

Deterring Cats from Your Yard and Garden

Feral and free roaming cats make their homes where they find shelter and food, often in close proximity to humans. We understand that not everyone enjoys having cats in their yard or under their porch. Coupled with trap-neuter-return (TNR) and ongoing care, these quick steps can help you coexist with neighborhood cats and divert them from certain areas.

Please call us if you suspect there are free roaming cats in your area in need of spay-neuter services.

Scatter orange and lemon peels or spray with citrus-scented fragrances. Coffee grounds as well as oil of lavender, lemongrass, citronella or eucalyptus also deter cats.

Use an aromatic spray product, such as dog and cat repellent, available at <http://www.gardeners.com> and most urban hardware and gardening stores.

Plant the herb rue to repel cats or sprinkle dried rue over the garden.

Install an ultrasonic animal repellent or a motion-activated water sprinkler, such as the ScareCrow™ or CatStop™ (Contech). Available at <http://www.contech-inc.com>.

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 the sharp edges rolled under.

Try embedding wooden chopsticks, pinecones or sticks with dull points eight inches apart set deep into the soil with tops exposed.

Cover exposed ground in flower beds with large, attractive river rocks to prevent cats from digging.

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.

Feral and free roaming cats are part of the city's landscape, and the San Francisco SPCA is committed to offering spay-neuter services to assist in reducing their population. If you wish to learn more about having these cats spayed or neutered, please call the SF SPCA Community Cats Program at 415.522.3539 or email us at communitycats@sfspca.org.