

Bob Taylor of CatsAway.org

TOP TIPS FOR A CAT POOP FREE GARDEN



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CATS HATE CHICKEN WIRE

Bob Taylor

One of the best and most useful cat deterrent tips I ever found online was that cats do not like the feel of chicken wire on the pads of their paws so they won't climb it and avoid walking on it if at all possible.

Not only that but they can't dig in any areas you have strategically placed the wire making it the best cat deterrent against digging I have yet to find.

Of course, it is not going to be the perfect solution for many gardeners. If you have established perennials in your beds then it is going to be difficult to lay the wire but if you use bedding plants, grow annuals from seed or perhaps grow vegetables in raised beds then preparing the area before planting will ensure your seeds or young plants remain in the ground and that you won't be finding any more buried surprises.

Here's what I did for a raised bed to try it out.



After preparing the soil as normal ready for seeding I laid out the chicken wire on top and used some long tent pegs to hold it nice and flat. I then spread my seeds and sprinkled a thin layer of compost on top of both the seeds and the wire.

This made the wire barely visible while ensuring no more cats would be able

to dig in the soil.

I used 40mm mesh but you could use wider if you were growing bigger plants.

If you are planting bedding plants or growing large vegetables then you can simply cut the wire and bend it over to make holes for your plants.

If your borders and beds are established then cut the chicken wire in smaller lengths to cover any bare spots or particular problem areas and then cover with a layer of mulch to hide it.

I've also seen some raised beds that are used for growing veg with the chicken wire simply placed around it and held in place with bamboo canes to create a fence as this gardener has done below.



A little unsightly perhaps for flower beds but it does the job when growing crops. I went with this method on one of my raised flower beds but used a pond net I got from B&Q for a tenner as shown below.



It is a little easier on the eye although cats won't mind standing on it as its not wire so I had to make sure it was securely fastened around the edges.

You can just about make out the cable clips I used to fasten the left side of the netting down. I used weights to hold down the other side so I could easily gain access for thinning out the seedlings.

Another way to use chicken wire to protect your garden is to just lay it on the floor if cats are entering your garden in a particular spot. Part of our raised deck was an easy access point used by one particular cat who would drop onto the deck from a fence post. Once I laid the wire down on the deck the cat would not jump down onto it.

I couldn't leave it there full time as we have a toddler using the garden now and then but it does seem to work so give it a try.

When using chicken wire always wear gloves as it can be sharp on the cut edges. I used some wire snips to cut it and then always bent over the cut edge so there was no risk of either me or the cats cutting themselves.

In summary

Chicken wire is one of the most cost effective cat deterrents I have yet to

use. What's more you only need to buy it once. You can lift it out of your raised beds each year when it is time to weed and dig in some new compost and then lay it down again.

For established beds you will need to lift it to do your weeding but as it is going to be in easy to handle sizes it shouldn't be a problem. Besides, if you cover the wire with a good mulch you will have less weeding to do any way.

CAT SPRAY REPELLENTS - THE PROS AND CONS OF CAT SPRAYERS

Bob Taylor

While most commercial cat deterrents are designed to scare cats away the cat spray repellent works by making an area less attractive to cats by giving off a smell or taste they don't like.

Some of them contain the urine of foxes or other cat predators so I suppose you could argue they fall under the cat scarer category too.

They are used on areas the cat does its business or sprays to mark its territory and this brings its first problem when opting for a cat spray repellent - assuming it works, the cat simply picks another spot to poop or spray.

If you have lots of area with loose soil (borders, raised beds, flower beds etc.) that is going to be attractive to cats looking to do their business then you could end up doing more harm than good by spreading the problem throughout your garden instead of keeping it isolated to one spot.

I have seen some gardeners recommend making an area tucked away somewhere in a corner of the garden attractive for the visiting cat so that at least you know where the crap is and while I can see the benefit of that if you owned cats, I don't really want cats crapping anywhere in my garden. If you are lucky enough to have a large garden though this might be something you want to consider.

I purchased a tin of Growing Success Cat Repellent from B&Q and used it on my 2 raised beds. Unfortunately it stinks awful and as my beds are built into the decking patio this was a problem. I also found it wore off after about a day or instantly if it rained so needed applying regularly.

It did seem to be effective but because of the above problems it wasn't very practical.

Cat spray repellents are fine for cat owners who want to keep their cat from an area in the house but for gardeners trying to keep their garden cat free, you are fighting a losing battle armed with one of these spray bottles.

Not only that, they are false economy too. Sure they only cost a few quid but you have to constantly keep applying the stuff. A decent **electrical cat deterrent** can be had for around a tenner more than a bottle of spray but will last at least a few years.

The Citrus Fruit Myth

Because of the close vicinity of the raised beds I decided to try odours that were less repulsive to my own nose and after reading how cats disliked citric smells I gave the orange peel trick a try.

This involved clearing away the poop (which you should do before applying any repellent) and spreading plenty of orange peel in and around the area.

Like most of the tips and tricks I found online, this had no effect at all and the cat pooped right in the middle of the area treated with the peel. I can only assume the smell is too weak outdoors to have any effect.

Lion Manure

Another tip I found online that turned out to be yet another dud (for me at least) - spread some lion manure around your garden and the cats will run a mile.



When I first read this on a forum I thought it was a joke but it wasn't and there's even a commercial product called **Lion Manure by Silent Roar** for those that don't have access to the real thing.

It did nothing at all for the cats visiting my garden but like all repellents, it will work on some cats but not on others.

At the time of writing there are 150 reviews of Silent Roar that back that point up. From 5 stars claiming final relief from their cat problems to 1 stars claiming it did nothing. There's even one that claimed the fowling increased after they spread the manure around!

With an average of 3 stars though it may well be worth trying at under a tenner.

Many of the commercial odour repellents use toxic ingredients so might do more harm than good. At the very least you will want to read the instructions carefully and don't over use.

Summary

Cat repellents that rely on smell are very hit and miss. A cats sense of smell fades with age and like us they each have different tastes so what is repulsive to some may not be to others. The other downsides are that they require constant replacement so are not a long term solution and they stink so not great for use near your patio or decking.

If you only have a small area to protect though, it could be a cheap and easy answer to your problems.

CAT REPELLENT RECIPES YOU CAN MAKE YOURSELF

Bob Taylor and readers of CatsAway.org

Using one of these home made cat repellent recipes means you will know exactly what ingredients are in it so you can be sure it is environmentally friendly and safe. It's also a lot cheaper than buying a commercial cat deterrent and they tend to be friendlier to the human nose!



Why are there so many different cat repellent recipes listed below? All cats are different and what works on one may not work on another. As an example, some of these were given to me by people who swore the recipe worked for them yet they did nothing to repel the cats visiting my garden.

So, if you try one of these and it has little effect simply try another. Even when you find one that does work, you should still consider trying another recipe after a week or so to ensure the cats don't get used to the odour and start ignoring it.

Before using any type of natural cat repellent you should first clean the

area of any cat litter or spray.

It's worth noting too that using a cat repellent spray - whether home made or commercial - means it will need re-applying after a rain shower. Perhaps not a problem for some of our USA and Aussie readers but for British Isles residents, having to apply twice a day for 10 months a year and once a day for the 2 summer months can become a chore :-)

Recipe 1

The average cat has 40 times more odour cells than us and they find many essential oils unpleasant. These include lavender, peppermint and orange.

Mix 1 part of any of the above oils to 3 parts water in a spray bottle and give it a good shake. For problem spots you can try soaking cotton wool balls in one of the oils and putting them in and around the area.

Recipe 2

Another natural cat repellent recipe I found that proved reasonably successful but required a bit more work was as follows:

Mix 2 tablespoons of Cinnamon, Rosemary and Lavender into a pint (500ml) of boiling water and leave it overnight.

Next morning you will need to strain the liquid through a cheesecloth and then add half a cup of vinegar and a dozen drops of Tangerine essential oil. Place your cat repellent in a spray bottle and give it a good shake before use.

Recipe 3

Squeeze a lemon into a litre of water, add 2 dozen drops of eucalyptus oil and give it a good shake. Eucalyptus acts as a repellent to several animals including cats and they are supposed to find citrus off putting.

Recipe 4

Certain dried herbs you can buy in the big supermarkets can also be effective as cat repellents. Sprinkle dried Rosemary or Lavender around your bedding plants or other problem areas for a quick and easy way to put the cats off using the area as its litter tray.

Recipe 5

Citronella oil is the home made cat repellent I had most success with. Although best known as a mosquito repellent cats find the Citronella odour very distasteful. Mix 1 part Citronella oil to 4 parts water and spray liberally in the trouble spot.

Warnings

Although I have tried to use only natural ingredients you should still try to avoid spraying directly onto your plants.

I have come across several recipes that included boiling Cayenne or black pepper with other ingredients. Pepper can cause injury to a cat or other animals eyes and I would not recommend it. Not only is it cruel but you could well end up with a hefty vet bill or worse, being prosecuted (see [cat laws](#)).

Similarly, you will come across plenty of people advising the placement of moth balls in your garden to keep cats away. Moth balls are toxic and not only bad for your soil and plants, can cause all sorts of serious problems to most animals (including us) and can cause death to a cat.

Cat Repellent Recipes Submitted By Our Readers

Brian told us how he uses Listerine mouth wash where a cat leaves its mark as it eliminates the smell and puts the cat off when he returns.

I use it undiluted on the spot where the neighbour's cat made his mark. It really eliminate the smell, never use vinegar or ammonia on a cats urine, it just make the smell worse.

Joseph from America had great success with his own concoction which he was good enough to share.

I bought the Eucalyptus plus Mint essential oil at Walmart for \$3.87 (large bottle). The pharmacy there gave me a free syringe to use to extract the oil from the bottle. It is the plunger type that measures in ml and tsp.

I took 1 whole lemon and ran it through a juicer but a food processor works just as good. I then strained the mixture through cheesecloth and poured it into a 16-ounce spray bottle. I then used the plunger to extract 1/2 tsp of oil from the bottle and put it into the spray bottle.

I filled up the rest of the spray bottle with water from the tap. I shook the bottle vigorously before spraying in the areas where the neighbours cats were continually spraying and defecating on my property.

Thankfully, the mixture worked wonderfully. No more cats whatsoever. I respray every Saturday morning, and it has been working faithfully for more than three months now.

Debbie from here in the UK is finding Citronella seems to work best against her neighbourhood cats.

I have been using Citronella oil mixed with water and it is very successful so far. The cheapest way to do it is to buy the essential oil. There are gel's on the market specifically for dog and cat repellent however it ends up being pricey as it doesn't last long. Citronella needs topping up every couple of days. So far so good! I have been told to put lemon slices around the plants too as it will deter fouling.

Submit your home made cat repellent recipes

If you have any cat repellent recipes that you have had success with please let me know by [clicking here](#) and I will add them to the website.

HOW TO STOP CATS POOPING IN YOUR GARDEN

When the cat owner doesn't give a sh!t

Bob Taylor



I get quite a few emails asking how to stop cats pooping in your garden when the cat owner doesn't give a poop about you or your flower beds. One I received a few days ago in particular had an air of desperation to it that is familiar to many a gardener.

Here's the email.....

Dear Bob

My husband and I are at our wits end with our neighbours cat. Don't get us wrong, we know the right to roam law relating to the cat, we don't dislike cats. But to cut to the chase, everyday we are subject to spoilt flower beds due to the neighbours cat digging and using the flowerbeds as a toilet.

The difficulty we have is that we have an extremely poor relationship with our neighbours.

We've been reading the law regarding cats and come across the same thing, cats have a right to roam.

Earlier this year I approached my neighbour and showed him photographic evidence of his cat fouling and digging our flowerbeds. It's soul destroying watching your efforts being dug up and spoiled.

We were able to capture the cat on camera, it has been happening for a considerable amount of time now but without evidence we realise there is little you can do. But I did have a short conversation with the owner next door who agreed it was his cat and I gathered that he had had problems like this at his previous address.

He told me to put citrus peel in the ground, purchase cat repellent etc. and a parting note was that it would be a gesture to receive a contribution to purchase some of the damaged flowers. He agreed to pay a sum of £3 but never did.

The saga continues. The cat continues to use our garden most days. We now have cctv evidence, the same cat fouling in our garden.

Everyday I have to tidy the area, remove the cat faeces and dispose of THEIR cat excrement!

Last year I underwent treatment for a serious illness, my husband had our garden renovated for me to relax in and enjoy whilst undergoing chemotherapy. He is beside himself to see the garden being used as a toilet and the neighbour doesn't give a monkeys because of the right to roam law.

I've read your site and felt a glimmer of hope. Surely the

neighbours do have a duty of care towards us with this ongoing issue?

We're obtaining more and more evidence now with our cctv and have made it our business to take dates and times and screen shots to compile this evidence.

I am galled that I have to clear the cats excrement, dispose of it with my own gloves and bags and put it in my bin. I want to throw it over the fence but I'm aware I need to do things in the right way and not land ourselves in trouble.

Can you give us any further advice Bob?

Kind regards

Tracey

Unfortunately Tracey, you only have to read some of the comments left by cat owners here on Cats Away to realise that some of them simply do not understand how you can consider a cat coming into your garden and doing what cats do as a problem so I suspect you are beating your head against a wall when trying to reason with a cat owner like this.

The first thing I advise anyone trying to stop cats pooping in the garden is to tackle the cat rather than the owner once it becomes obvious they don't really give a damn about you or your right to enjoy your own garden.

Collecting video and photographic evidence will obviously help your case should you wish to attempt to go the legal route and visit a Solicitor but there is no guarantee of a successful outcome and it is not going to be cheap.

Water Is Your Best Defence Against Cats Pooping In Your Garden

Your best and fastest course of action is to invest in a [Contech Scarecrow](#) (you can [read my review here](#)) and set it up to protect the area your neighbours cat is currently using as its toilet or its point of entry into your garden.

Believe me, once the cat has received a blast of water from the Scarecrow it very quickly gets the message that this area is no longer a giant litter tray.

This is an American product that was developed to scare off a whole range of animals and it works great on cats. I've found it to be the best commercial cat deterrent I've so far tested.

If the flower bed the cat is using cannot be protected by the Scarecrow due to its location (they aren't really suitable for protecting areas next to a boundary fence for instance where you might end up giving a neighbour a soaking) then set up a few solar powered ultra sonic cat deterrents around the area.

These work by sensing movement and giving off ultrasonic noises that cats don't like. There are several available and I've extensively reviewed most of them. You can read them on CatsAway by [clicking here](#).

These might not give the instant success that you get with the Scarecrow but usually after a few nights the cat will take the hint and stop paying your garden a visit.

Another option is to set up a simple frame around your flowerbeds and lay pea netting or chicken wire over it to keep the cat off. Finally, as a last resort you might want to invest in a decent water pistol.

Cats are intelligent critters and they soon move on to somewhere new when a garden suddenly becomes a wet area. I am confident that with the use of at least one of the cat deterrents mentioned above you will soon be able to enjoy your garden without the need to approach the cat owner again.

CAT REPELLENT PLANTS TO KEEP CATS AWAY

Bob Taylor

Using cat repellent plants is as natural as you can get in your battle to deter cats from your garden and this will appeal to those people who for whatever reason can't or don't want to use any of the commercial cat deterrents.

In the UK cats are allowed to roam wherever takes their fancy and if you are a gardener who doesn't want them visiting your garden, using plants to deter cats is going to make a lot of sense.

A few strategically placed plants that cats hate should mean they get to exercise their right to roam by quickly moving on rather than pooping in your flower beds or sunbathing in your vegetable patch.

So lets have a look at the plants you might want to consider using....

Coleus Canina aka Scaredy Cat - The ultimate cat repellent plant



Some bright spark in Germany bred this hybrid with the specific intention of producing a plant that keeps cats away. It is also said to work on dogs, rabbits and foxes too.

I purchased half a dozen Coleus Canina as plug plants when they first became available in the UK. I found them very easy to grow and kept them in containers placed around my decking where cats were entering the garden.

Coleus Canina prefers a sunny spot although they will grow in shade and are drought resistant but they aren't hardy and need protection from frost.

Coleus Canina plants smell pretty bad if you brush by or touch them so you probably won't want to position them directly outside your back door or under your kitchen window.

Also, you will also need a greenhouse or cold frame to get them through the winter months.

In my experience most cats at least try to avoid the Scaredy Cat, with many giving it a wide berth. I have seen at least one old Tom walk straight past

one - but like humans cats lose their senses as they get older.

Coleus Canina is a nice looking plant with pretty blue flowers in the summer. They grow and spread about 40cm at their peak after 2 years and you can expect to pay around a tenner for half a dozen from Nurseries or a quid each if you [purchase online from here](#).

Other Cat Repellent Plants

If Coleus Canina (the Scaredy Cat) isn't for you, here's a few other cat repellent plants you might want to try.

Curry Herb and Lemon Balm Plants



Helichrysum Italicum (aka the Curry herb plant) and Lemon Balm plant are strongly disliked by most cats and are often purchased together by gardeners in the know to be planted in their borders.

Cats find the odour from both unpleasant and the coarse texture of the Curry plant is said to irritate them if they brush by it. If grown into tight bushes the Lemon balm too is irritating enough for cats to avoid going near it.

Planting around your boundary will deter cats from entering your garden or if this isn't practical, adding them to your beds and borders should stop them being used as litter boxes.

You might also want to grow a few in containers so they can be moved to troublesome spots. For example, placing on the path to your back garden can stop cats using it as a point of entry.

Both these cat repellent plants are said to be easy to grow and for most of

us the smell is not unpleasant. As an added bonus you can make a tea with the Lemon Balm leaves which is said to be a tonic for common colds, stomach cramps and headaches. Bees and butterflies are said to be attracted to the Lemon balm too.

I have as yet not tried either of these plants but plan to grow them this year. You can either grow from seed or purchase as plugs. If your garden centre doesn't have any then you can [order online from here](#).

Rosemary - Rosemary is a wonderful perennial that smells lovely, is great for cooking and as an added bonus, many cats hate the smell! The only problem is that it needs a warm and dry climate so in the UK you are probably best to grow Rosemary in containers.

Lavender - Borders with sways of Lavender plants smell and look gorgeous to us but not to cats. The tall varieties seem to work best as cats won't jump over something if they can't see where they are going to land.

Ground Cover - Cats go for bare soil when it's time to find itself a toilet so grow some ground cover such as Perennial Geraniums to hide these spots. It can make a garden look too cluttered for some tastes though so instead of planting the area you could instead spread your rose or other suitably thorny cuttings over the bare spots.

Hawthorn and other Prickly Bushes

Talking of thorns, there are many prickly plants that will deter cats, dogs, foxes and even human intruders from your home if strategically placed in your garden.

The downside is that by their prickly nature they can be difficult to look after and you will want to think carefully if you have toddlers regularly in the garden.

Suitable prickly plants include:

- Hawthorn - can be pruned into an hedge that the SAS would find practically impenetrable
- Holly - Planted close together it creates a formidable barrier
- Berberis - Plenty of varieties that come in various sizes and all have prickles
- Blackthorn - Really nasty spikes guaranteed to keep cats and most other

animals out

- Blackberry - Plenty of thorns to keep all animals at bay with the added bonus of producing berries

Unlike the Curry plant, Lemon Balm and Coleus Canina, thorn bushes cannot be simply jumped over. They can though, like all these plants be walked around so you need to do some planning before planting and because of your particular garden layout using cat repellent plants might not be practical.

Of course, plants take time to grow and so you can think of them as a cat repellent for the months and years to come. If you need something that is going to work straight away you can read my reviews of some of the commercial cat deterrents available below.

KEEP CATS OFF YOUR LAWN

Bob Taylor

As you probably know, cats like to bury their mess which is why they are attracted to our freshly raked borders and forked raised beds. Although not common, it has been known for some male cats to forsake the burying part and instead take a liking to doing its business on your nice lawn.

You can almost picture Tom sniggering in the general direction of your bedroom window while he takes his nightly dump in the middle of your lawn.



The best cat deterrent for a lawn in my opinion has to be one of the water sprayers such as the [Contech Scarecrow](#) (expensive but will last for many years) or the [Pestbye Jet Spray Repeller](#) (a cheaper and less well made version of the Scarecrow).

A couple of reasons for this, the main one being that cats get used to the ultrasonic deterrents so you have to keep moving them around and it's hard to know exactly what area they are covering but with a water spraying deterrent you can easily test and adjust its coverage area to ensure your lawn has full protection.

Cats very quickly learn to keep well away from the protected area because they hate getting a soaking.

A sonic deterrent won't work on all cats. Just like us their hearing range changes as they get older so they may not even hear the noise given out by the deterrent and if they do, it might not be the horrible noise a young cat hears. With a cup full of water heading their way, trust me, all cats run.

Just 1 Contech Scarecrow is enough to protect all but the biggest English garden lawn and for the larger lawns, several can be linked together. The Scarecrow will also protect your lawn from foxes and other critters too.

Other things to try

Keep the grass well mown during the Summer, the shorter the better and plant some cat repellent plants in your surrounding borders such as Coleus Canina, lemon balm, lavender and rosemary.

Cats are creatures of habit and so you should find they are doing their business in the same spot on your lawn. If they are, during the winter when you can't keep the grass short try to discourage them from the problem spot with some of the odour deterrents sprayed on the spot.

One reader suggested cutting a cane up into 6" lengths (150mm to you youngsters), wrapping tin foil around one end and sticking the other into the ground to create a barrier around the problem area. She had excellent results and puts it down to cats not liking the shiny tin foil.



COMMERCIAL DETERRENTS

Are you are considering purchasing one of the many commercial cat deterrents on the market?

Over the last few years I've purchased and tested lots of them to better help you choose the one that's best for your garden.

[Read My Reviews Here](#)