

Advice on deterring cats

Cats are protected by law and are free to roam meaning they might go into other people's gardens or allotments. It is understood that some may wish to deter other people's cats from those areas.

In attempting to prevent cats from entering a garden or an allotment it is important to make sure that any deterrent methods used are non-harmful and don't cause pain, suffering, injury or distress. Causing unnecessary suffering to a cat is an offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 (AWA). It may also be an offence to put down snares, poison or an unlicensed deterrent. The AWA also prohibits poisoning protected animals. The maximum penalty for anyone found guilty of an offence under the AWA is up to 6 months imprisonment and/or a £20,000 fine.

Some suggestions which could help you are:

- Cultivate shrubs closely to make it more difficult for cats to find a place to dig
- Cultivate prickly plants or place clippings of prickly or thorny plants in any gaps on your flowerbed
- Keep flowerbeds watered as some cats don't like wet earth
- Consider covering parts of the garden that you do not want the cat to toilet in with stone chippings, pebbles, small rocks or netting over the top
- Shoo a cat away by either shouting or clapping your hands when you see them enter your garden
- Squirt water near the cat, **not at the cat**, using a low-powered water pistol - super soakers are not suitable. The intention is to give them a fright and not to hurt them. Try to remain hidden from view if you spray an unwanted cat in your garden; if they learn to associate you with the negative experience rather than the garden itself they may simply wait until you are not around before happily entering. It could also cause the cat to be afraid of people.
- Install an automatic garden spray, triggered by an infra-red detector which locates movement - you can find these online
- Attempt to make it difficult for cats to enter the garden through use of high, close-boarded fences. Patch up any holes in any fencing.
- Do not start feeding someone else's cat if you do not want him around as this will likely encourage the cat
- The owner of the cat may be able to help by ensuring their cat is neutered and has suitable latrine sites within its own garden. If





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possible and appropriate, it may be helpful to have a courteous conversation with the owner.

There are also a variety of approved cat repellent products on the market but if you do decide to use one please make sure it's a licensed product and that it is used in strict accordance with the manufacturer's guidelines and instructions - failure to follow these may lead to an offence being committed and could result in unnecessary suffering being caused to the cat.

We would not recommend using 'homemade' remedies or deterrents as their use may infringe legislation and regulations, particularly if it causes actual harm to the cat. In addition, the true negative or toxic effects of these remedies is likely to be unknown.

Where the land adjoins a footpath or bridleway, a landowner must not put up barbed wire on land where it is likely to injure persons or animals using the public highway. In such cases, the local authority can take action against the landowner.

If you wish to make an allegation of nuisance regarding a neighbour's cat, then the relevant provisions are contained in the Environmental Protection Act 1990. You should refer such complaints about the cat to the Local Authority.

OTHER POSSIBLE LINKS:

- [RSPCA cat care](#)
- [RSPCA advice and welfare on wildanimals](#)

Links to the web pages of other organisations are provided for additional information only and do not imply any endorsement by the RSPCA of those organisations or of any content on the website.

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