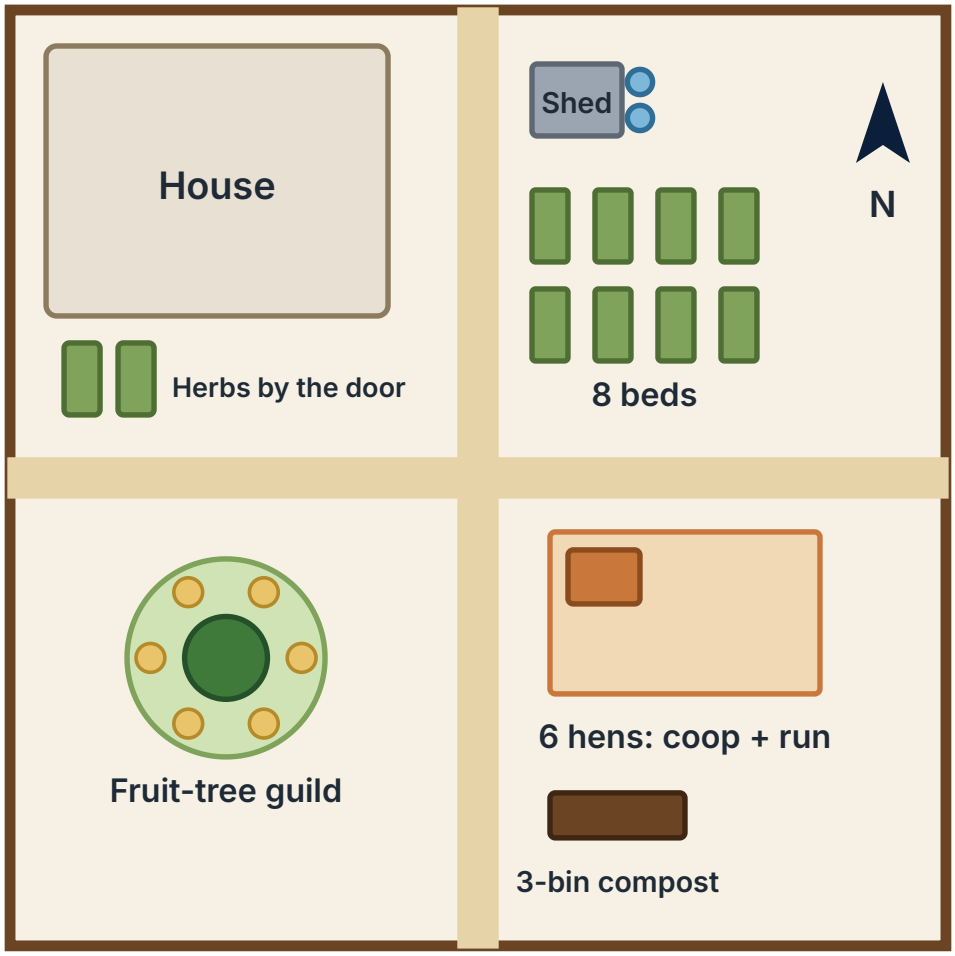
Hobby farm plan: 1/4 acre

About 104 × 104 ft, drawn to scale. From the 508 Ministry agriculture ministries kit, 508ministry.com/impact/agriculture/



0 20 ft

1/4 acre lot, about 104 × 104 ft

- House and yard
- Raised beds (4 × 8 ft)
- Wood-chip paths
- Fruit tree (food-forest guild centre)
- Guild plants: berries, herbs, nitrogen fixers
- Chicken coop
- Chicken run
- Compost bins
- Water catchment: barrels, tank or pond
- Tool shed

Notes

- Beds sit closest to the kitchen door, so watering and picking happen every day.
- One fruit tree with berries, herbs and comfrey around it is the start of a food forest.
- Six hens give eggs and manure for the compost; rain barrels on the shed roof water the beds.

Resources and supplies

Supplies for 1/4 acre: typical US prices

Item	Qty	Each	Total	Cost type	Price source, date checked
Cedar raised bed kit, 4 ft x 8 ft x 11 in	8 kit	$280.75	$2,246.00	One-time	Johnny's Selected Seeds, 2026-11-13
Organic raised bed and garden soil, 1.5 cu ft bag (Planning assumption: a 4×8 ft bed 11 in deep holds about 29 cu ft; budget buys 10 bags (15 cu ft) per bed, the rest is filled with own compost and yard waste.)	80 bag	$9.99	$799.20	One-time	Murdoch's, 2026-11-13
Honeycrisp apple tree, dwarf, bare-root (food-forest guild) (Stark Bro's dwarf Honeycrisp, SKU 29863; trees ship dormant in spring.)	1 tree	$39.99	$39.99	One-time	Stark Bro's, 2026-11-13
Nasturtium Jewel Mix seed, 1 oz (guild support planting)	1 packet	$5.85	$5.85	One-time	Johnny's Selected Seeds, 2026-11-13
Rhode Island Red female day-old chicks (Listed single-chick price; Meyer lists a lower per-chick price from 6 chicks. Brooder heat and starter feed not included.)	6 chick	$4.86	$29.16	One-time	Meyer Hatchery, 2026-11-13
Chicken coop with run, up to 8 hens	1 coop	$389.88	$389.88	One-time	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Poultry waterer, 5 gal	1 each	$42.99	$42.99	One-time	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Livestock panels for 3-bin compost, 16 ft x 30 in (16 ft x 30 in livestock panel bent into bins; listing says it is built to contain livestock.)	2 panel	$30.99	$61.98	One-time	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Heavy-duty steel T-posts (compost bins)	6 post	$6.99	$41.94	One-time	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Used 55 gal poly drum with spigot (rain barrel) (Murdoch's listing says it works as a rain barrel. Diverter and gutter fittings not included.)	2 drum	$69.99	$139.98	One-time	Murdoch's, 2026-11-13
Raised bed drip irrigation kit, medium (up to 9 beds of 4×8)	1 kit	$166.85	$166.85	One-time	DripWorks, 2026-11-13
Steel wheelbarrow, 6 cu ft	1 each	$89.24	$89.24	One-time	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Round point shovel	1 each	$38.99	$38.99	One-time	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Hand hoe, Japanese style	1 each	$22.70	$22.70	One-time	Johnny's Selected Seeds, 2026-11-13
Johnny's Easy Choice Garden Set (vegetable and herb seeds) (Planning assumption: about 1 set per 4 beds, rounded up (2 sets).)	2 set	$80.70	$161.40	Yearly	Johnny's Selected Seeds, 2026-11-13
Layer feed, 50 lb bag (Extension figure: a laying hen eats about 0.25 lb of feed per day (ANR-2913); 6 hens x 0.25 lb x 365 days = 548 lb = 10.95 bags of 50 lb, rounded up to 11.)	11 bag	$13.79	$151.69	Yearly	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Pine shavings bedding, 2 cu ft bag (Planning assumption: about 2 bags of shavings per hen per year (6 hens).)	12 bag	$6.49	$77.88	Yearly	Fleet Farm, 2026-11-13
Organic compost top-up, 1.5 cu ft bag (Planning assumption: 2 bags per bed per year (8 beds).)	16 bag	$9.49	$151.84	Yearly	Murdoch's, 2026-11-13
Startup (one-time)			$4,114.75		
Yearly			$542.81		

Choosing the land: site selection and zoning

1. **Flat or gently sloped.** Level to gently sloping ground is the easiest to farm, build on and keep from washing away. Steep ground erodes, makes fencing and driving harder, and sends runoff into the beds. Visit the day after a rain: there should be no standing water.
2. **Zoned for farming.** Look for land zoned agricultural (often coded A-1, AG or AR) or rural residential that lists gardens and livestock as allowed uses. Codes differ by county. Find the parcel on the county zoning map (planning or GIS office), then read the ordinance for animals allowed per acre, setbacks, barn and fence rules, and whether you may sell produce at a farm stand. Ask the planning office to confirm in writing.
3. **Ag-use or farm tax exemption.** Many states lower the property tax assessment for land in agricultural use. Minimum acreage, income and use rules are set by the state and county. Ask the county assessor what applies to the parcel and what happens if the land stops being farmed.
4. **Water.** Is there a well, and has its flow and water quality been tested recently? Where your state requires water rights (common in the West), confirm they transfer with the land. Note the irrigation source: well, ditch, pond or town water. Rain tanks help, but one dry summer shows whether they are enough.
5. **Soil test.** Check the soil type and drainage on the county soil map, then send a sample to a soil lab through your county extension office before you buy. Ask about past use: old dumps, treated-lumber areas and former orchards can leave contamination. USDA Web Soil Survey.
6. **Road access.** Confirm the deed gives legal access, not just a path across a neighbor's land. A livestock trailer, a delivery truck and an ambulance should all be able to reach the gate. Find out who grades or plows the road.
7. **Flood zone.** Look the parcel up on the FEMA Flood Map Service Center. Avoid a mapped floodway. Land in a flood zone can bring flood-insurance rules and lost crops. Walk the land after heavy rain to see where water pools or runs. FEMA Flood Map Service Center.
8. **Hardiness zone.** Enter the ZIP code of the parcel in the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map. The zone tells you which fruit trees, berries and perennials survive winter there. Also write down the average first and last frost dates. USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map.
9. **Distance to market and help.** How far is it to a feed store, a large-animal vet, a farmers market, a church and neighbors who can help? A plan that sells produce works best within a short drive of customers. Find your county USDA service center.

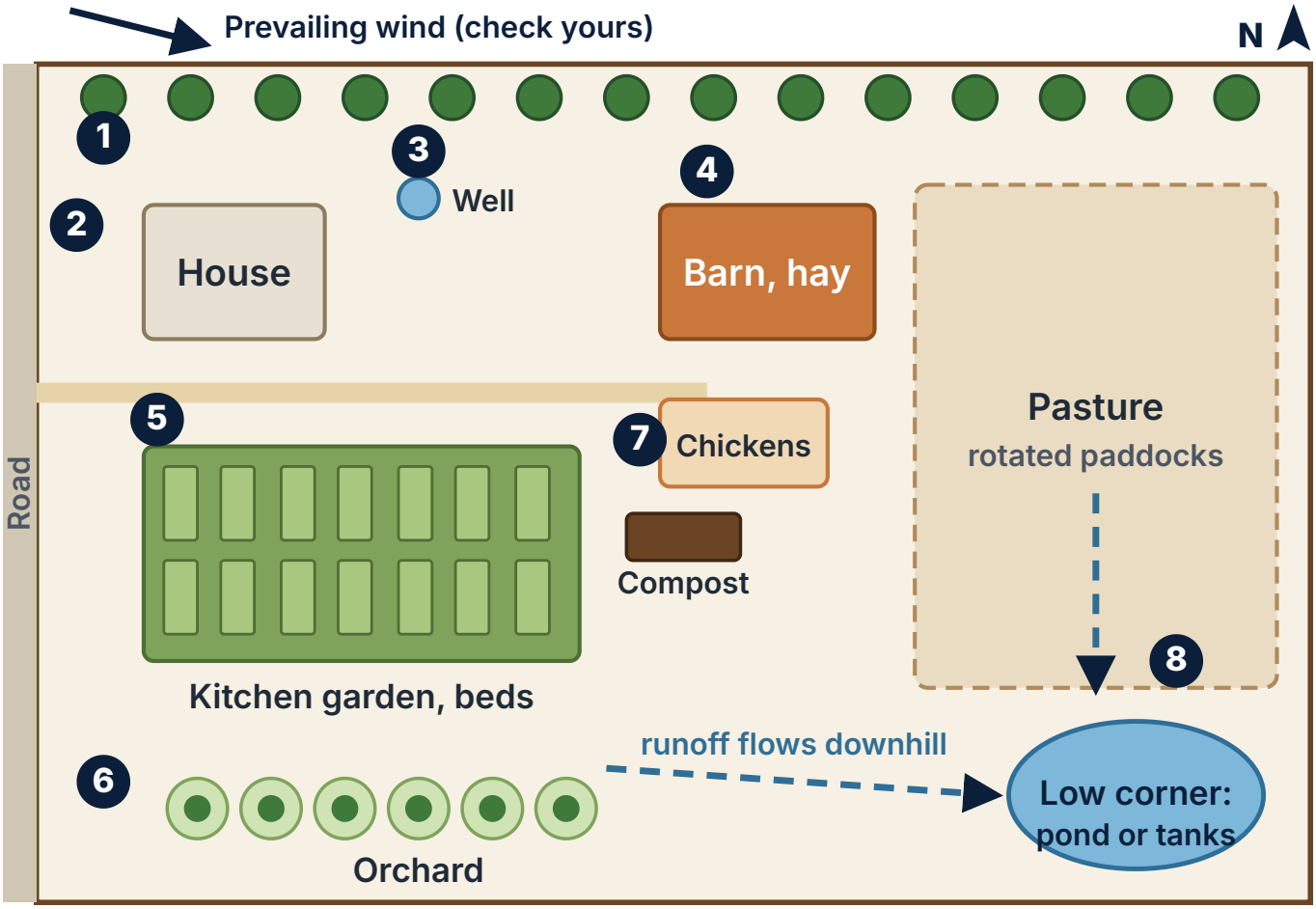
Zoning and tax rules are set by your county and state. Ask the offices named above and get answers in writing.

Land-search checklist

Land-search checklist (print it and take it to every parcel)

	Check	Write it down
☐	Ground is flat or gently sloped; no standing water after rain	Slope: _____
☐	Zoning allows gardens and the animals I plan to keep	Zone code: _____ Animals per acre: _____
☐	County zoning office confirmed in writing	Name and date: _____
☐	Ag-use or farm tax exemption: assessor says	Rules: _____
☐	Water: well flow and water-quality test, or water rights	Test date: _____
☐	Soil test sent through county extension	pH: _____ Lab result date: _____
☐	Legal road access in the deed; trailer and truck can reach the gate	Road owner: _____
☐	Flood zone checked on the FEMA map	Zone: _____
☐	Plant hardiness zone checked for this ZIP code	Zone: _____ Frost dates: _____
☐	Sun: open to the south; room for a windbreak on the north and west	Notes: _____
☐	Distance to feed store, vet, market, church	Miles: _____
☐	Who will hold title (see owning the land through the ministry)	Decision: _____

Preferred location plan



South: the sun side. Not to scale; a flat or gently sloped parcel.

1. **Windbreak.** A row of trees on the north and the windward side cuts wind on the house, animals and garden. Prevailing wind direction varies by place, so check yours.
2. **House near the road.** Short driveway, and the house sits uphill of the barn, compost and animals.
3. **Well uphill.** Keep the well uphill and well away from the barn, compost and runoff.
4. **Barn and hay downwind.** Animal smells blow away from the house. The barn sits beside the road side of the pasture so feed deliveries are easy.
5. **Kitchen garden south of the house.** Full sun, a few steps from the kitchen door, and nothing tall to the south of it.
6. **Orchard on the south edge.** Trees to the south of the beds never shade them.
7. **Chickens and compost between barn and garden.** Manure goes a short way to the compost, then to the beds.
8. **Pasture and a low corner for water.** A gentle slope carries runoff to a pond or tanks in the low corner, away from the house and well.

Owning the land through the ministry

The land you farm is a long-term asset, and who holds the title matters. 508 Ministry can help you set up two kinds of trust for it.

A land trust that holds the property

The trust holds title to the farm land and is placed under the ministry's 508(c)(1)(A) trust, so the land is held for the ministry's purpose and not in one person's name.

A real-estate holding trust for income property

For property that earns rent, such as a farmhouse rental or acreage leased to a grower, a real-estate holding trust keeps the property and its records in one place under trust.

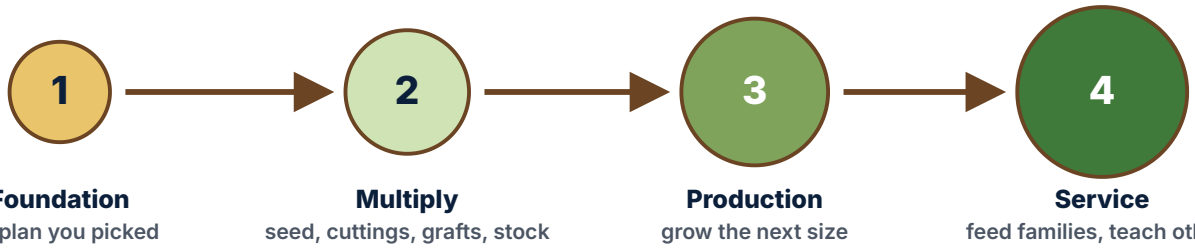
A real-estate holding trust is not a REIT. A REIT is a specific kind of tax entity with its own IRS requirements, and we do not call these trusts REITs.

> This is general information, not legal or tax advice. Talk to your own tax professional and an attorney in your state before you buy land or move property into a trust. Rules differ by state and by your situation.

Book a call: book.startmybusiness.us/coreypearson/508-holiday-offer-fit-call-with-corey-pearson **Start the questionnaire:** 508-trust-services.vercel.app/questionnaire

This is the foundation: growth roadmap

The basics come first, and every later layer grows out of them.



Stage 1: Foundation

The first growing season

The plan you picked, built well.

- [ ] Soil tested and amended
- [ ] Beds built and filled, water on
- [ ] First fruit-tree guild planted
- [ ] Hens or goats settled with shelter and fence
- [ ] Records started: plantings, costs, treatments
- [ ] Mark your best plants and healthiest animals

Stage 2: Multiply what you have

The next seasons

Make more from what already grows here.

- [ ] Save seed from open-pollinated plants that did best
- [ ] Divide berries, herbs and perennials
- [ ] Take cuttings; graft scionwood from your best trees
- [ ] Raise replacement pullets and keep healthy doe kids
- [ ] Send your best plants to a tissue-culture lab for clean copies

Stage 3: Grow into production

As the stock builds

Plant the next size from your own stock.

- [ ] Add beds, orchard blocks and paddocks from your own plants and animals
- [ ] Spend on fence, tanks and shelter, not on plants
- [ ] Start the hay field or a market row
- [ ] Sell extra eggs and produce where state rules allow

Stage 4: Grow into service

When there is more than you need

Turn the harvest into help for others.

- [ ] Feed families from the garden and orchard
- [ ] Open a farm stand or a food pantry shelf
- [ ] Start a seed library from your saved seed
- [ ] Train other churches and hand them starts of your plants

Plants and animals matched to your hardiness zone

Plants

- **Start with your zone.** Look up the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone for the parcel's ZIP code. Choose trees, berries and perennials rated for your zone or a colder one; one zone colder gives you a margin for a hard winter.
- **Match fruit trees to your winters.** Fruit trees need a set number of cold hours each winter, and nurseries list the chill hours for each variety. Pick varieties whose needs fit your winters, and ask the nursery for rootstock that suits your soil and climate.
- **Save seed from open-pollinated plants.** Seed from hybrid (F1) varieties does not come true, so save seed only from open-pollinated or heirloom varieties. Beans, peas, lettuce and tomatoes are the easiest. Squash, corn and cabbage-family crops cross with neighbors and need distance or hand pollination.
- **Pick your best, every year.** Save seed from the plants that grew best in your own ground, not from the biggest fruit alone. Over several seasons the seed adapts to your soil, water and frost dates.
- **Divide and take cuttings.** Berries, herbs, comfrey and many perennials multiply by division and cuttings, and the new plants are exact copies of the parent.
- **Graft your best trees.** A fruit tree is a clone. Graft a twig of your best tree onto rootstock and the new tree is the same variety. Check plant patents first: a patented variety cannot be propagated without a license, and the tag will say so.
- **Clone the best with tissue culture.** A laboratory can grow many identical, disease-free plants from a few cells of your best plant. Use a commercial or university lab once you know which plants are worth copying.

Animals

- **Keep your healthiest, calmest animals.** Write down each animal's parents and any health problems. Breed from the ones that stay healthy on your feed and in your climate.
- **Avoid breeding close relatives.** Inbreeding concentrates weak traits. As the herd grows, bring in an unrelated buck or share one with a neighbor.
- **Ask for health records.** Goat sellers can show herd test results for CAE, CL and Johne's disease. Keep new animals apart from the herd for at least 30 days before they join it.
- **Choose chicken breeds for your climate.** Cold zones need hardy breeds with small combs; hot zones need heat-tolerant birds. Broody hens or a small incubator let you raise your own pullets.
- **Check state rules first.** Rules cover selling live animals, hatching eggs and moving animals across state lines. Call your state department of agriculture before you sell.

Sources and where to ask: USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map Seed Savers Exchange: seed saving SARE (sustainable agriculture research and education) USDA National Agroforestry Center Your county USDA service center and extension office

Typical retail prices from the listed product pages on the date checked; local prices vary. Prices checked 2026-11-13. 508 Ministry, c/o Corey Pearson, 1155 Twain Ave #108148, Las Vegas, NV 89169.