

Booted Bantams are calm and friendly, making them ideal for a wide range of chicken enthusiasts.



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Booted Bantam Chickens Stand Out

The Booted Bantam, a feather-footed chicken, has made an impression since ancient Rome. These pint-sized birds are among the oldest bantam breeds in the world. Historical records suggest that Booted Bantams likely originated in South China, though they first gained popularity after spreading to the Netherlands and Germany in the 1600s. The birds even appeared in artwork by Dutch Golden Age painter Adriaen van Utrecht around 1640.

It wasn't until 1879 that the breed was added to the American Poultry Association's (APA) Standard of Perfection; at that time, only one color variety (white) was accepted. Today, the APA's standard colors include Mille Fleur, Porcelain, Self Blue and black.

Booted Bantams are closely related to the Belgian Bearded D'Uccle, though they're larger and lack a beard. The birds typically weigh around 26 oz. for males and 22 oz. for females, and they're known for their single combs and red earlobes. Their short backs and necks make their high tails stand out, and the feathers on their feet can extend 4 in. or more outward. They're also identified by their "vulture hocks," stiff, straight feathers growing from the lower part of the thighs and pointing downward. An ideal bird features a

short, compact body with a prominent breast.

The birds are calm and friendly, making them ideal for a wide range of chicken enthusiasts. While they tolerate confinement, they're good flyers and should be kept within tall fencing. They tend to be decent layers, especially among bantams, and lay small, creamy-white eggs. Expect about 150 to 180 eggs per year. While females are broody and make great mothers, they usually don't produce many chicks from their clutches.

While the birds are hardy, they still need protection from the cold. They aren't very tolerant of humidity, so avoid wet, muddy areas in their enclosures. They do best with low perches that are easy to step onto and with coop doors at least a foot wide for easy entry without disturbing their feathers.

Their feathered feet reduce the birds' instinct to dig and scratch, making them safer than other breeds in gardens and landscaping. However, they still enjoy pecking, so it's best to keep them away from low-hanging fruits and vegetables.

Give Booted Bantams plenty of access to short-cut, grassy lawns to keep their leg and foot feathers in good condition, and you'll enjoy the perks of a happy breed that makes your yard feel fancy.

Powerful Precision Laser Cutting

Woodworkers seeking serious power and precision in their laser projects might find the Laser Tree K40 their favorite tool. With a true 40W+ output, it's built to handle even tough cutting jobs with ease. Thanks to clever beam-compression technology, eight 5.5W high-performance laser diodes work together to deliver a refined, powerful beam.

The K40 includes an adapter board and a multi-hole sliding plate, making it compatible with various engravers. Convenient power and signal LED indicators confirm electrical stability.

A company spokesperson says, "Setting the focus is straightforward, and the dual-fan system keeps everything cool and running reliably, delivering stable performance and a longer lifespan."

For improved accuracy, the K40 features a red cross cursor at the base, which quickly pinpoints a starting point, especially for repeat cuts. The removable protective cover provides options for safety and maintenance, while the integrated dovetail guide ensures smooth, stable movement. Focus can be fine-tuned with up to 115 mm of adjustment.

The unit's dual-fan design maximizes airflow without excessive noise, keeping cuts sharp and consistent. Built-in temperature sensors help maintain safe operation, and the improved focus slider glides easily for



Removable cover offers options for safety and maintenance, while the integrated dovetail guide ensures smooth, stable movement.

precise adjustments. With a streamlined air duct and side-by-side air and power ports, the K40 simplifies wire management.

A high-performance thermal sheet helps keep the drive board operating smoothly and reliably.

The Laser Tree K40 40W Optical Power Laser Module retails for \$529 USD plus S&H.

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Scrimshaw Artist Keeps Traditional Art Form Alive

Roni Dietrich of Harrisburg, Pa., is among a handful of artists who keep alive the 19th-century tradition of scrimshaw. Whale hunters once carved ivory whale teeth to pass the time on long sea voyages. Sailors would sketch images on paper, then transfer them to whale or walrus ivory by poking a series of dots through the paper sketch. Sharpened sail needles carved the designs, which were then filled with candle soot to make the images stand out.

"I've been a scrimshaw artist and carver since 1979, when my mother bought me a starter kit," Dietrich says. "Since then, I've scrimshawed hundreds of pieces, including jewelry-sized to knife handles and large artifacts."

Her work has appeared in many knife and scrimshaw books, and she has scrimshawed for one of the presidents of Leupold Scopes in Germany and for actor and director Charles S. Dutton.

"In 2005, I won Best Color Wildlife Award at the national scrimshaw competition in Mystic, Conn., put on by Barbra Cullin of Mystic Scrimshanders."

Still, the art form remains obscure.

"Most people struggle to understand scrimshaw, much less its modern history," Dietrich says. "Ivory, one of the historical mediums for scrimshaw, has been federally banned as a US import since the early 1970s. However, it's legal for art use so long as you can prove it came into the country before the ban. Five or six states have made it illegal under any circumstance."

In the decades since the ban, scrimshaw artists have adapted by using preserved woolly mammoth tusks and synthetic materials like cast-polyester ivory.

"Some state bans include woolly mammoth," Dietrich says.

She notes that Pennsylvania has a bill pending to do the same.

"Writing a bill that protects animals that have been extinct for 10,000 years makes legislators look out of touch with reality. What's next, unicorn protection? This bill will not only affect scrimshaw artisans, but it also affects fossil collectors and all the people in Alaska who find it and sell it as part of their living."

Despite this legal confusion, Dietrich notes that making scrimshaw is simple.

"You polish a piece (mammoth ivory—my favorite—or a polymer ivory substitute, certain stones, plastic, horn, bone, antler, micarta, even Corian countertop material) to a mirror finish, removing all scratches or nicks."



"I use a very highly sharpened scribing tool to scratch over the lines of the drawing. Then I cover the entire area with India ink," says Dietrich.

Next, she uses a special STABILO write-on pencil to draw directly onto the polished piece.

"I use a very highly sharpened scribing tool to scratch over the lines of the drawing. Then I cover the entire area with India ink and let it dry well before spitting into the tissue and rubbing off the excess ink. Yes, saliva is really the best way. Never use water."

Ideally, the ink will fill all the scratches, allowing the picture to stand out. Dietrich repeats this process until the artwork matches her vision.

Much of Dietrich's current art incorporates equine imagery, inspired by a gelding paint she rode and cared for at the Capital Area Therapeutic Riding Association.

"I consider each piece as one of my 'children,'" Dietrich says. "Each piece is different and priced accordingly. As for how long I spend on each piece, I work on it until it's done. Scrimshaw, whaling, and woolly mammoth ethics is something that I can bore people with for hours at parties."

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