

## Introducing a Garden Cat to his/her New Home: Steps for Success

Adopters of Garden Cats need a quiet, escape-proof place to confine the cat for the first 3-4 weeks during the acclimation period. Garages, ventilated sheds and tack rooms are ideal because they are enclosed and dry. If your barn or property does not have an escape proof confinement area you can use a large wire dog kennel with a divider. People have gotten creative over the years; check out the pictures below for some of our favorite “do-it-yourself” options from King County’s barn cat program in Washington. (<http://www.kingcounty.gov/safety/regionalAnimalServices.aspx>)



“The landowner went to Goodwill and bought a beat up old chest of drawers for \$5.00. He took the drawers out, installed a shelf with a hole cut in it, and placed it inside a shed equipped with a cat door small enough to exclude predators. The litter box and cat bowls were placed on the bottom shelf, and the top shelf was the cat lounge. After acclimation, the chicken wire was removed and the chest of drawers became the permanent cozy home of two happy barn cats.”

“Where it isn’t possible to close up a barn, garage or shed, a spacious metal cage can be used to confine the cats during the acclimation period. In the setup on the left, the cats could see outside, which helped them orient to their new surroundings.”



Once acclimated to their surroundings, Garden Cats can be allowed out to roam while still allowed access to their confinement area. Ideally, the confinement area is always available for the cats as their designated shelter and safe space. Garden Cats generally do not enjoy human companionship and will be very shy. Adopters should not expect to see the cats often and need to be diligent to keep track of their routine and health.

In addition to being spayed or neutered, HSSV’s Garden Cats have been tested for FIV and FeLV, received vaccines, given a dose of deworm and flea preventative and have been microchipped. Depending on how social the cat is, the adopter should plan on keeping up as much of the preventative medical care as possible. Most often anti-social cats will not allow you to handle them until they are very ill. Sudden changes in behavior may indicate a problem and veterinary care should be sought immediately.

### Feeding Recommendations

Cat food both smells and tastes delicious to lots of creatures other than cats. To prevent unwanted wildlife and insect visitors, it’s best to feed on a schedule and not leave food out at all times. Placing food out twice per day for 20-30 minutes gives the cats plenty of time to eat and also encourages your cats to come home for meal time. Picking up leftover food when feeding time is over will help you avoid attracting ants, raccoons, rodents and other unwanted critters. Sealing bags of both opened and unopened food in plastic containers also deters unwanted pests that could otherwise nibble through the bag if tempted!

### Follow Up Support

As with all of our adoptions, HSSV is here to help adopters for life! If ever you have a question or need support just give us a call or send us an e-mail, we’re here for you!