



## She ... Is a He!

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*Jessica Walliser*

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Jessica Walliser You might have read about our new chickens in a previous post. We are really enjoying them, but to our surprise, one of our ladies has grown up to be a gentleman! He's a beautiful Rhode Island Red rooster that has taken nicely to his little harem of hens. The trouble is, he's starting to get a bit aggressive, and we've discovered that roosters and preschoolers don't mix.

I don't mind him going into someone's soup pot, but I'd much prefer he find a nice home somewhere where he can 'cockadoodledo' to his heart's content and not anger the neighbors. We live too close here. When we informed our neighbors about our new family members, we kindly mentioned that they shouldn't worry about noise because "there will be no roosters." So now we are trying desperately to find another venue for our gent.

I asked two farmer friends to take him in, and both kindly declined. I have since moved on to asking friends of friends with hens, telling them how cute little baby chicks are and how much fun it is to breed your own chickens. I don't think I'm very convincing.

I might soon have to move on to asking random people walking the aisles at our farmer's market. "Psst! Hey buddy, want a rooster?" Then I'll proceed to pull him out from under my jacket and try to hand him off. Or maybe I should just wait for a car with an open window to stop on our corner. (I'm reminded of a certain "Seinfeld" episode... Remember "little Jerry"?)

Anyway, if you know anyone in western Pennsylvania who is in need of a nice, robust Rhode Island Red, please, please send them my way!

On a totally different note, the weather here is really beginning to cool off and I've already begun some preparations for the winter. I covered our small pond and waterfall with a sheet of netting to keep the leaves out, and we're planning to pack away the patio furniture sometime this weekend.

The tomatoes have been ripped out (they did eventually succumb to the late blight that plagued gardeners up and down the East Coast), the cuke vines have hit the compost bin, and the zucchini have been pulled from the soil, even though they were still producing (much to my chagrin). I haven't picked our monster pumpkin yet but it is completely colored up now and will look lovely on our front porch.

Other weekend chores will include reseeding some bare spots in the lawn, pulling out the plethora of spent calendula plants in the front garden, harvesting spinach, digging up and dividing some of my overzealous Nepeta (catmint) plants, and moving my rosemary plant indoors. It sounds like a busy weekend ahead. Now if I could just get that rooster to help...

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