

5 EASY WAYS to deter cat behaviors

1. Use nontoxic repellents around your yard — available from pet supply stores.
2. Block gaps in the foundation of porches, sheds, and outbuildings.
3. Use a car cover at night.
4. Keep a tight lid on your trash can.
5. Talk to your neighbors to find out if the cats are owned or feral, are being fed, and most important, have been spayed and neutered. If not, get it done!

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WHY DO CATS DO THAT?



**Quick and easy ways
to make peace
with cats living in your
community**



So you're seeing cats in your backyard...

Gina Mantero

Stray and feral cats are found in nearly every community. They are a part of our neighborhood. Outdoor cats sometimes behave in ways that their human neighbors don't like or understand. This brochure will give you easy solutions to living with cats in your community.

What are feral cats?

Feral and stray cats live outdoors full-time. These cats live where they can find food and shelter — which is usually near people because we are a steady source of food, intended or not. Stray cats are lost or abandoned house pets — cats who are friendly with humans and can be adopted into a new family. Kittens can be adopted if socialized at an early age.

Feral cats, on the other hand, are not socialized to humans or accustomed to living indoors. They avoid close contact with almost everyone — even when living in the same neighborhood.

Not everyone likes having cats and other animals in their yards, but the fact is, the animals are there



and it is their home, too. There are many simple, time-tested ways to keep cats away from areas where they are not wanted. These quick solutions coupled with Trap-Neuter-Return and ongoing management can help you coexist with the neighborhood cats.

Quick Solutions to Cat Behaviors

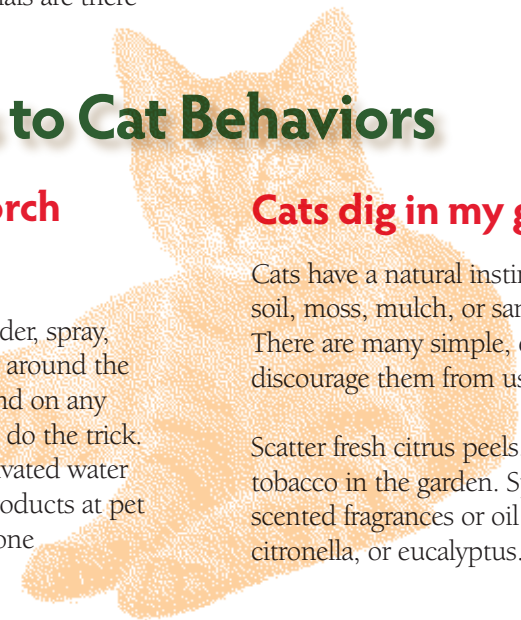
Cats hang out on my porch and in my yard.

Cat repellent such as a non-toxic powder, spray, or fresh citrus peels sprinkled liberally around the edge of the yard, the tops of fences, and on any favorite digging areas or plants should do the trick. An ultrasonic repeller or a motion-activated water sprinkler will work, too. Find these products at pet supply stores and online. Contech is one company that makes both.

Cats dig in my garden.

Cats have a natural instinct to dig in soft or loose soil, moss, mulch, or sand and bury their waste. There are many simple, even natural ways to discourage them from using your garden.

Scatter fresh citrus peels, coffee grounds, or pipe tobacco in the garden. Spray the area with citrus-scented fragrances or oil of lavender, lemongrass, citronella, or eucalyptus. Sprinkle the herb dried



rue over the garden or various types of cut-up plant matter like weeds, branchy lemon verbena prunings, or dead fern leaves.

Cover the ground in flower beds with attractive river rocks, which have the added benefit of deterring weeds. Arrange lattice fence material on the ground. Disguise these by planting flowers and seeds in the openings.

Set chicken wire firmly into the dirt with sharp edges rolled under. Consider Cat Scat™ (below) plastic mats that you cut into smaller



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pieces and press into the soil. Each mat has flexible plastic spikes that are harmless to cats and other animals, but discourage digging. You can find Cat Scat™ online.

Establish a litter box by tilling the soil or placing sand in an out-of-the-way spot in your yard. Keep the litter box clean and free of deposits. This works well when combined with one or more of the deterrents in your garden.

What should we do for outdoor cats?

Feral cats aren't socialized to humans and can't be adopted as house cats — even if that's how they started out long ago. They should never be taken to an animal shelter or pound for adoption — they will almost always be killed.

Trap-Neuter-Return

The most important way to help community cats is to get them spayed or neutered. And Trap-Neuter-Return is the best way to accomplish this.

The cats are painlessly trapped and taken to a veterinarian to be spayed or neutered and vaccinated. Kittens and stray cats (friendly to humans) are put up for adoption. Healthy, adult feral cats (cats that are fearful of human contact) are returned to their home to be cared for by compassionate neighbors.

Why not take them to the shelter?

It may seem like a quick way to get rid of cats in the neighborhood, but the fact is, it doesn't work. Efforts to simply trap and remove the cats have never succeeded and never end. A few or even most of the cats are removed, but survivors breed rapidly, new cats move into the territory, and very soon there are as many or more cats as before. The trapping and removing (killing) is cruel and must be done on a steady basis, making it an endless, very expensive campaign.

Cats sleep under my porch or in my shed.

The cats are looking for shelter from the elements. Block the entry with chicken wire or lattice (first make sure no cats or kittens are inside). You may want to provide a shelter in a more acceptable place.



Terry Pfeffer

Cats get into my trash.

They are looking for food. Put a tight lid on your trash can so they can't get into it. Be aware that scavenging cats may not have a regular source of good food. If neighbors are feeding, ask if they are doing it on a regular schedule. Maybe you can help. Feed the cats on a regular schedule and they won't be interested in the trash. But remember, exposed trash bags attract more than just cats. Keep a lid on it.



Erin Curtis

If you do start feeding the cats, do it at a regular time during daylight. The cats will quickly adjust to your schedule. Put out only enough food for one meal and remove leftovers after about 20 minutes. Leftover food, like unsecured trash, attracts insects and wildlife. Ask any other feeders to follow these guidelines, too.

Cats leave paw prints and/or scratches on my car.

Cats like to perch in high places, including vehicles. If they are fed or sheltered nearby, gradually move their shelters and feeding stations to a more secluded place and they may lose interest in your car. Or buy a cover for the vehicle. Car covers put an immediate end to scratches and paw prints.

Cats are yowling, fighting, spraying, roaming, and having kittens.

The cats need to be spayed or neutered. All these behaviors will virtually cease soon after the cats have been sterilized — and there will be no more kittens. Get rid of cat urine smell by spraying the area thoroughly with white vinegar or with products you can buy at pet supply stores. If the cats are feral, contact a local feral cat group. To have a list of local feral friends emailed to you visit www.alleycat.org/response.

Apply nontoxic cat repellent around the edges of the yard, tops of fences, and any favorite digging areas (pet supply store or www.gardeners.com). Install an ultrasonic animal repellent or a motion-activated water sprinkler (ScareCrow and CatStop, from Contech, www.scatmat.com).

