

The Small Backyard Homestead Planner

A one-page plan for raised beds, hens and compost on a quarter acre or less

Map your yard (weekend 1)

- ☐ Sketch the lot on graph paper: house, fences, trees, hose, wet spots
- ☐ Check sun at 9 am, noon and 3 pm; shade the dark areas
- ☐ Mark your daily walking paths (door, trash cans, car)
- ☐ Measure usable space after paths of 24-36 inches

Zone 1: by the kitchen door

- ☐ One small bed of salad greens and herbs
- ☐ A lidded scrap bucket for compost
- ☐ Pots of chives, parsley and thyme

Zone 2: the main garden

- ☐ Two or three 4x8 raised beds, 10-12 inches deep
- ☐ Soil mix: 60% topsoil, 30% compost, 10% bark fines
- ☐ Wood-chip paths and a compost bin within 20 steps
- ☐ Six easy crops: lettuce, bush beans, zucchini, cherry tomatoes, radishes, chard

Zone 3: hens and fruit

- ☐ Check city and HOA rules before buying chicks
- ☐ Coop 4 sq ft per hen, run 10 sq ft per hen
- ☐ Hardware cloth and two-step latches against raccoons
- ☐ One or two fruit trees or a row of berries

Stretch the season

- ☐ Build a cold frame by September
- ☐ Sow spinach and mache 6-8 weeks before first frost
- ☐ Plant garlic about 4 weeks before the ground freezes
- ☐ Mulch every empty bed with leaves or straw

Year-one checklist

- ☐ Spring: beds + compost bin
- ☐ Summer: herb strip + paths
- ☐ Fall: cold frame + garlic + coop plan
- ☐ Winter: write what worked and order seeds