



Garden Cat

Adoption Guide

Name _____

Animal # _____

Microchip # _____

Person # _____

Counselor _____

Share updates or contact us at adoptions@hssv.org

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What's Included

The fees for adopting animals allow us to provide medical care, food, and shelter to the animals in our care.

Core Treatments*

Dewormer | Flea Treatment | FVRCP | Rabies

**All future treatments and vaccines at cost of adopter*

Spay & Neuter

Cats and kittens adopted through HSSV must be altered prior to adoption.

Microchip

HSSV uses HomeAgain for its microchip services. Animals without microchips will receive one prior to adoption. All microchips will be registered with HomeAgain for the life of the pet at time of adoption.

Medical Exam & Behavior Notes

A copy of the animal's medical history and any behavior notes will be provided to you at the time of adoption. Please consult your vet for any questions on the medical history.

Next Steps

Resources

Mandatory Items

- **Secure medium hard sided animal crate**
(Not a wire crate, one per cat)
- **Secure Housing**
(Must be set up prior to taking home garden cat)

1. Pick up basic supplies

- Food
(Hills Science Diet Adult Cat dry & wet food)
- Litter Scoop
- Litter Box/Unscented litter
- Scratcher
- Enrichment Items

Additional Supplies:

- *Comfy Bed*
- *Bowls*

2. Complete Microchip Registration

We started your microchip registration for your new pet in the Home Again database. Log into their website to complete the registration at www.homeagain.com.

3. Contact a Vet

Since most garden cats prefer to keep to themselves it can be difficult to take your cat to the vet for vaccines and treatments. We recommend contacting a vet from the referral page within 1-2 weeks of adoption to create a plan for future vet visits. Many medical clinics will rent or loan you a trap to catch your cat to bring them in for exams or treatments.

4. Diet

While in our care your cat has been eating Hills Science Diet dry and canned wet food. You can use the feeding guidelines on the back of the packaging or speak with your vet to determine appropriate amounts. Your chosen veterinarian can also serve as a resource to provide advice about which diet is best for your new pet.

Behavioral Resources

Check out list of comprehensive behavior re-sources for cat parents at hssv.org/resources

Returns and Surrendering

If you need to return an animal for any reason, please reach out to our intake department at **408.262.2133 x110**

Returns are by appointment only. After 90 days surrender fees may apply.

Animal Age: _____

Animal Weight: _____

Special Instructions:

What Your New Pet Eats

At Humane Society Silicon Valley, we're proud to be part of the Hill's Food, Shelter & Love® program and we feed our pets Hill's® brand pet food.

We offer all our new pet parents the opportunity to participate in the Hill's New Pet Parent program. As a part of the Hill's New Pet Parent program, you will receive an email with a link to Hill's New Pet Parent website, more information about the Hill's food, the Adoption Kit, and other tips for new pet parents. If at any time you wish to no longer receive emails about the Hill's New Pet Parent Program, you may opt-out at the link at the bottom of the emails, or otherwise contact Hill's at [Hills Corporate Consumer Affairs@hillspet.com](mailto:Hills_Corporate_Consumer_Affairs@hillspet.com) or call 1-800-445-5777.

Why we suggest that you continue feeding your new pet Hill's Science Diet:

- Continuity and consistency of food helps reduce digestive distress
- While feeding Science Diet, you are offering your new pet a food that is or has:
- #1 veterinarian recommended
- Precise nutrition supports healthy skin, coat, and stool
- Clinically proven antioxidants for a healthy immune system*
- Unique foods for healthy dogs and cats of every age, size, and need
- Natural, great tasting ingredients*
- Not artificially colored, flavored, or preserved*
- Made in the USA with global ingredients you can trust

**Dry foods only*

When you chose Hill's® brands, you help our shelter and the Hill's Food, Shelter, and Love® program!

Would you like to be signed up for the Hill's New Pet Parent Program and other offers and promotions from Hill's? YES___ NO___

As a part of the Hill's Food, Shelter, and Love® program you receive a starter bag of food for your new pet. It contains approximately 1 week of food as well as a \$5 coupon for your first purchase of any Hill's® pet food product.

How Does a Cat Become a Garden Cat?

When kittens have no human interaction by the age of 3 months they start to become fearful of people and touch. The older they become, the less likely they will be able to become house pets. These cats are not aggressive, just shy and would prefer to be outside.

In exchange for providing them with food and shelter they will soon become guardians of your backyard. Their natural prey drive gives them an occupation of keeping rodents and pests at bay. Garden Cats deserve love just as much as their more domesticated counter parts.

Introducing a Garden Cat to their New Home: Steps for Success

- **Housing Recommendations:** Adopters of Garden Cats need a quiet, escape-proof place to confine the cat for the first 3-4 weeks during the acclimation period. This period is crucial for the cat to develop an environmental imprint of their surroundings through sight, smell, and sound. If they wander off, they need to be able to find their way back.
- **Cats should be housed:** Enough space to turn freely and to easily stand, sit, stretch, without touching the top of the enclosure. Be able to lie in a comfortable position with limbs extended, move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating.
- With at least 11 cubic feet of living space.
- Have at least 2 feet separating the litter box from the sleeping quarters and feeding area.
- Places to hide and a higher point than ground level to perch upon (this can be the carrier you bring them home in, left in the acclimation housing)

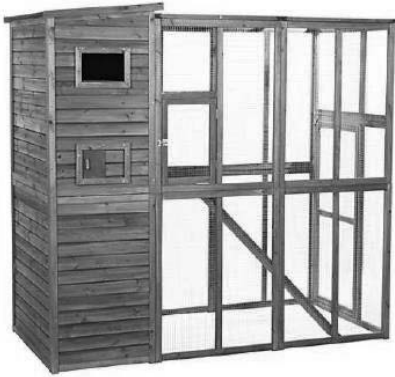
Common Housing Accommodations

Chicken Coops and DIY Enclosures Often the best option. Coops that meet minimum spacing requirements provide a place for hiding, eating, litter box, and lounging. DIY enclosures are the most affordable and allow the maximum amount of customization to ensure all guidelines are easily met.

Garages and Ventilated Sheds are secure housing locations. However, they must have at least one screened window the cat can see out of and, and must be slightly cracked open to allow airflow to carry the outside scents in. Remove any dangerous items or objects such as tools, pesticide's/poisons before turning it into your cat's new home. Garages and ventilated sheds are often the riskiest housing option due to hazardous materials, and the possibility of escape. Be careful not to let the cat out when you enter/exit to clean and feed.

XXL Dog Kennels, or ideally two kennels secured together are an acceptable acclimation housing option if minimum space listed above is met. Place the kennel in a semi-shaded spot on your property so it's not in direct sunlight. Adding extra height to the kennel by raising it off the ground a few feet or more will make your Garden Cat feel more secure.

Common Housing Accommodations

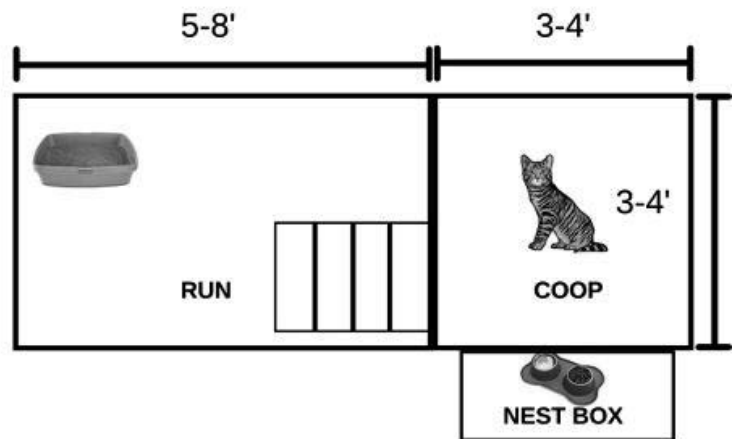


Chicken Coop A chicken coop's multiple layers and areas can make a great home. The compartments that open from the top are the perfect size for a separate sleeping and feeding area. Coops also offer a combination of inside and outside space, providing enrichment during their confinement period. We recommend getting the largest coop you can find.

Amazon: Product #B078LMQWR5 (~\$450) PawHut Large Wooden Outdoor Cat House w/Large Run

Setup:

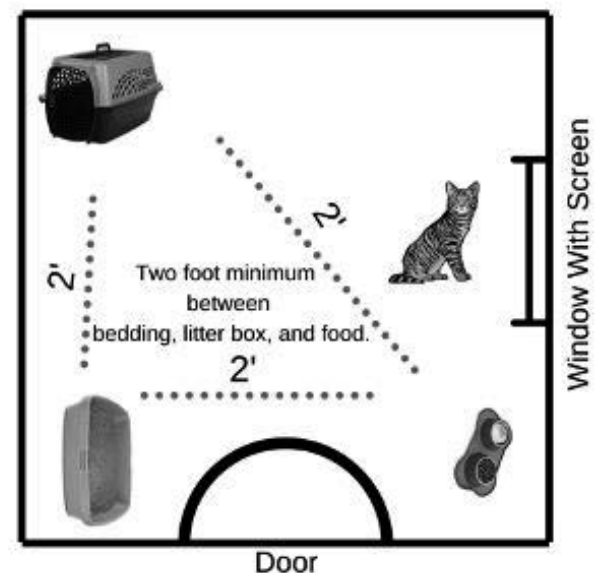
- Food and water in the nesting box area
- Litter box in the far corner of the run, preferably closest the entrance
- Straw bedding in coop (hay can grow mold)
- Enrichment items in the chicken run
- A raised platform or bed can be placed in the run for added extra luxury



Garden Shed Adding a screened-in porch can give your cats a larger of vision to better acclimate to their new environment. A minimum of one window is required for housing in a shed; cats must be able to see the outside during their acclimation period in order to memorize their environment. Be careful not to let your cat escape whenever you open the door.

Setup:

- The litter box should be closest to the entrance
- Clean up and remove any pesticides or poisons from the shed
- A minimum distance of 2 feet between bedding, food, and litter box
- A perch near the window enables your cat to scout their new territory comfortably
- Keep screened window open to allow for constant air flow if possible



Housing Examples



XXL Large Dog Crate or 2 Large Dog Crates Connected

A dog crate can be an acceptable housing if it contains at least 11sq ft of space per cat. This is equal to an XXL crate or connecting two large crates. You can compare an XXL crate to yourself living in a small garden shed, so it's the least favorable option, but it is an option.

Amazon: Product #B005VVWBVY (~\$152) MidWest Homes for Pets
XXL Giant Dog Crate | 54" Long Ginormous Dog Crate

Setup for an XXL::

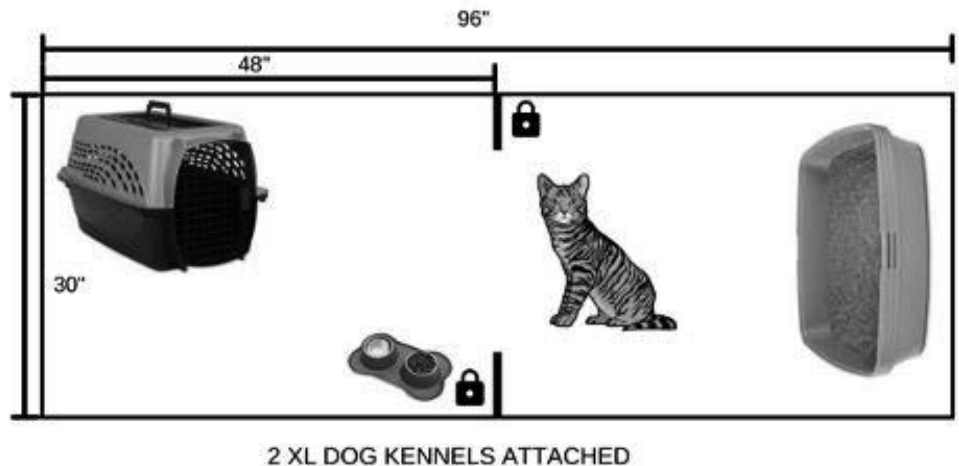
- Arrange litter box, carrier, and food bowls as far away from each other as possible
- Raise the kennel off the ground, if possible, by placing on a pallet or 2x4s
- Place the crate in a partially shaded area and protected from the elements if it rains; Foldout Canopies are a great solution.
- You can cover 1/3 of the crate with a tarp or towel



Setup for 2 Connected Crates::

- Two crates can be connected if at least one of them has two doors.
- Align the open entrances and connect them with zip ties
- Place the litter box near the remaining accessible entrance
- Place food, bedding (carrier), and litter box as far away from each other as possible.

- Adding a cardboard box or a single layer cat tree can provide a second layer for the cat to rest on
- Crates with multiple doors are helpful, as this gives you a way to clean the litter box and add more food and water safely



Environmental Recommendations

Having a Garden Cat who lives outside 24/7 means you need to make sure they stay cool in the summer and warm in the winter. Do not rely on the cat's instincts to find appropriate shelter.

In the warmer months

- Provide options for your cat to keep cool such as: self-cooling pet beds, raised pet beds, increased airflow, and ice cubes places in water dishes.
- If you notice symptoms of overheating such as: rapid breathing, drooling, vomiting, or howling you should contact your vet immediately. Heat stroke in cats can be fatal.

In the colder months

- Provide an additional insulated shelter for warmth and protection from the elements.
- Insulated or heated outdoor beds are available online, or you can make one easily from a large Rubbermaid tote and Styrofoam or straw (not hay).
- Put outdoor heating pads or self-heating pet beds in their shelter.

Releasing Your Garden Cat

Once the acclimation period (3-4 weeks) is up, It is recommended to keep the housing unit set up permanently or switch over to another type of shelter in the same location.

Purchasing or constructing a special cat house, like the Feral Villa™ (Right), is highly recommended. It is designed specifically for protection from predators, and only takes up a small space on your property. Purchase at www.feralvilla.com



Multiple Cats

While Garden Cats don't usually enjoy the company of humans, most will enjoy the company of other felines! We wholeheartedly recommend adopting at least two Garden Cats for twice the benefit and so they have companionship in their new home. Having a fellow feline friend also creates another connection to your property, as they can find entertainment and companionship with each other rather than wandering off on adventures.

**Multiple cats will need to double the housing space*
22 sq ft minimum (11 sq ft minimum per cat)*

Feeding Recommendations

It's important to remember that while your Garden Cat will potentially be eating some of your pests, they still need to be provided fresh food and water daily for their entire careers. Cat food both smells and tastes delicious to lots of creatures other than cats.

- To prevent unwanted wildlife and insect visitors, do not leave food out for more than 30 minutes. Placing food out twice per day gives the cats plenty of time to eat and also encourages your cats to come home for mealtime. A feeding schedule ensures punctuality, allowing you to consistently check on their wellbeing.
- Sealing bags of both opened and unopened food in plastic containers also deters unwanted pests that could otherwise nibble through the bag if tempted!
- Be aware of pesticide use in your area; run-off into water supplies can be fatal to outdoor cats. Provide fresh water daily to ensure your cat has a safe water source.

Litter Box

Garden Cats should always have access to a litter box. Once the confinement period is complete, your cat might choose to do their business out on the property, but it's still good to have the litter box available should they choose to use it. The food should be placed as far away from the litter box as possible in the cat's confinement space, at least 2 ft. Both the litter box and the food should be easily accessible for easy cleaning without entering the cat's space.

- Place litter box near entrance.
- Take litter box from housing in one swift motion; closing the entrance and cleaning before returning.
- Keep the entrance to the housing open as little as possible to prevent the possible escape of your furry employee.
- Scoop the litter box at least once daily, and completely change out the litter weekly to avoid odors and attracting predators.

Getting to Know Your Garden Cat

You can increase the likelihood of your cat sticking around if you try to befriend them! This does not mean trying to pet or directly play with them but giving extra enrichment in their lives. While they're in the acclimation housing, the more outside environment they can see around them, the better. You can further enrich their experience through:

- Offering fresh cat grass, catnip, treats.
- Providing cat scratchers and toys
- Sitting in their field of vision and just hanging out
- Having conversations within earshot or reading out loud
- Looking in their eyes and blinking slowly several times (this is cat for: "it's ok!")

Getting a Garden Cat used to your presence is the first step in befriending them! Remember, many of these cats are fearful of humans, so we need to take small steps in getting closer to them.

- Like all cats, Garden Cats should get an annual physical and updated vaccinations. Contact your local vet offices first to confirm they work with Garden Cats (also known as Barn Cats or Feral Cats).
- We encourage all our adopters to get a trap of their own and keep it opened in the locked position and do all meal feedings inside the trap. This will ensure that the cat feels safe and comfortable entering the trap on a regular basis.
- It is also recommended to keep a diary of the garden cat and note places where they like to spend their time so that they may be easier to locate in the future when needed.
- Taking pictures every month of your new family member and comparing them to when the cat first came home will allow you to note any changes in physical appearance such as weight loss or weight gain.
- Garden Cats usually won't tolerate being picked up to be put in a carrier to visit the vet, so you'll have to trap them again.
- Place trap near usual feeding area and cover, leaving the front and back uncovered.
- Most traps have a section in the back that opens; secure it with a carabiner or zip tie so that they can't escape once trapped.
- Bait the trap with tastier than normal breakfast, towards the back (past the pressure plate of the trap).
- Once this is done, go back inside and wait to hear the trap fall.
- Bring your trapped Garden Cat into a more secure location (in your garage or laundry room) until it's time for your appointment.
- **DO NOT LEAVE A SET TRAP UNATTENDED.**
- Other wildlife can be attracted to the bait and cause the cat distress, or you could catch something else by accident!
- Schedule your vet appointment the same day you trap them. It's okay if they sit in the trap for a few hours while they wait for their appointment but try to have as little time window in between catching and the vet visit as possible.

Veterinary Resources for Garden Cats

Find a vet at: www.hssv.org/choosingavet

Parktown Veterinary Clinic HSSV
Recommended Animal Hospital 1393 S.
Park Victoria Dr., Milpitas, CA, 95035
Monday to Friday: 8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday: 8 a.m. – 2 p.m. Sunday:
closed
408-263-3990 www.parktownvet.com

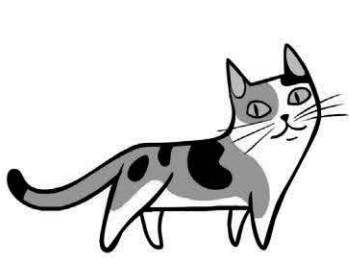
****It is not recommended to bring a cat to the vet if they are still acclimating, unless they're showing obvious signs of illness. This can cause undo stress and may do more harm than good. We recommend consulting with your vet prior to bringing in them in for an appointment.**

Animal Behavior Help

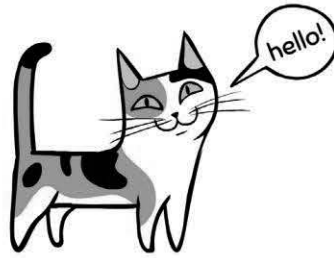
You can contact a member of our Behavior Team with behavior concerns or questions at any time after adoption. You will need your "Person Number" found on your adoption paperwork and can fill out a form at:

hssv.org/behaviorhelpline

CAT LANGUAGE



INTERESTED



FRIENDLY



ATTENTIVE



RELAXED



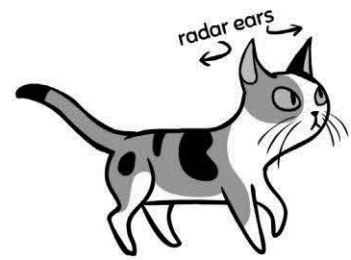
TRUSTING



FRIENDLY, RELAXED



CONTENT



CONFLICTED, CAUTIOUS



PLAYFUL



EXCITED



"THIS IS MINE"



ANXIOUS



PREDATORY



WORRIED



FRIGHTENED



THREATENED



TERRIFIED



SUPER TERRIFIED



IRRITATED



DISGUSTED