



Bird houses, in Burma Shave style, caution visitors to "watch for low flying birds and droppings out of the sky."

A WONDERLAND FOR BIRDS

Welcome To Birdland

Pardon the pun, but Chris Gierloff's hobby is strictly for the birds.

His country home near Ridgefield, Wash., is surrounded by more than 200 bird houses of various shapes and sizes, all created and built by Chris in his workshop.

It's Birdland U.S.A., featuring single family dwellings, duplexes, apartments, condominiums and swanky mansions for his feathered friends — all available rent-free for a song. There's a Bird Cage Saloon, The First Bird Church, and Song Bird School, all of them mounted on long poles, well out of reach of cats or other would-be intruders.

Not a single birdhouse is for sale. "People often ask to buy them but I'm not in it for money," explains Gier-

loff. "I really don't know much of anything about birds but just enjoy having them around."

His labor of love started in 1942 when Gierloff, now 65, built his first bird house. "I discovered one wasn't enough so I kept building new ones every year." He still builds a few new ones each year but spends most of his time cleaning, repairing and repainting existing bird houses.

Gierloff and his wife Eilene welcome visitors to drive by and look at their Wonderland for birds. The country place where they and their feathered friends live is located a few miles south of Ridgefield, Wash. Their address is: Chris and Eilene Gierloff, 716 N.W. 179th St., Ridgefield, Wash. 98642.

RESISTANT TO MOST COMMON AILMENTS

4-Horned Navajo Sheep Oldest American Breed

The oldest breed of domestic sheep in the U.S. is making a comeback on a Washington sheep ranch.

Historians think Navajo sheep may have been brought to North America by Viking explorers in the 14th century. They were raised for centuries in the arid south but seem to thrive in any climate, hot or cold. Ingrid Painter, Redmond, Wash., has developed a flock of Navajos which she breeds for both meat and wool.

"We've developed an improved fleece quality which makes the wool highly desirable for handspinners, especially those who want to weave Navajo rugs in the traditional way," Painter told FARM SHOW. "We've maintained the best qualities of the primitive sheep in that they're resistant to internal parasites, hoof rot and many other ailments that plague modern sheep breeds. Ewes are able to lamb unassisted and are superb mothers, capable of raising triplets."

Navajo sheep produce a lean carcass with no excess fat, according to Painter. Lambs can be raised to butcher at 5 to 7 months on pasture

alone with a dressed weight of 45 to 50 lbs. Navajo's require little in the way of high protein feed supplements.

Painter says the fleece on Navajos is excellent. "Our fleeces recently won the top five prizes at the largest wool show in the Northwest. Our first place winner also received the longest fleece award."

Many of the rams are 4-horned as well as some of the ewes. The fleece is not all uniform but comes in varying shades. "When I was at the recent World Sheep Congress in New Zealand I was amazed to realize that Navajos have many of the rare color patterns highly sought after by geneticists throughout the world."

Painter sells 4-horned rams at \$300 apiece and ewes for \$150. She also sells carded and uncarded wool after shearing in the spring.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ingrid Painter, Puddleduck Farm, 1607 232nd Ave. N.E., Redmond, Wash. 98052 (ph 206 885-3508).

THEY "SOUND OFF" WHEN STRANGERS APPEAR

Peacocks Make Good Farm "Watchdogs"

By Naomi Simmons

As I turned in the driveway to Doris Shaw's home southeast of Coffeyville, Kan., I heard several high-pitched voiced calling. "Help! Hhhhelp! Hhhhelp!"

A startled look about revealed the identity of the distressed callers . . . peacocks!

"They are good watchdogs. If a stray animal, unfamiliar person, a car or anyone comes up around her, they holler," Doris explains. "When we had cattle, the peacocks paid no attention to our cattle, but if a stray animal approaches, they will holler their heads off."

The peafowl meander about the farmstead and come up to the house taking Doris' red chow dog, Bear, her tabby cat, Tom, and long haired calico cat, Baby, for granted. The peafowl, the cats and the dogs all consider each other as friends, it seems.

"But you let a strange animal come near and everybody gets disturbed," Doris says with a laugh. She has 26 adult peafowl and two chicks. Peafowl nest on the ground or in low places. The hens usually lay between 12 and 15 supersized eggs at each nesting. Eggs are about two in. in diameter and three in. long.

When the hens come in to eat, they always holler. They stand up, shake their legs, yell for help, then fly in," Doris explains. "They are so interesting to watch."

She feeds corn, milo, wheat — whatever field crop has been raised and saved. Her feathered friends also eat several pounds of insects and worms every day.

"Only the males have the beautiful plumage," Doris explains. "The females and young birds are plain gray in color so they blend in with the dry grass and weeds. You can't tell whether the babies are male or female. They look exactly alike."



Doris has 26 adult peafowl and two chicks.

"A lot of people think the females are turkeys when they see them."

The males begin to develop the colorful plumage at about seven or eight months of age. It takes two to three years to develop the full tail that fascinates humans and seduces the hen peafowl as the cock spreads his tail and struts in all his glory.

The tail feathers grow in layers. The longest bottom layer has no eyes. Subsequent feather layers have eye markings with the larger ones on the longer feathers. These markings get smaller as the layers of feathers are shorter.

As the birds begin to molt during the summer, Doris gathers some of the more colorful feathers to give to interested friends.

Though the peafowl do not provide an income source to Doris, she feels they are worth much more than the grain she feeds. Not only are they beautiful insect eating birds and companions, they give her a sense of security with their warning signals.



Painter sells 4-horned rams for \$300 apiece. Both rams and ewes can grow 4 horns.