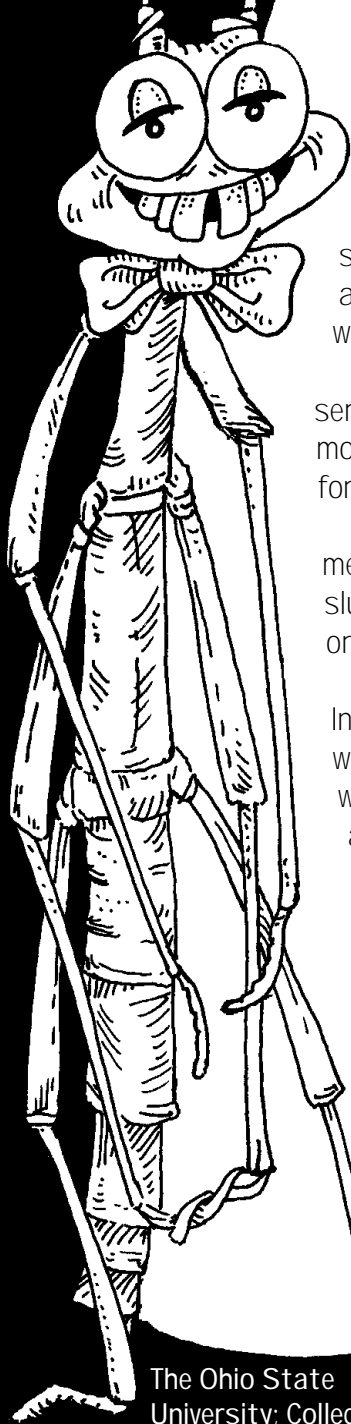


Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



Dear Twig: I saw what I thought was a penguin on a farm. But it wasn't a penguin. It was a duck! Any idea what it was?

Yep, I'm pretty sure it was an Indian runner, which used to be called the "penguin duck"!

It's easy to see why. Indian runners don't look like most other ducks. They're tall and thin and stand nearly straight up and down. This leads to another nickname: "Bottleneck." Indian runners don't waddle like most ducks, either. They run!

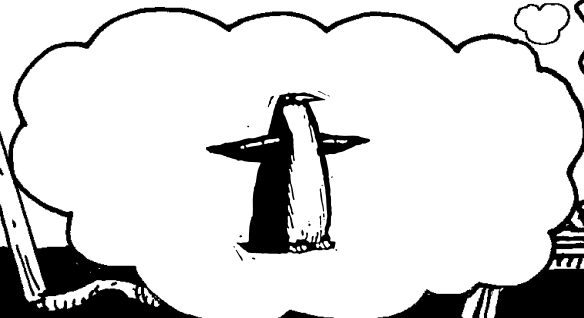
On farms and in gardens, Indian runners can serve several purposes. They lay a lot of eggs, usually more in a year than a chicken! So they're a good breed for people who eat or sell duck eggs.

Indian runners are also good foragers. That means they're good at finding things to eat: bugs and slugs, weeds and seeds. That's a big help to a farmer or gardener.

If you've seen the movie "Babe," you've seen an Indian runner. Ferdinand, the duck who liked to crow and who got Babe in trouble in Farmer Hoggett's house, was a white Indian runner. Remember how funny and appealing he was? That's an Indian runner.

By any name, Indian runners are ducks worth knowing. In the words of Farmer Hoggett, "That'll do, duck, that'll do."

Twig



The Ohio State University College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences



For the week of
March 3, 2002

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Hey Editor!

For more information, try the Indian Runner Duck Association, <http://www.runnerduck.net/index.htm>; Oklahoma State University's excellent "Breeds of Livestock" web site, <http://www.ansi.okstate.edu/poultry/ducks/RUNNER/>; or the Murray McMurray Hatchery (Iowa), web site, <http://www.mcmurrayhatchery.com/>.

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