

Backyard chickens can bring bears

by Chris Thomas, Oregon News Service

Free, fast food is an irresistible lure for bears, and education campaigns have long been in place in Oregon to encourage people to keep trash, and even bird feeders, away from bears. But the rise in backyard chicken-keeping offers bears a new attraction: chickens.

Erin Edge, Rocky Mountain region associate with Defenders of Wildlife, says the good news is that multi-strand electric fencing can keep bears away from chickens, "People taking these small measures to

protect their investment in their chickens also protects bears and increases human safety."

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) estimates there are between 25,000 and 30,000 black bears in the state, and says they're very active in midsummer, when their breeding season begins. Reports of black bear sightings are already on the rise along the coast and in the Eugene area.

Edge says a shock from a strong electric fence is a quick lesson for any bear and can stave off future problems that could lead to

a bear being put down or relocated, "We're seeing bears that are escalating behavior faster with chickens than they do with garbage. They may break into structures faster. They may stick around longer."

Edge adds that bear fencing has additional benefits because it keeps out almost all other predators, too, such as coyotes, foxes and mountain lions.

Guidelines for fencing design and voltage can be found at www.LWWF.org. ODFW black bear information is available at www.dfw.state.or.us.

Bits & Bites

By Jacqueline Ramsay



It was so nice the other afternoon to just sit on my 4'x8' concrete block they call a patio and enjoy the sunshine. All of a sudden I notice a funny bump on one of my tomato plants. I stewed over this for several days. A friend came in, looked puzzled over it for a spell and said, "I think your plant is trying to tell you 'I don't belong growing down side up'." The bumps seem to be root nodules. Since they can't find any dirt to sink into they will probably just sit there and be cute. Nice to know, I thought it might be a fungus of some sort. But, better still, was the fact that my Crab cactus had two big beautiful peach colored blooms on it. It hasn't seen a bloom in over two years. I don't know what it is celebrating. The fact there is sunshine, or the fact it stopped raining for a day or two.

Now, down to the bee I seem to have that keeps buzzing around in my life these days. Have you ever had the feeling you were standing on the curb watching life go by?? Thinking of all the folks I knew in Vernonia (strange, my spell check doesn't know Vernonia is a correct spelling) that have passed away in the last three or four months. Now since I have changed treatment days, I have heard of three acquaintances that are much worse off than I. One had a stroke, #2 had a heart attack, and #3 who is a diabetic with gangrene in one of his legs. Only way to stop it is amputation, he and his family say NO. He is up in age, mentally unstable, really in poor health. It seems to me there are a lot of us in dialysis fighting to stay ahead of our final destiny, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Yes, I'm in a FUNK. Look at the sunshine, enjoy it while you can. Eat sensibly, eat healthy, laugh and smile and maybe you can ward off some of the other bad side affects of what we call bad health.

For now, bye.

I'm off to Blue Grass again tonight. Wheeee...

50 Years Ago This Month

The August 9, 1962, issue of the *Vernonia Eagle* included the following news story on the front page:

Much of the meeting of the city council Monday evening was devoted to consideration of the sewage lagoon and the correction of its inefficiency.

A report from the engineers indicate that their study revealed that the present condition was due to low sewage flow, high evaporation and excessive seepage.

Their recommendations for correcting it were as follows:

1. Return sewage flow to former septic tank disposal system and allow floor of the lagoon to dry out.
2. Remove all vegetation.
3. Divide area into two sections by a four or five foot dike.
4. Rip bottom area to depth of one and a half to two feet in two directions, wet loosened earth and compact with sheepsfoot or grid roller.

The first recommendation has been followed out now and the engineers are arranging with the original contractors to do the other work as soon as possible.

The council took action, also, to have an ordinance prepared lowering the sewer use charge from \$1.50 to \$1.00.

A representative of the Jay-Cees appeared before the council

to present suggestions from Bruce Roberts for deepening the swimming pool at the diving board by moving bottom material upstream, thus creating an area of medium depth for use for swimming instruction. It was the opinion of council that the area on the east side of the pool at the end of North street formerly used for instruction could still be used for that and that it was too near the end of the season to make changes now.

Information from Crown Construction company was that water lines in Second addition were pro-

gressing satisfactorily and that sewer lines were the next problem. A supplier for sewer pipe is to be here this week to figure material needed.

Other business included a change in names on a contract for a house in the OA addition and instructions of the recorder to notify certain residents of defective sidewalks which need repair. A decision was reached to engage a surveyor to lay out the extension of Idaho avenue in the Oregon-American addition.



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