

THE DUTCH OWLBEARD



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Why chose for the Dutch Owlbeard

- Helping to preserve a rare Old Dutch Breed
- Comes in many colours and markings
- Large and bantam
- Good layer
- Easy to keep, hardy and tame

The Dutch Owlbeard is a genuine historical chicken with a modern appearance. The breed consist in many colours, so a choice might be difficult. But if you are looking for something special you might consider to choose this breed. Owlbeards are real showy birds to have walking free in your garden and they will happily eat your leftovers. A warning is required here however; do not feed the chickens everything, as too much salt is very bad for the chickens!

However, do you choose the Owlbeard for having a rare and useful chicken in the garden or do you choose this breed to hatch? In this case I would advise you to go to an exhibition and look around there and make your choice from the different colours. Poultry shows mostly take place in autumn. You can also look at various poultry websites. For Owlbeards is a Dutch website: www.bku-club.nl - the specialty club of keepers and breeders of Brabanters, Kraaikoppen (Breda Fowl) and Nederlandse Uilebaarden (Dutch Owlbeards). The secretary of the club

will be happy to help you with addresses of breeders who sell hatching eggs or chickens.

Motivation for purchase

There are many reasons for purchasing a few Owlbeards. In the first place they have a peculiar appearance, they are rare (so you help preserving this unique breed), they are a nice sight in the garden and a you will enjoy to see how the birds stroll around to find their food and surprise you with a fresh laid egg!

Character

The Dutch Owlbeard is tame and docile and not flighty at all. In particular this applies for the large ones, the bantams can be quite lively. They are excellent layers, even in winter.

You can find excellent birds in the Netherlands, with good types, with proper V-comb, well placed, straight in front of the eyes. The two horns must be equal in size.

The hens get broody. Occasionally. Most breeders prefer an incubator. Owlbeards are healthy, hardy and vital chickens so you will experience hardly any diseases. However, with such a limited gene pool, this might not be so forever...

What does an Owlbeard look like

An Owlbeard is a hardened bird of the landfowl type (which have a long back), On the head it has a 2 horned comb, also called a V-comb. The Owlbeard has no wattles, but a full beard and an ample feathered neck. Their eyes are orange to brown and they have slate-coloured legs, except the Cuckoo variety which have pinkish legs, and the Whites have light blue-grey legs. The Owlbeard is recognized in 14 colours (in the Netherlands). If you are a novice, it is best is to start with self-coloured birds.

What to chose, Large or Bantam

The large Owlbeards are more rare than the bantam variety. Depending on the size of the garden you can choose large Owlbeards. In a small garden a small henhouse of 1 m³ of surface and a coop of 3 x 1 meter is enough for 3 large or 5 bantam Owlbeards.

If you opt for breeding eggs you should choose eggs from hens which are frequent layers. These hens will probably also lay eggs in winter. Be aware that the breeding eggs are undamaged, smooth and have a good model. When the eggs hatch the chicks must be vital.

Selecting

Breeding chicks

When the eggs hatch, the chicks must be alert and vital. Owlbeard chicks have to be placed in a warm and well ventilated breeding room.

Which colours are recognized

The following colours are recognized:

Black, White, Laced Blue, Cuckoo, Gold-spangled, Silver-spangled, Yellow white (chamois) spangled, Golden pencilled, Silver pencilled, Silver Moorkop, Buff Moorkop, Golden Moorkop, Yellow spangled (bantams only), Silver Lavender spangled (bantams only). So you see there is ample choice.

Special demands

Owlbeards have the same demands as other chickens. To feed them they require the same feed as other chickens. However, pellet feed is best since pellets do not stick to the beard. Owlbeards like to pick the food from eachother's beard which will damage the beard. Consequently these birds cannot be showed anymore. Nowadays all feed is qualified as good, although I prefer pellets for above mentioned reasons.

Exhibition

To give you an indication how rare the breed is, this is the number of entered Owlbeards at a recent Dutch Club show. Present were: Large Fowl: one Golden Spangled, four Silver Spangled, two Buff Spangled, one Silver Blackhead, three White, two Black, two Cuckoo.

Bantams: three Golden Pencilled, eight Golden Spangled, one Silver Spangled, five Silver Lavender Spangled, four Chamois, seven White, 13 Black and two Blue.



Gold spangled chicks of 2 days old. Interesting to know is that the gold pencilled bantam cockerels (this also holds for the silver pencilled) will lose the pencilled marking when they are about 10 weeks old and the large cockerels when they are about 14 weeks old. The adult marking of the males is very different from the marking of the females.



Left: A bit older gold and silver spangled chicks.

Below: Breeding pen of gold pencilled bantams. The females are good colour, the male is a bit too red. (Coming from a Frisian Fowl breeding line).



Left: Owlbeard bantam cockerel, silver lavender spangled. The side hangers are not properly marked, they are laced but should be spangled.

**Right:
Cuckoo Owlbeard bantam.
Cuckoo is a sex-linked colour.
One day old male chicks have a
more or less clearly defined
white spot at the head.**





**Left: Laced blue Owlbeards.
Below: Owlbeard cockerel, white black columbian. (Probably coming from a Brabanter breed line).**



**Left: A yellow white spangled Owlbeard.
Good head, with the wide-open nostril trait. Full beard, without wattles. Good feather colour and spangling.**

Below: A rare white Moorkop.



Left: Head of a silver black spangled rooster. Owlbeards are a special and beautiful appearance in your garden.



Left: A silver pencilled hen with a 'clean' breast, as is wanted according to the Standard.

Below:
A nice pen of silver black spangled Owlbeards. The tail of the rooster could be better spangled and the beard a bit fuller and rounder. Could be the bird was moulting. Note the evenly distributed black spangles over the plumage of the hen.

Below: A gold black spangled hen, with a very good beard. The spangling could be better defined and the ground colour in the tail a bit cleaner, also we want better spangling in the tail feathers.





Above: An outstanding golden moorkop; a very rare variety.



Left: The latest colour variety: lemon black spangled. The lemon colour could be a bit more plain. The comb horns are not the same size.

Below: Head study of a beautiful white hen with perfect comb horns.



Left: A white hen, excellent body type, with outstanding colour and a full beard, which could be a bit rounder. This is how an Owlbeard should be, a real Showy Bird!



Left: Cockerel in the latest colour variety: lemon black spangled.

Below: A marketenster from Bourtagne with Owlbeards in her basket. Owlbeard some time take part in the re-enactment festivities. (Historical re-enactment is an educational or entertainment activity in which people recreate aspects of a historical event or period.)



For more information please visit the website of the **Brabanter, Kraaikop en Uilebaarden Club** www.bkuclub.nl There you can also find the e-mail address of the secretary.



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