

## How to Humanely Deter Cats in Your Neighbourhood

Community cats, also called feral cats, are members of the domestic cat species just like pet cats but are usually not socialized to people and therefore are not adoptable.

Like all animals, feral cats make their home where they find shelter and food, often in close proximity to people. We understand that not everyone enjoys having cats in their yards and these simple tips may help you divert feral cats away from certain areas.

Please review the following tips to humanely deter cats in your neighbourhood.

### **Cats are getting into my trash.**

Explanation: Cats are scavengers and are looking for food.

Quick Solutions:

- Place a tight lid on your trash can. Exposed trash bags will attract wildlife as well.
- See if neighbours are feeding the cats. If they are, make sure they are doing so on a regular schedule.
- Start feeding the cats yourself if you find no regular feeder - at a set time, during daylight hours, in an out-of-the-way place. Feeding cats regularly and in reasonable quantities, which can be eaten in less than 30 minutes or so, will help ensure they don't get so hungry that they turn to the trash.

### **There are cat paw prints on my car.**

Explanation: Cats like to perch on high ground.

Quick Solutions:

- Gradually move cats' shelters and feeding stations away to discourage cats from climbing on cars.
- Purchase a car cover.
- Use deterrents listed in the next section.

## **Cats are digging in my garden.**

Explanation: It is a cat's natural instinct to dig and deposit in soft or loose soil, moss, mulch or sand.

### Quick Solutions:

- Scatter fresh orange and lemon peels or spray with citrus scented fragrances. Coffee grounds, vinegar, pipe tobacco, oil of lavender, lemongrass, citronella or eucalyptus also deter cats.
- Plant the herb rue to repel cats, or sprinkle dried rue over the garden.
- Use plastic carpet runners spike-side up, covered lightly in soil. They can be found at local hardware or office supply stores. Or, set chicken wire firmly into the dirt with sharp edges rolled under.
- Artfully arrange branches in a lattice-type patterns or wooden or plastic lattice fencing material over soil. You can disguise these by planting flowers and seeds in the openings. You can also try embedding wooden chopsticks, pinecones, or sticks with dull points deep into the soil with the tops exposed eight inches apart.
- Obtain "Cat Scat", a nonchemical cat and wildlife repellent consisting of plastic mats that are cut into smaller pieces and pressed into the soil. Each mat has flexible plastic spikes that are harmless to cats and other animals but discourage digging. Available at [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com).
- Cover exposed ground in flower beds with large, attractive river rocks to prevent cats from digging. They have the added benefit of deterring weeds.
- Establish a litter box by tilling the soil or placing sand in an out-of-the-way spot in your yard. Keep it clean and free of deposits.

## **Cats are lounging in my yard or on my porch.**

Explanation: Cats are territorial and will remain close to their food source.

### Quick Solutions:

- Apply cat repellent fragrances liberally around the edges of the yard, the tops of fences and on any favourite digging areas or plants.
- Install an ultrasonic animal repellent or a motion-activated water sprinkler.

### **Cats are sleeping under my porch or in my shed.**

Explanation: The cats are looking for a dry, warm shelter away from the elements.

#### Quick Solutions:

- Physically block or seal the location the cats are entering with chicken wire or lattice once you are certain the cats are not inside. Be sure to search for kittens before confirming the cats have left - especially during spring and summer (prime kitten season).
- Provide a shelter (similar to a small dog house). Or, if they are feral and part of a nearby managed colony, ask the caregiver to provide a shelter for the cats. Shelters should be hidden to keep the cats safe and placing them in secluded areas can help guide the cats away from unwanted areas.

### **Feeding the cats attracts insects and wildlife.**

Explanation: Cats are to be fed under proper guidelines. Leaving food out can attract other animals.

#### Quick Solutions:

- Keep the feeding area neat and free of leftover food and trash.
- Feed cats at the same designated time each day, during daylight hours. They should be given only enough food for them to finish, in one sitting, and all remaining food should be removed after 30 minutes. If another person is feeding, ask them to follow these guidelines too.

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

Explanation: These are all mating behaviours displayed by cats who have not been spayed and neutered, and they will continue to breed.

#### Quick Solutions:

- Spaying or neutering and vaccinating the cats will stop these behaviours. Male cats will no longer compete, fight, spray or roam. Females will stop yowling and producing kittens. After sterilization, hormones leave their system within three weeks and the behaviours usually stop entirely.
- To combat the urine smell, spray the area thoroughly with white vinegar or with products that use natural enzymes to combat the smell.