

Colony Caretaking: Tips And Tricks



NEIGHBORHOODCATS



THE
COMMUNITY CATS
PODCAST



Susan Richmond
Executive Director
Neighborhood Cats



Bryan Kortis
National Programs Director
Neighborhood Cats

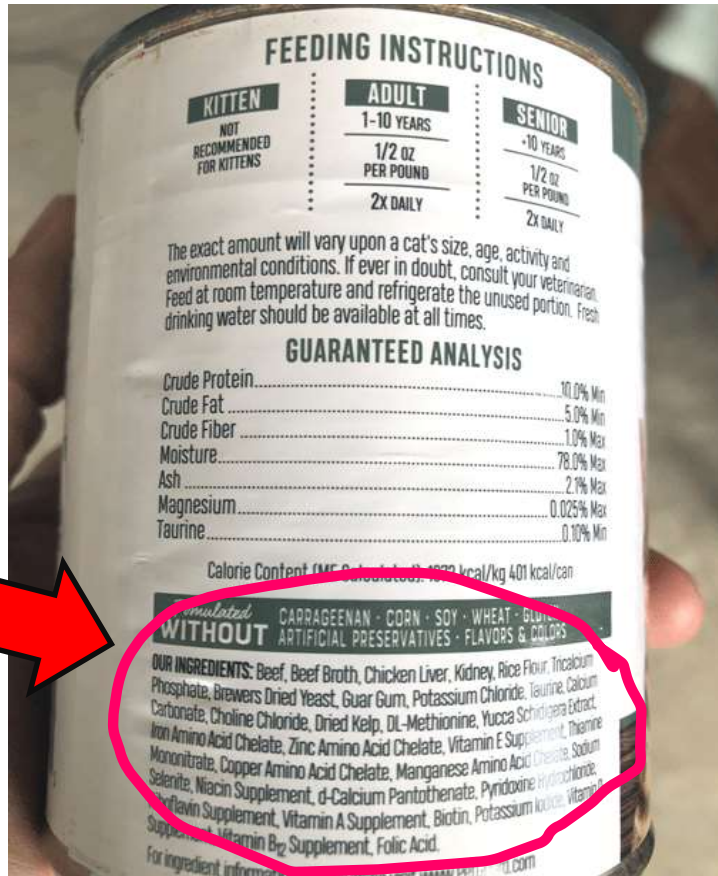
The bond



Feeding pattern

- Cats are very habitual
- As close as possible to same time, same place daily
- “Clicker” train (or unique sound)
- Avoid 24/7 feeding
- Helps with monitoring & trapping





Read the ingredients label

- Ingredients listed in order of volume
- More nutritious = whole meats
- Less nutritious = grains, by-products
- Better = pricier

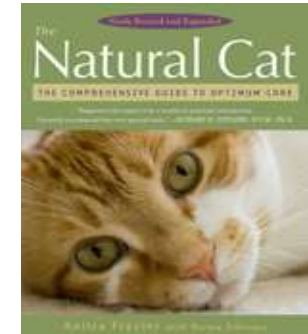
Learn more:

The Natural Cat by Anitra Frazier

feline-nutrition.org

catinfo.org

littlebigcat.com



Wet vs. dry

Which do you think is more nutritious?



Wet meat



Dry meat

Value

Choose the best quality and type (wet or dry) you can comfortably afford

[“What is the best food for feeding feral cats?”](#) [allaboutcats.com](#)

- 4Health All Life Stages Dry Cat Food
- Kirkland Signature Maintenance Cat Chicken & Rice Formula
- Rachel Ray Nutrish Natural Dry Cat Food
- Diamond Naturals Activate Cat Chicken Meal & Rice Formula
- SportMix Wholesome Chicken Meal & Rice Formula





Weather matters, too

Feeding in winter

- Cats expend more calories in colder temperatures
- They burn more calories keeping warm and are more active (they sleep more in hot weather)
- Research shows cats need an average of 15% more food in winter



Where to feed?

- Low visibility (as discreet as possible, e.g., backyard not front yard)
- Minimal impact on neighbors or work site
- Safe and quiet for cats
- Accessible for you
- Distant from any threatened wildlife

Avoid putting food directly on the ground, curb, sidewalk, etc.





Use plastic plates,
cardboard, plastic
containers, etc. —
something that can
be picked up and
removed

Clean up!

- Number one complaint against cat feeders is leaving a mess
- Avoid feeding off products which can easily blow away (paper plates, dishes)
- Pick up all, inc. non-cat trash
- Don't leave bags of trash on-site with any food scent inside - can get ripped open or trap/suffocate wildlife



Feeding stations

- Hide food, dishes, supplies
- Protect from elements
- Keep site clean & neat
- Large opening or multiple doorways



30-gallon trash can



55-gallon storage bin



DIY wooden



18-gallon storage bin



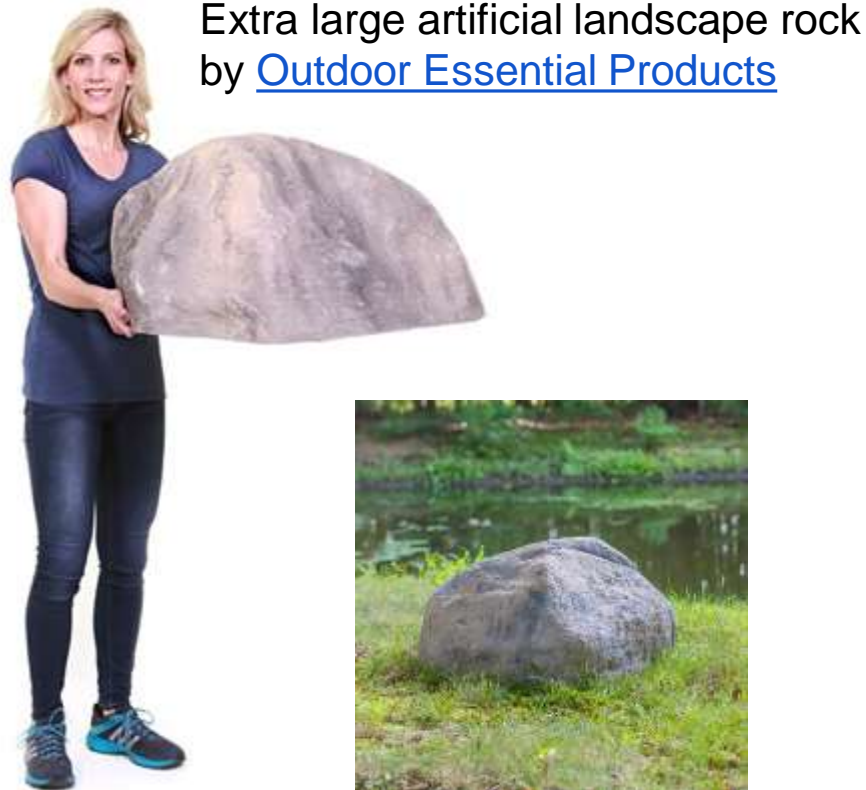
Large Feralvilla
www.feralvilla.com



Small Feralvilla
www.feralvilla.com



Mock rocks



- Help keep feeding stations hidden, even in plain sight
- Lightweight, available in a range of sizes and shapes
- Use a hand-held jigsaw to cut a doorway
- DIY YouTube videos, search: “How to make a hollow faux rock cover”



Gravity feeders & auto-waterers

- If feeding regularly is a problem (limited access, weekend trip, etc.)
- Use smallest needed
- Could attract wildlife, rodents, other cats

A few tips



No feeding station and it's raining or going to rain?
Take-out dishes!



Vittles Vaults to store dry food on-site – keep in a storage bin
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Arm extender/grabber for fences, hard-to-reach spots
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Clearing a path

Rock salt and chemical de-icers can be highly irritating and toxic to cats

A safe solution:

- 1 teaspoon Dawn dish detergent
- 1 tablespoon rubbing alcohol
- ½ gallon warm water
- Mix
- Spray or pour on ice





Water in winter

- Healthy cats don't need much water, but do need some daily
- Especially important when main source of food is dry food
- If cats are present, feed some wet food right away with a little extra water mixed in

Products you can buy to stop freezing



Solar Sipper (solar heated
to 20 degrees F.)

SolarFlairLighting.com



SnuggleSafe
Microwave Heat Pad

www.entirelypets.com



Electric heated bowl

Farm Innovators Heated Pet
Bowl with stainless steel insert

www.amazon.com

Do-it-yourself



Styrofoam cooler
(buy while in season
during the summer)



Deep, wide, thick plastic bowl
Petmate Crock Bowl (10 cup)
www.amazon.com



Bucket, tire & rocks



Small Styrofoam shipping
box:
1. line interior with plastic
bag
2. cut small drinking hole in
top lid



Ants can't swim

- Ant-proof food bowls (search on Amazon)
- Build your own – cookie sheet pan

Flies

- Most attracted to wet food on hot days
- Less attracted to dry food
- They sleep at night – train cats to eat at sundown (at least during summertime)

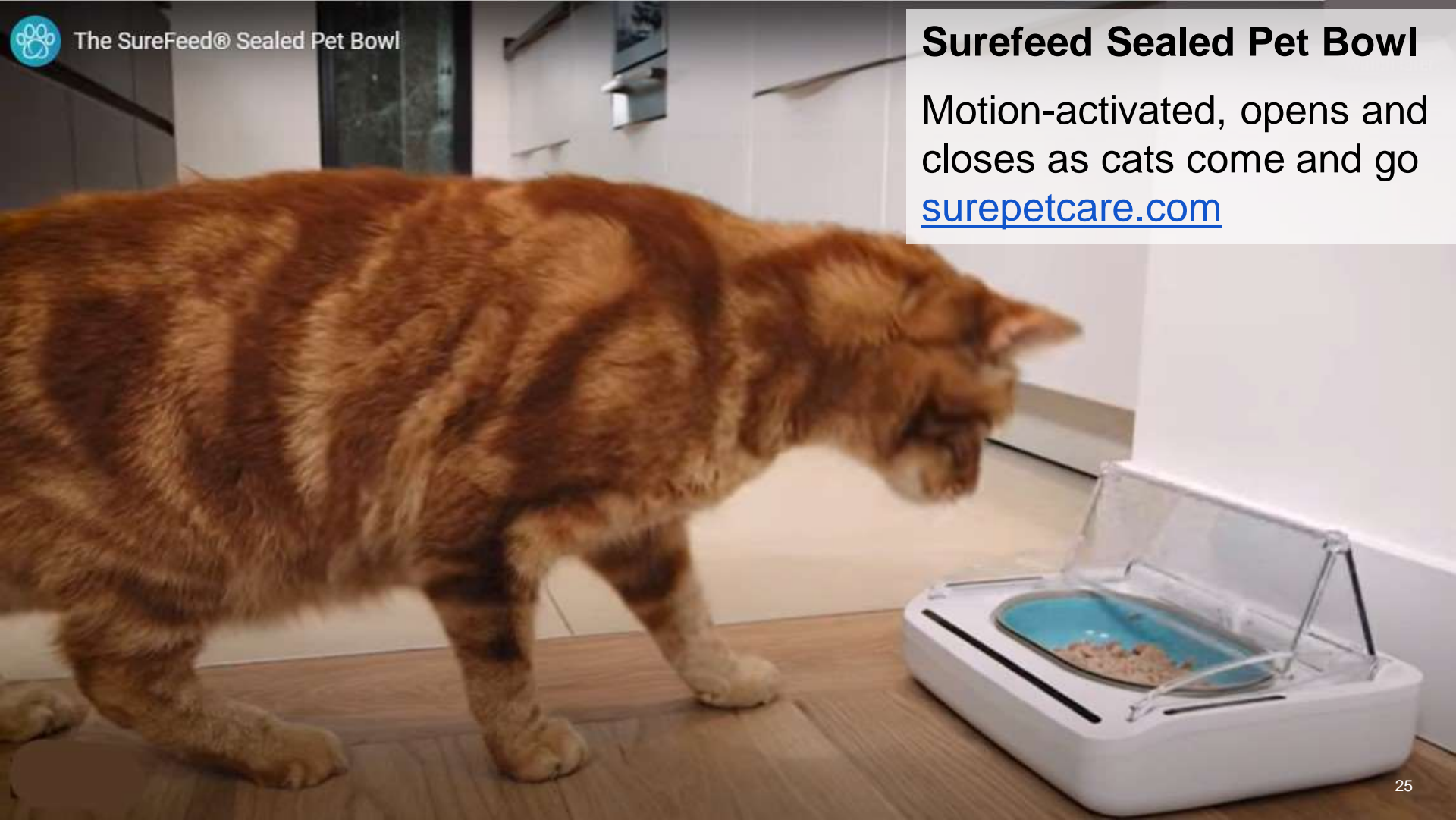




The SureFeed® Sealed Pet Bowl

Surefeed Sealed Pet Bowl

Motion-activated, opens and closes as cats come and go
surepetcare.com



Slugs

- Food grade diatomaceous earth. Don't inhale! Wear a mask when spreading.
- Crushed eggshells or chalk powder
- Sheet of sandpaper
- Feed separately - a bit of food on the ground a few feet away



Diatomaceous Earth
www.amazon.com



Avoid attracting wildlife

- Feed during daylight – most wildlife (except birds) are nocturnal
- Train the cats to eat during a window of time (e.g., 5 to 6pm) and don't leave excess uneaten food behind
- Keep feeding area clean

Raccoons, opossum & skunks

Raccoon-proof feeder – for wildlife that can climb, but not jump vertically

Main elements:

- Platform (2 ft. square) raised off the ground on a post
- Grip-proof skirt around the platform (metal flashing)
- Smaller jump-up platform 2 ft. away



plans: [Forgotten Felines of Forsyth](#)

Birds

- Are diurnal and inactive at night, so feed cats at dawn, dusk or when dark out
- In daytime with a feeding station, attach door flaps like plastic strips
- Most birds will eat cracked corn (chicken feed) so can feed separately



CAT TRIVIA!





Winter shelter must be:

- Waterproof
- Well insulated
- Minimal empty air space

Cats' body heat is captured and warms the interior

This shelter:

www.wintercatshelter.com

Neighborhood Cats Winter Shelter

Plans:

www.neighborhoodcats.org



A black plastic storage bin is shown, repurposed as a winter shelter for stray cats. Inside the bin, a wooden frame is constructed, creating a small, enclosed space. The interior of the bin is filled with a thick layer of dry straw, providing insulation and a soft resting place. The bin is placed on a snowy surface, with some dry leaves scattered around. The overall setup is designed to protect cats from the cold weather.

CSM Stray Foundation Winter Shelter

Plans (& other ideas):
www.neighborhoodcats.org

Styrofoam boxes

- Shipping containers (meat, fish, vaccines, etc.) Can order in bulk online.
- Cut 6" round or square doorway in short side (leave lip a few inches above ground)
- Use silicone glue to attach top
- Deck paint to camouflage





**Feralvilla Outdoor
Cat Shelter II**
www.feralvilla.com



Emergency winter shelter

Made from two cardboard boxes, newspaper, plastic drop cloth (or large trash bags) & duct tape

Plans:

<https://www.neighborhoodcats.org/how-to-tnr/colony-care/feral-cat-winter-shelter>

Placement

- Paint and/or camouflage to blend in
- Discreet
- Near feeding station



Interior insulating materials



Straw (not hay)



Mylar blanket
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



Shredded
newspaper

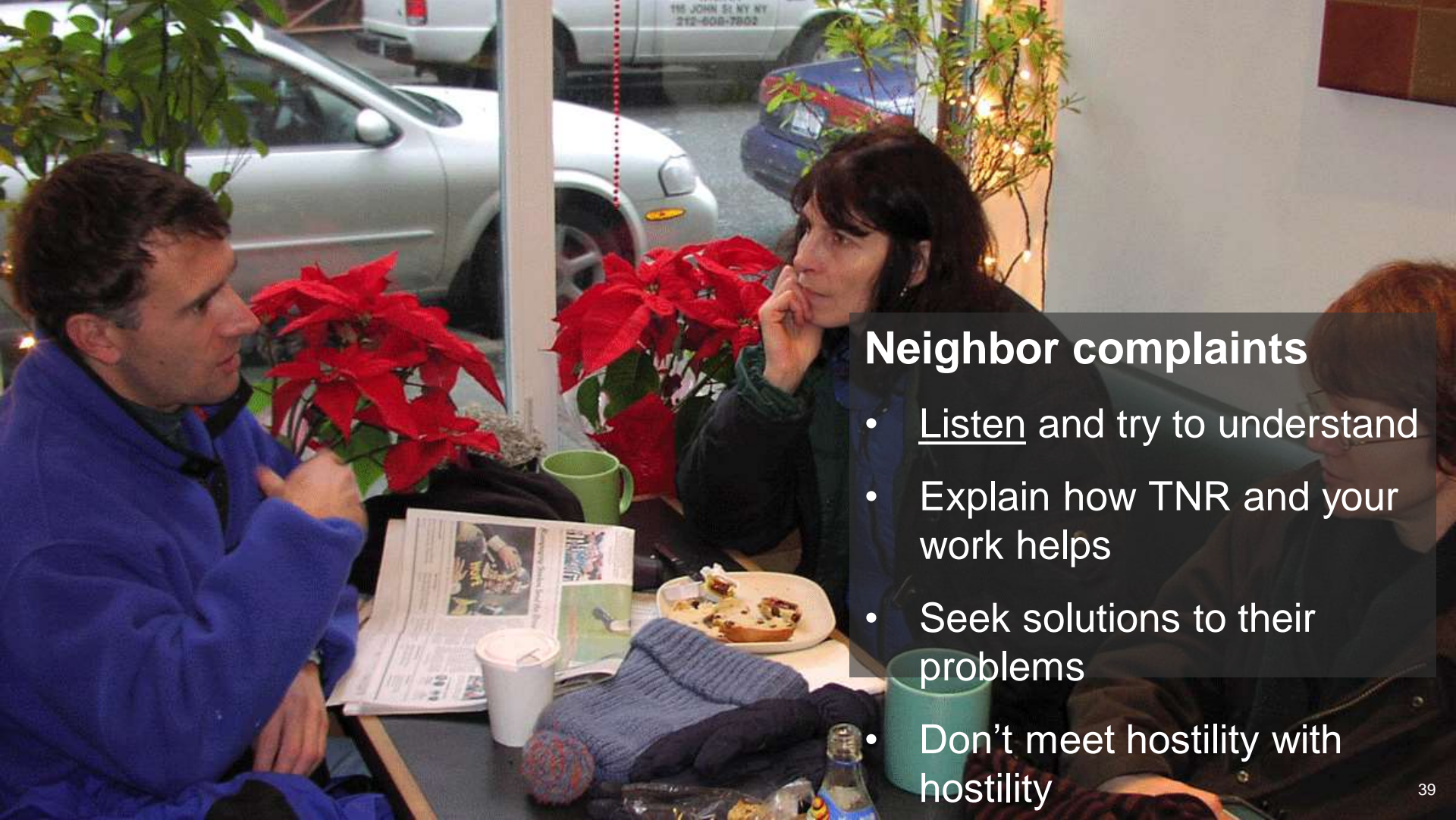


Carolina Pet Company Purr Padd
www.petco.com



Flat newspaper

Blankets, towels



Neighbor complaints

- Listen and try to understand
- Explain how TNR and your work helps
- Seek solutions to their problems
- Don't meet hostility with hostility

Deterrents

Keep cats out of gardens
& yards

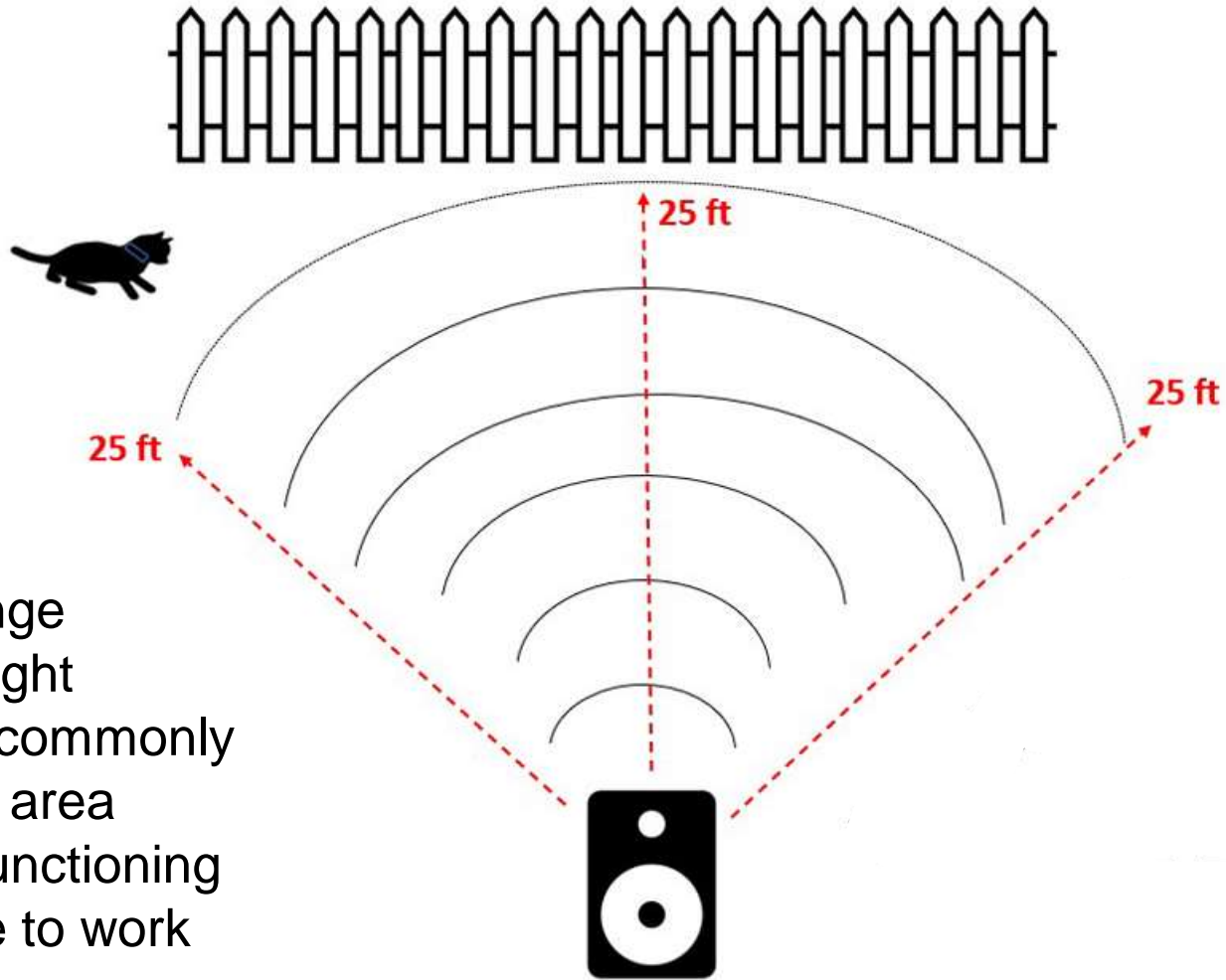
- Motion-activated sprinklers
- Ultrasonic devices (also motion activated)



Yard Gard
www.bird-x.com



Critter Ridder
www.havahart.com



Ultrasonic

- Correct range
- Correct height
- Pointed in commonly frequented area
- Batteries functioning
- Give it time to work

Physical barriers

- Car covers
- Cat-proof fencing
- Cat Scat mats
- Stones / lattice



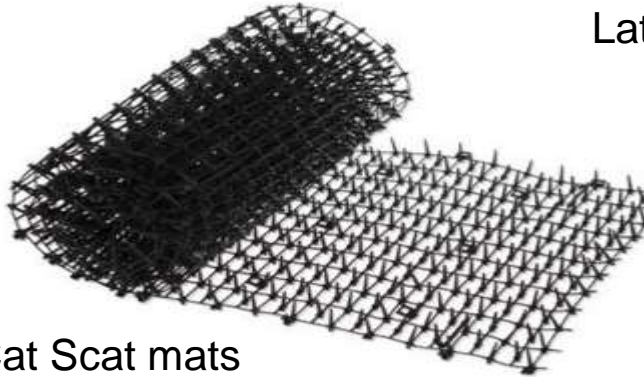
Unique Bargains
www.walmart.com



Lattice fencing



Purrfect Fence
www.purrfectfence.com



Cat Scat mats
www.gardeners.com



River rocks



Long-term storage

Alternative litter boxes

Options:

- Peat moss
- Sandbox
- Storage bin (with litter and doorway)

Kids Wood Sandbox
by Back Bay Play
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

A ginger and white cat is lying down, partially obscured by a green, needle-like branch. The cat has a white face with a pink nose and long white whiskers. Its eyes are a golden-yellow color. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting a natural outdoor setting.

Health hacks

Safeguarding your colony's health doesn't have to be costly or difficult.

Try these simple tips to keep cats purring along!



Vitamin C

- Bolsters immune system during times of stress (trapping, trips to the vet, severe weather)
- Use powdered supplements or organic tomato sauce (without onion as an ingredient)
- Give up to 250 milligrams ($\frac{1}{8}$ th teaspoon) per cat with each meal



D-mannose

- Cranberry extract
- Helps eliminate harmful bacteria in the urinary tract
- Maintenance dose equals 1/8th teaspoon twice a day (per cat)
- Especially helpful for cats prone to feline lower urinary tract disease



Probiotics

- Promotes healthy intestinal flora (good bacteria that lives in the intestines)
- Healthy gut = stronger immune system
- For cats on antibiotics, helps replenish good intestinal bacteria killed by the medication
- Add to food or water – $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon per cat daily



Jackson Galaxy Cat Probiotics
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Fleas - natural

- Sprinkle **diatomaceous earth** (food grade) in cracks, crevices, shelters or other areas fleas gather – kills on contact
- Be careful not to inhale (powder is tiny sharp objects)
- **Beneficial nematodes** are microscopic organisms that eat flea larvae – spray over grass in shady areas during cooler part of day



Diatomaceous Earth
[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)



NemaSeek
by Arbico Organics
www.arbico-organics.com

Fleas – over-the-counter, ingestable

- **Capstar** begins killing adult fleas within 30 minutes – over-the-counter, no prescription required
- Dose is one tablet – can be administered in food
- Safe for kittens over 2 lbs.
- Does not kill eggs or larvae
- Active ingredient is **nitenpyram** – generic versions are cheaper



[amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com)

Worms: over-the-counter, ingestable



[chewy.com](https://www.chewy.com)



[petmeds.com](https://www.petmeds.com)



[chewy.com](https://www.chewy.com)

Return-to-Field & Targeting: The Community Cat Program

Saturday, November 13, 2021, 2 to 4pm ET

<https://www.communitycatspodcast.com/community-cat-care-training-education/>



NEIGHBORHOODCATS



**THE
COMMUNITY CATS
PODCAST**





Neighborhood Cats TNR Certification Workshop – Saturday, October 2, 2021, 2:00 – 4:30pm ET

\$10.00

Are you ready to be part of the solution for feral and stray cats in your neighborhood? Learn what TNR is, why it works, and how to get started. Our expert instructors will teach you the best practices for Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) and colony management. Plus, you'll receive a certificate of completion after you attend.

<https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/2061792523453401613>