

EASY SOLUTIONS TO CAT BEHAVIORS



Like all animals, community cats settle where shelter and food are available. That means their territory is often close to people. We understand that not everyone enjoys having cats in their yards. The following tips will help you keep outdoor cats away from certain areas without hurting them.

Alongside Trap-Neuter-Return and regular colony care, these quick steps will help you peacefully coexist with your neighborhood cats!

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 neighbors are feeding the cats. If they are, make sure they are doing so on a regular schedule. Ask if you can help with feeding in a feeding station and work with them to set up a 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, will help ensure they don't get hungry enough to turn to trash. A good amount of food can be eaten in less than 30 minutes. For example, feed from 7-7:30 a.m. and from 6-6:30 p.m.; the cats will learn when feeding time is and will come.

CATS ARE DIGGING IN MY GARDEN

Explanation: It is a cat's natural instinct to dig 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, or 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.
- Arrange branches in a lattice-type pattern, or put wooden or plastic lattice fencing over soil. You can disguise these by planting flowers and seeds in the openings. You can also try embedding wooden chopsticks, pinecones or sticks into the dirt about eight inches apart, with the tops exposed.
- Get 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.
- 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.

5 Easy Steps for Humanely Deterring Cats

1. If stray or feral, if the cat isn't already spayed/neutered, work with the ARL to get low-cost or free spay/neuter done. If the cat is a neighbor's pet find out if your neighbors are intending the cat to be a community cat or if they will consider keeping their cat inside their home.
 2. Apply nontoxic deterrents around your yard. Things like oranges (cut the oranges open) and other citrus scents are a natural deterrent or sprinklers that are motion detection so they go off when a cat comes into the area.
 3. Put a tight lid on your trash can (removes a food source).
 4. Block gaps in the foundation of all sheds and outbuildings (cats will look for warm and dry areas to hang out in).
 5. Use a car cover if cats are laying on your car.
-

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 around the edges of yards, the tops of fences, and on any favorite digging areas or plants. See the “Cats are digging in my garden” section for a list of cat repellent fragrances.
- Install an ultrasonic animal repellent or a motion activated water sprinkler, such as CatStop™ or the ScareCrow™.



Questions?

Contact the ARL's TNR Coordinator at tnrcoordinator@arl-iowa.org or find additional information at ARL-iowa.org/TNR.

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.

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 area 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 that the cats have left – especially during spring and summer, also known as kitten season.
- Provide a shelter. Or, if the cats have a caregiver, ask the caregiver to provide shelters. Shelters should be placed in secluded areas and hidden to keep cats safe and away from populated areas. Find tips to build or buy shelters for them.

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. 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 mating behaviors. They will continue unless the cats are spayed or neutered.

Quick Solutions:

- Trap-Neuter-Return stops mating behaviors. Neutered male cats no longer fight, spray, or roam. Spayed female cats stop yowling and having kittens. After spay/neuter, hormones leave their system and the behaviors usually stop entirely within three weeks.
- To combat the urine smell, spray the area thoroughly with white vinegar or products that use natural enzymes to combat the smell, like Nature's Miracle™, Fizzion Pet Stain & Odor Remover or Simple Solution™. These are available at most pet supply stores.