How To Use Chickens To Boost Your Garden Health and Plant Yields

Categories: Growing your Own, Homesteading

For homesteaders and urban farmers, the use of chickens has begun to delve deeper than simply providing fresh eggs for breakfast. By incorporating chickens into your garden, you receive the same gardening power of multiple tools and fertilizers. Those seeking a way to disconnect from modern gardening tactics are flocking to our feathered friends in record numbers, and after reviewing this list of ways chickens boost the health and productivity of your garden, you'll soon be clucking your way to healthier vegetables and more beautiful plants.

Natural Nitrogen Source for Compost

In order to properly feed your garden, you need to cultivate a compost with a 30:1 carbon to nitrogen ratio. While there are many commercial products with such a nitrogen/carbon concentration, why spend money when you can call upon the nearly eight pounds of manure a chicken produces per month.
To make a good chicken manure compost, mix 45 pounds of leaves or hay per one pound of chicken manure. As the chickens produce their manure, pack it away in a leach-proof container until you're ready to build your compost pile. Once you're ready, mix the 45 pounds of leaves per one pound of manure and spread the compost over your garden. Before you know it, you'll have vibrant and healthy plants without having to spend hundreds of dollars on commercial products.

**The Cutest Tillers in the World**

Regardless of your garden size or purpose, tilling the soil is essential to stimulate healthy plant growth. While you can manually till your garden, why do so when a single chicken can till nearly 50 square feet of sod in less than six weeks? Simply place your chickens in the desired area and allow them to do their work. Within a matter of weeks, your established sod will be perfectly tilled without you having to lift a single finger.

**Powerful and Safe Fertilizer Machines**

Fertilizer is the lifeblood of any garden; however, many commercial fertilizers are packed with harmful compounds and chemicals, which leak into the very essence of your plants. Because chickens produce such large quantities of manure per month, introducing the recommended levels of nitrogen and other compounds into the soil can be strikingly fast, if you have enough chickens roaming in a confined area. As a general rule of thumb, one chicken can fertilize 100 square feet of space in just 75 days. Simply confine your chickens in the area you wish to fertilize and keep them in this contained area until the soil has been properly fertilized.

**Spread Mulch Without Any Work**

Spreading mulch is the disdain of many farmers and gardeners. While this laborious duty is required for a healthy garden, if you have a bad back or a lack of time, it's also one of the first steps in gardening to be skipped. However, this is where your feathered friends come into play. A single chicken can spread and level a large pile of mulch within 48 to 72 hours. Simply place the mulch or compost where you wish to to be spread and confine a couple of chickens in the area. Within a matter of days, the mulch will be levelled. Are your chickens showing a lack of interest in the mulch pile? Spread some of their feed over the mulch and watch the pile be levelled out in record time.

(Image from: Wikipedia)