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Papa John talks chickens
By Pippa Fisher

Papa John talks with interested residents outside of his backyard chicken coop. Photo Pippa Fisher

Papa John is once again helping Lafayette residents with their chickens. As he has done many times before, this spring John Kiefer - better known to most as Papa John - is running workshops from his Lafayette home, sharing his extensive knowledge of chickens.

In fact his classes have proved so popular, they are once again full, so he is (once again) adding another class on March 25 from 1 to 3:30 p.m. to accommodate those on the wait list - and he has room for a few more.

Each workshop is a complete class, not part of a series, and teaches how to raise chickens from starting young chicks in a brooding box to moving them into the coop, maintaining laying hens and constructing a sustainable coop. All participants receive an email upon completion of all course materials.

Papa John has been raising chickens since he moved to Lafayette in 1966. He decided to develop a sustainable environment for chickens appropriate to the limited space of residential living.

And thus was born his sustainable coop which keeps chickens on soft soil, rather than raised up on a floor in the way of traditional pre-made coops. Kiefer says that the chickens like to scratch in the dirt and, by keeping them on the soil they create healthy manure by effectively digging it in for themselves. And because in this natural environment the manure dries quickly, there is no odor and no cleaning is required.

Kiefer likes to hold his classes in March so that anyone interested in going ahead with chickens has April to build their coop in time to get new chicks in May, which he says is a good time for healthy chicks.

Residents interested in the free March 25 class should contact Kiefer directly via email at chickenspapajohn@gmail.com to find out further details.

Reach the reporter at: pippa@lamorindaweekly.com

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