Lavender Araucanas

The unique blue / green egg layer

The low maintenance South American fowl that captures the imagination of all who have them.

Ideal for the fancier who wants a really hardy breed with all round appeal. The blue eggs are a highlight.

History

The Araucana has had an interesting history with contributions from many parts of the world. The Spanish first founded the Araucana in their conquest of Chile during the 1500’s. Araucana was the local indigenous tribe, so it is fitting that they gave the jungle fowl of the region, the same name.

They languished as a breed until the 1920’s when they were exhibited in London. Their ability to lay a blue, olive, green egg set them apart from other breeds. More remarkable though is that unlike all other domestic fowl the colour of the shell permeates right through.

Adding more to the confusion of the breed, were the Americans who split the Araucanas into two – Araucana and Americauna. Because of the diverse nature of Araucanas i.e. some rumpless, varied colours, tufted beards and crests etc. it has been difficult to clearly define them.

Features

- **Egg Laying**: Araucanas regularly lay a medium sized egg which ranges from blue to olive green.
- **Fertility**: Roosters are extremely active and have a high fertility rate.
- **Hatchability**: Chickens usually hatch early and have little difficulty getting out.
- **Rearing**: Dense feathering makes them easy to rear and they remain healthy.
- **Suitability**: A friendly, smallish bird they are suitable for small backyards.

Lavender Araucanas are very hardy birds, which eat frugally and requires very little maintenance. Fanciers enjoy their soft grey beauty and unique blue / green eggs.
History (cont).

It is widely believed that they were introduced into Australia in 1927. Gerry Coady an Araucana pioneer carefully bred the Blue (or lavender as we know it) breeding out the tufted feet and 5\(^{th}\) toe to suit the American Standard, which was the only one in existence at the time. The British, then Australian standards, copied this and so we now have a standard to go by.

More misinformation came in the latter part of the century when it was falsely claimed that Araucana eggs possessed less cholesterol than any other egg. It proved to be a fortunate falsehood however and managed to raise the awareness of the breed today. Currently they are my fastest sellers.

The characteristics of this beautiful but endangered species

Lavender Araucanas are easy to breed. They are reliable layers (180 – 190) eggs per year and lay a smallish (60g) egg when hens. The shells are quite tough but this does not seem to have any effect on the hatching as they are always one of the first to hatch and cleanly make their way out of the egg. Males are usually very active so fertility rates are not an issue. Once hatched the “Lavenders” feather quickly and are the most hardy of all the birds that I breed.

They make excellent foragers and wander far from the pen in search of insects, grubs and other tender morsels. Like most fowls they seem to do better when kept with their own kind with the rooster taking control of the females. The males however can become aggressive and if they do so they need to be handled regularly.

The appeal of the Grey birds

There is something about grey birds that capture the imagination of would be buyers. Many people who visit my property intent on getting their hands on other varieties often leave with an Araucana or two instead.

This breed though quite independent can be easily tamed and I know of one girl who bought a trio and has them sitting happily on her shoulder as she walks around.

Like any fowl they can be tamed with handling and have a surprisingly soft feel when you pick them up, which adds to their appeal.
More characteristics about the Lavender Araucana

Type

The Araucana is a compact bird possessing a generous amount of soft feather and down. This gives them a plump look without being too fluffy. They hold themselves erect and proud in the pen and look alert at all times.

Three commonly accepted truisms of Araucanas exist. One is the relationship to the pea comb and blue eggs, another is the mating of two tufted birds and the third is the fact that they don't go broody.

As with everything about Araucanas this is not necessarily so.

The Araucana typically should only have a pea comb as this is supposedly linked to the blue egg and single or rose combed or walnut combed birds are not supposed to consistently lay the blue egg. I only have pea-combed birds and they lay a blue or blue/green eggs all the time. So beware if someone offers you a bird with a different comb.

Another issue with them in breeding is that you should not try to mate a heavily tufted male with a similarly tufted female as this produces lethal results with deformed chickens that are dead in the shell. I have not had an issue with this aspect and I have been able to consistently breed tufted and crested males and females without deformities.

Finally I have set eggs under one particular hen several times now and she has hatched most of the chickens and looked after them extremely well. They make great mothers! So the concept of them not going broody is definitely not true.

Summary:

Araucanas are probably the most interesting birds that I breed as they have a number of unusual characteristics such as the blue egg-laying, tufts and muffs along with a no nonsense approach. They are the hardiest of my stock and eat sparingly, preferring to graze on the open range. Their longevity and fertility coupled with the unique lavender grey colour make them a favourite to any who visit my property. I can thoroughly recommend them for the beginner or the back yard breeder who wants a tough bird that can cope with any conditions.