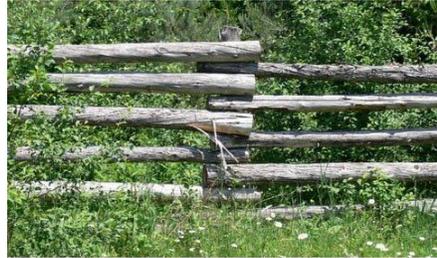


How to choose the right type of fence

Virginia Rail Fence:

Otherwise known as the zigzag fence, the Virginia fence was extremely common as the United States went from being woodland to farmland. This kind of fence could be constructed easily because it requires no posts. However, they consume large amounts of expensive material so they're not very common anymore.



Pole fence

Split-Rail Fence



This option is much more economical than the Virginia Rail Fence, however it requires more work. Holes need to be chiseled or drilled through the fence posts at heights corresponding to all the desired rail levels. This kind of fence is very sturdy and handsome.

The Board Fence

Because of the availability of machined boards and nails, the board fence is much more popular. It is considered the aristocrat of the fencing world. It's often seen surrounding horse pastures or dressing up estates like a frame on a masterpiece. Horses would need a six-foot high fence with fewer horizontal boards. A decorative fence doesn't need to be so high.

The cost of board fencing will be more than for split rail or electric, but most likely less than woven wire fencing.



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Barbed Wire Fence:

Today there are fewer than 6 standard styles of barbed wire. A 16 ½-inch gauge is popular among cattle owners, who use three to five strands of it. Barbed wire is effective, economical, and durable. It costs less than split rails, boards, or woven wire. It's probably more than electrical fencing.

Woven Wire Fence

Woven Wire Fences are very gentle, formidable fences. A woven wire fence is just a net of wire with no sharp features. They're used for all kinds of livestock, and are especially good for sheep because it has no edges to catch the wool on. It can contain small animals such as hogs due to its tight grid pattern close to the ground. Its tall enough for cows and horses. It doesn't have any sort of thing to discourage larger animals, so you may want to string a strand of barbed wire along the top of the post above the woven wire to keep them from leaning over the fence and bending it.

You need to choose the gauge and the protective coating. On top of this, you have to choose the type of grid pattern you want. To understand how to decipher a code number, realize that the last two numbers tell you the height of the fence in inches and the first two tell you the total number of horizontal wires in the pattern. For example: Style 1155 is fifty-five inches tall with 11 wires. Style 726 is twenty-six inches tall with seven wires.

Electric Fences

Controllers: *Also called the fence charger, fencer, or energizer, the controller sends pulses of electricity into the wire. Some allow you to choose how often you want to send the pulse through the line; this is typically once a second until the livestock understands what the fence is, then twice a second afterwards. The intensity of the pulse depends upon the unit. Controllers can get their energy from batteries or household currents. Those that require batteries are cheaper to purchase, but are much more expensive to maintain because the six-volt dry cell or wet cell needs to be changed every four to six months. If you don't change it, you're left with a strictly psychological fence.*

Wire: *Usually a 14 gauge wire is used to carry the current. Heavier gauge (which*



would be a lower number) is more expensive, but they carry a current with less resistance.

The Ground: Oftentimes we see the ground wire as just another additional bother. Without a good grounding rod, however, you have no electricity in the wire. The current needs to travel from the controller to the wire to the animal to the ground and back to the controller if the animal is to feel the shocks. When an animal touches the circulation, it's basically completing the circuit. Because the animal is touching the ground, it feels the shock. A bird sitting on the wire without touching the ground doesn't complete the circuit and is not affected.

The fence wire doesn't have to make a circle for the fence to work. You can run the wire from the controller in a straight line for a mile and it will still do the job. A copper tube planted six feet deep in soggy soil is considered the best ground. Copper is quite expensive, so you can simply settle for a copper-coated steel pipe or any good conducting metal rod. Some electric fence manufacturers recommend using two or three grounding rods.

Construction of electric fencing is typically cheaper than any other type of fencing. Usually only one strand of wire is necessary, especially if you're simply supplementing an older fence. Wire stretchers and other additional construction equipment items aren't necessary.

Picket Fences



Constructing a picket fence requires patience, precision, and an attention to detail (such as constantly measuring little distances and checking alignments with a bubble level). Pre-cut picket designs are available in most lumberyards, but are quite limited. With some effort and imagination, you can customize a picket top and have it cut out by the lumberyard. You could also do it yourself with a C clamp and a saber saw.

This costs approximately the same as a split-rail fence. It's mainly decorative. It has a low height and openness making it friendly and attractive.

For this information and more refer to [The Best Fences](#) ©1984 by James Fitzgerald.