The Backyard Run — 8′ × 16′

A free starter chicken run plan from LawnMuse (lawnmuse.com/chicken-run-plans/)

Specifications

Finished size	8′ wide × 16′ long; 6′ high front wall, 5′6″ back wall (sloped roof line)
Run area	128 sq ft
Capacity	Up to 12 hens at 10 sq ft per bird (8–10 comfortable)
Structure	Pressure-treated 4×4 corner posts, 2×4 framing, base boards at ground level
Mesh	½-inch 19-gauge galvanised hardware cloth on all walls; apron around the base
Door	30-inch framed walk-in door, two-step latch
Roof	Mesh standard; rigid panels optional
Build time	One weekend, two people
Est. materials cost	Roughly $280–$450 (typical US 2026 prices)

Frame layout (front wall)

Corner posts at each end; intermediate posts every 4 ft along the 16 ft walls; top rail and mid rail on all walls; base board at ground level on all walls. Door (30 in clear) framed in one end wall, right-hand bay. Front wall 6 ft high, back wall 5′6″ — the difference gives the roof its slope so rain runs off the back.

Materials / shopping list

Item	Qty	Notes
4×4 pressure-treated posts, 8′	4	Corner posts, cut to height
2×4 pressure-treated, 8′	14	Rails for the two 16′ walls
2×4 pressure-treated, 8′	8	End walls and door framing
2×2 lumber, 8′	4	Door frame and braces
½-in 19-gauge hardware cloth, 36″ wide	100′ roll	Walls and door (and roof if meshed)
½-in hardware cloth, 24″ wide	50′ roll	Base apron
Exterior screws 3″	1 box (~200)	Frame joints
Exterior screws 1¼″ + fender washers	1 box each	Mesh fixing — no staples
Strap hinges	2	Door
Two-step latch + carabiner	1 set	Raccoon-resistant door closing
Corner brackets	8	Post-to-rail reinforcement
Gravel / coarse sand	4–6 bags	Post holes, dry strip inside door
Ground pins	1 pack	Pinning the apron

Tool list

Tape measure, spirit level, string line and stakes; post-hole digger or spade; circular or hand saw; drill/driver; tin snips or angle grinder for hardware cloth (wear gloves); hammer and pliers; step ladder.

Build steps

1. Mark and level an exact 8′ × 16′ rectangle (diagonals equal). Choose the door end.

2. Set corner posts 18–24 in deep on gravel, braced plumb — front pair at 6′, back pair at 5′6″.

3. Fit base boards inside the posts at ground level, all four walls.

4. Fit top and mid rails; studs every 4 ft; frame the 30 in door opening.

5. Mesh the walls with hardware cloth, screwed with fender washers every 6–8 in; overlap courses 2 in and wire the overlap.

6. Lay the apron: 24 in hardware cloth flat outside the walls, bent up and screwed to the base board; pin and cover the outer edge.

7. Build and hang the door; fit the two-step latch; check the half-inch rule on all four sides.

8. Roof: mesh across the top, or sloped rigid panels. No gaps where roof meets walls.

9. Final walk: gap hunt, hard pull on mesh at ground level in five places, latch test with gloves. Then hens.

Before you build

Check local ordinances on setbacks and flock limits before building, and call before you dig if buried services are possible. This is a DIY plan drawn to standard prescriptive framing practice for a garden structure. It is not an engineer-stamped drawing and does not replace local building advice for your soil, snow load or wind zone.

More guides: lawnmuse.com — sizing (how-big-should-a-chicken-run-be), predator-proofing (predator-proof-chicken-run), budget breakdown (chicken-run-on-a-budget).