



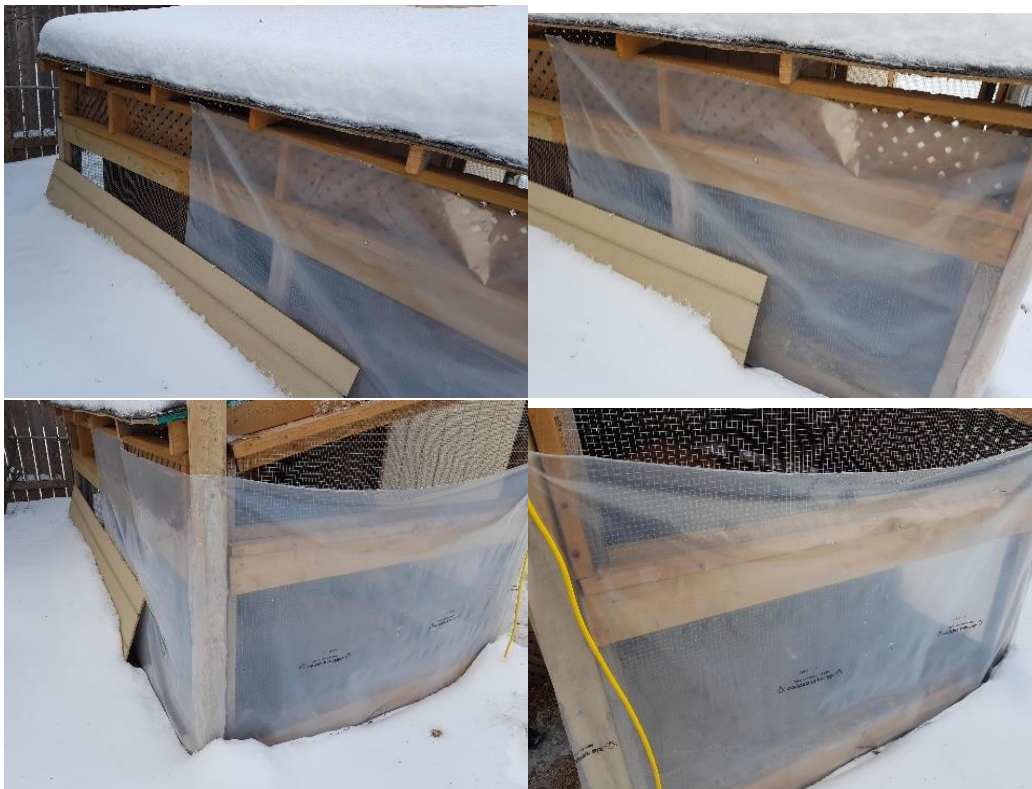
## KITCHENER URBAN HENS PRESENT

### “WINTERIZING YOUR BACKYARD CHICKEN COOPS”

A visit to the home of Alayne and Mike Klesar of Kitchener Urban Hens proven very worthwhile in showing how to properly winterize “The Coop and Run Area”, for a flock of backyard birds. Their current group of laying hens has weathered the cold winter months very well to date, due to a few simple, but effective, techniques.

#### 1. Plastic Tarp as a Windbreak

By using a simple plastic tarp on two sides of the run, the outside run area is kept remarkably free of wind, drafts, and snow build up that would otherwise bring unwanted moisture and cold into the run. The area is nice and dry, allowing the birds to have room to run, exercise and enjoy fresh air, even in cold conditions. An example is shown below in the photos.



## 2. Heated Waterer

A vitally important thing for all backyard birds is to have access to clean, fresh drinking water at all times. Unfortunately, Mother Nature is often not very kind during the winter months and the bitter cold temperatures can lead to frozen waterers. Alayne and Mike utilize a heated waterer, which keeps the temperature just warm enough to prevent the water supply from freezing.



### 3. Deep Litter

To help retain heat in the chicken coop, the deep litter in the coop is kept between 6 and 8-inches deep, during the winter months to insulate the floor. Alayne and Mike start with 2-3 inches of pine shavings, and the coop is cleaned out every weekend. About half of the old bedding is emptied back onto the floor of the run. Over the course of the winter, the manure builds up quite quickly. It is raked twice a week, turning everything over. Eventually, it can be cleaned out once on the weekend and once about mid-week. At this point, the manure level is high enough that it's almost like stepping down as you leave the coop. Come Spring, a full clean out of the run is done and the deep litter compost is used on the garden.

Using this method helps to keep an extra source of heat and warmth for the birds during the cold winter months.



#### 4. Extra Run Space and Access to Feed and Water

To give the birds a little bit more run space and a separate area for food and water, Alayne and Mike created a separate shed space which the birds have access to.



\*\* Note: The picture on the left shows the entrance from the chicken run into the extra food/water space, while the centre photo shows the same entrance inside the food/water space. The picture on the right shows how the feeder and heated waterer have been situated.

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#### 5. Chicken Coop Itself

While the actual chicken coop itself is a fairly simple design, the birds are still warm and dry, despite the fact that there are no heat lamps used. The run is kept dry and relatively free from wind and drafts, the deep litter method allows for extra warmth in the run area, and the actual coop is constructed well to prevent drafts and moisture build up. The birds are also able to huddle close together for warmth if needed.



\*\* Note: The picture on the left shows the entrance to the coop. It allows the birds easy access to the coop and provides for a little bit of airflow inside the coop to prevent moisture build-up. The centre and right photos show how the birds are able to huddle together for warmth. The flip lid allows for easy access to the birds while maintaining a tight enough seal to prevent drafts.

## 6. Extra Storage Space

By building the accompanying shed that provides access for food and water and extra run space, there is also plenty of space for storage for items such as shavings, rakes, shovels, feed bins, etc. as shown in the photo below.



## In Conclusion

Remember that winterizing your coop is much like building the coop in the first place. You can be as simple or elaborate as your budget, time and imagination will allow. However, the basic elements of wind and weather control, the deep litter method for extra heat, a dry and insulated coop with some airflow to prevent moisture, and access to unfrozen drinking water is essential. If you make sure that these steps are looked after, your birds will remain healthy and happy even during with wettest and coldest winter conditions.