



HOW TO KEEP CATS OUT OF YOUR YARD

San Francisco backyards play host to a variety of animals, including cats. All animals fill important roles in our urban environment, but if you want to keep cats out of your yard, there are many humane ways. Keep in mind that what might work for one cat, might not work for another, so be willing to try more than one solution.



Push disposable wooden chopsticks or 10-inch plant stakes into flower beds every eight inches. Prevents digging or scratching.

Cats dislike the smell of citrus: try putting orange and lemon peels out; spray the area with citrus-scented sprays; or sprinkle with orange-scented pet bedding like Citrafresh.



Spray cat repellent (available at pet supply stores) around the perimeter of your yard and along the top of the fences.

Scatter coffee grounds or pipe tobacco in the area.

Try growing the herb rue—cats dislike the smell. You may also be able to buy it dried in health food stores.

Soak strips of old towels or rags with old perfume and hang them near target plants.

Cocoa bean shells sold as gardening mulch *is toxic to cats and dogs.*

A motion-activated sprinkler named the “Scarecrow” sprays intruding animals. The Scarecrow is made by Contech (800-767-8658). Real Goods Catalog (800-762-7325) sells the “Scarecrow” for \$89. Locally sold at Urban Farmer Store 2833 Vicente 415-661-2204.



The Cat Fence-In System [www.catfencein.com] can be used to completely exclude cats and other animals from your yard. (Brochure available from The SF/SPCA Feral Cat Assistance Program 415-522-3539.)

If the cats belong to your neighbors, talk to them and try to work things out amicably. Encourage them to keep litter boxes in their houses and yards for the cats to use. San Francisco residents may want to consult Community Boards, a free mediation service, for assistance. (415) 863-6100.

If the cats are feral (un-tamed, homeless), see the other side of this sheet for more information.



FERAL CATS

Often, the cats people see in their backyards (or in parks and alleyways) are feral cats. These are homeless animals—previously abandoned or born wild—who are not accustomed to humans but are still dependant on people for survival. Since feral cats are not tame or socialized, they cannot be placed in homes, and are routinely killed if they are trapped and taken to the City’s Animal Care and Control Department.

The most humane and effective way to control the population of feral cats is through spaying and neutering. Not only does spay/neuter prevent more homeless kittens from being born, it also decreases unwanted behavior like spraying, fighting, howling and roaming. Trapping and killing cats, on the other hand, opens up a niche for more cats to move in and is usually only a temporary fix.

The San Francisco SPCA’s Feral Fix Program provides free spay/neuter and vaccinations for San Francisco feral cats. The sterilized cats, identified by a tipped left ear, are then re-released back into their habitat to be fed and monitored by human caregivers. To hear a recorded message about the program, call the Feral Fix Line at (415) 554-3071 or the Feral Cat Program Coordinator at 522-3539.

The San Francisco SPCA also offers Feral Cat Pack with 11 fact sheets on topics like Humane Trapping, The Care and Feeding of Feral Cats, and Socializing Feral Kittens. To find the fact sheets on the web site go to www.sfspca.org and click on programs and then feral cats. Finally, our neighborhood-based Cat Assistance Team volunteers may be able to provide assistance to people who want to spay/neuter feral cats.

