

NUISANCE CATS

HOW TO DETER THEM FROM YOUR YARD & GARDEN

THE PROBLEM

You may choose not to own a cat, but your neighbours cats keep coming into your garden or around your home to dig and spray. Cats spray to mark their territory and your carefully mulched, loamy garden soil is an attractive toilet for a cat. Other peoples unwanted pet's on your property are annoying and can be a source of tension between neighbours.

How can you keep their cats out without harming the animals?

THE SOLUTION

If the cats have an owner, talk to them without being confrontational. Remember, cats will be cats and it is unfair of us to blame them for what their owners allow them to do.

EDUCATION

Horsham Rural City has a cat curfew. The curfew requires cats to be confined to the owner's premises between sunset and sunrise (overnight). The cat curfew is not about keeping cats inside the house, but confining your cat to your property boundary. However, cats that are not confined during the day (non-curfew hours) can still be trapped if a resident objects to the cat being on their property.

These laws apply to anyone who owns, acquires, breeds or sells a cat. You may like to direct your neighbours to our website for further information.

A letter can be used to politely let your neighbour know their cat is causing problems - refer to 'Dear Neighbour Letter' on Councils website.

CAT DETERRENTS

Below is a list of deterrents which have been suggested as a way of keeping cats out of your garden. Keep in mind that each cat is different, just like people; a deterrent that works for one may not necessarily work for another.

WATER

Cats hate it, so keep a water pistol handy and spray any time you see them in your yard. A spray with the hose also works well.

Put a sprinkler on in the area you don't want them to go (cats hate wet ground). You could try putting the sprinkler on a timer or using a motion activated 'scarecrow sprinkler' that is setup to trigger when it detects a cat. Move the sprinklers around regularly so the cats can't learn to avoid them.

SCARECROW MOTION ACTIVATED SPRIKRLERS

The 'Scarecrow' senses animals the same way security lights detect people; movement and heat. When an animal is seen a valve opens instantly releasing a three-second pulsating spray of water. The combination of the sudden noise, movement, and water frightens animals away.

For more information go to:

<http://www.birdxpeller.com.au>

DOGS

Borrow or offer to mind a friend's dog for a while. The cats will get the idea.

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CAT DETERRENTS (continued)

COMMERCIALY AVAILABLE PRODUCTS

CATWatch and **Strayban** are ultrasonic deterrents which are available online. Ultrasonic Deterrents train persistent feline visitors to stay out of your garden. CATWatch has an ultrasonic alarm which is triggered by the cat's movement and body heat as it enters the protected area. As soon as the cat leaves the protected area the alarm stops and therefore the cat soon learns that to prevent the ultrasonic alarm the area must be avoided.

Get off my Garden is a spray or granular deterrent that is sprinkled in your garden and is available in hardware stores.

SSSCAT is an aerosol can which sprays a harmless gas and releases a hissing sound when motion is detected. The cat must be within one metre of the device.

PHYSICAL DETERRENTS

- Chicken wire (metal or plastic) or gutter guard pegged down over garden beds, cats hate treading on wire.
- Try running a taut string across the top of your fence as a barrier. Cats won't like trying to climb over it.
- Smear the tops of your fence with Vaseline. Cats will find it difficult to climb onto your fence.
- Electric fencing for animals.
- Install PVC rollers or a purchased 'Cat Fence Roller' along the top of your fence. Cats can't get a grip on it to climb over the fence.
- Cat proof fencing. There are many ready-to-install cat fencing options available or try building your own.

PLASTIC SPIKED FENCE CAPPING

Specifically designed strips of plastic spikes can be purchased and fitted on top of fences, shed roofs etc to prevent cats from walking on it. The plastic spikes are designed to maximise discomfort without unnecessary harm. Benefits include:

- Non dangerous/harmful for cats or wildlife.
- Keeps your cat in and/or keeps other cats out of your yard.
- Marketed under the names 'Thorny Devil', 'Stegastrip' & 'Prikastrip'

SMELL DETERRENTS

Apply scents around your property that cats don't like. Be sure to renew whatever scented material you use every few days so it smells strong enough to keep the cats away. Essences should be sprayed on the garden but never on the cat. Some options include:

- Lavender (planted or essence oil).
- Citronella oil.
- Lemon thyme, oregano or peppermint essence.
- Blood meal fertilizer.
- Citrus peels.
- Citrus spray or essence of orange, essence of lemon, lime (citrus essential oils).
- Dog urine (cats hate predator smells). You may be able to get some of this from a vet
- Sprinkle coffee grounds and/or ground-up citrus peels around the areas cats like to go. These all have smells cats don't like but which aren't too offensive for people.
- Fresh (chicken) manure and/or liquid manure.
- Garlic cloves.
- Red wine vinegar or ordinary vinegar sprayed on areas where they roam.

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SMELL DETERRENENTS [continued]

If you would like to avoid the expense of commercial sprays or repellents, below is a recipe that you can mix up at home in a spray bottle:

1. Combine all ingredients in an empty two litre bottle, and leave mixture overnight.

- 2 cups white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon of whole cloves
- 2 - 3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
- 2 - 3 hot chillies
- 2 - 3 drops of concentrated dish washing liquid
- Black pepper
- Water to fill bottle

2. Fill spray bottle and spray around the area that you wish to deter cats from.

3. Keep the remaining mixture for later.

You don't need to spray much to give the cats the hint. Just respray every week or two until they disappear. Be aware that this recipe has a very unpleasant odour, so do not spray in the house or near open windows, and do not spray directly onto the cats.

Source: <http://www.9livescatrescue.com.au/>

VISUAL DETERRENENTS

Reflections from old CDs strung up at cats height on trees can sometimes scare cats away.

Place clear plastic (PET type) soft drink or water bottles (one litre size) full of water around your garden, doorway or other places where cats spray or defecate. This also creates moving reflections that can scare cats away.

CAT DETERRENT GARDEN

Plant specific cat deterrent plants as a border in your yard. These are generally herbs that have a scent or texture cats don't like. If you have a cat these plants will also form boundaries to your yard that will help keep your cat in. These plants will not harm the cat, instead they have a scent or feel that the cat will not like. Some of these plants are listed below:

- Pyrethrum or *Tanacetum cinerariifolium*
- Lemon Thyme
- Geranium
- Pennyroyal
- *Coleus canina* or 'Scaredy cat'
- *Plectranthus ornatus* or 'Dogbane'
- Lavender
- Marigolds

TEXTURE DETERRENENTS

Cats are fussy about what surfaces they do and don't like. They like soft soil for digging but hate sharp surfaces. Change the texture of your garden beds by using:

- River rocks, crushed rocks or pebbles over the exposed soil.
- Holly leaves or rose bush cuttings laid over the garden bed.
- Cocoa bean shells.
- Gutter covers.
- Heavy bark mulch.
- Pinecones around garden borders.
- Short twigs throughout the planted area about 15cm apart.
- Pepper flakes or crushed cinnamon (it sticks to their feet and they have to lick it off)

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TEXTURE DETERRENENTS [continued]

- Coffee grounds - fresh and not brewed or used tea leaves (not just a light sprinkling).
- Aluminium foil around the edges of the garden bed - cats hate the noise and feel.

OTHER DETERRENENTS

Make sure your pets food is not left outside to tempt other cats around.

Put up fake 'pesticide in use' warning signs 'dangerous to animals and children'. This may encourage owners to ensure their pet stay away.

NOT RECOMMENDED

DO NOT ever use mothballs or naphthalene flakes. These toxic pellets can contaminate your own garden soil, could seriously harm people who handle them and can destroy a cats kidney function. Their packaging even warns against using them this way. Using these or any other method of deterrent, unintentionally or otherwise, could see you being charged with animal cruelty under the Domestic Animals Act 1994.

DISCLAIMER

Animal cruelty is an offence and harsh penalties apply. The deterrents listed here have been collected from a range of sources and none of the products have been tested by nor are they endorsed by Council.

Before using any product consider whether it could contaminate your soil, negligently cause harm or even kill any animal or human.

FURTHER INFORMATION

To find out more about wandering and nuisance cats, download our 'Dear neighbour' letter template or lodge a request with our Community Safety Unit Rangers, please:

🐾 Visit us at:

<https://www.hrcc.vic.gov.au/Residents/Pets-and-animals>

🐾 Call Customer Service on: 03 5382 9777
08:30am to 5:00pm, Monday – Friday
(excluding public holidays).

🐾 Email: council@hrcc.vic.gov.au