochin hens to go broody late in the spring, which may be useful if you want to hatch chicks under hens. Keep in mind, however, that broodiness is counter-productive to overall egg prolificacy.

### Bantam Light Brown Leghorns

Pets with breakfast benefits! These mini-chickens are smart, active, chatty and curious. The hens especially are naturally tame, and even the littlest hands can easily catch and handle them. By spending some time with them and offering treats they become quite trainable. Bantam Leghorn hens are very prolific layers of small, white eggs which are hard-shelled and high quality. I often hear from the older generation that the lustrous, colourful roosters are the quintessential farm chickens they remember from the past, making them a joy to have decorating the farmyard. While their diminutive size and friendliness makes them an excellent choice for urban flocks, supplemental heat will be required in the winter.