**Community Cat Frequently Asked Questions**

 **General Questions**

Q: What is a community cat?

**A:** Community cats are members of the domestic cat species, but are not socialized to humans and therefore not adoptable. Cats have been living outdoors near humans for 10,000 years. They typically live in groups called colonies and have strong social bonds with their colony members.

Q: What is Trap-Neuter-Return?

**A:** Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is an effective and humane way to stabilize community cat populations. Cats are humanely trapped and brought to one of the AHS clinic days to be spayed/neutered and vaccinated by the vets at AHS.
TNR works. No more kittens. Their lives are improved, and the population stabilizes and declines over time. The behaviors and stresses associated with mating, such as yowling and fighting, stop.

Q: When Can I Rent a Trap from AHS?

**A:** You can rent a trap from AHS anytime between 12pm – 7pm Mon – Sat and 12pm – 5pm on Sunday.

 **Questions About Kittens**

Q: What should I do if I find a kitten?

**A:** Most likely if you find a kitten or litter of kittens alone, the mother cat is off hunting for food and will return shortly. To be sure, watch the kittens from a distance where the mother cat cannot see you and wait to see if she comes back. If the mother does not come back, here are tips on what you can do. Remember, you can always contact us at 646-PETS!

Q: Will AHS accept stray kittens?

**A:** All of our intake depends on our current capacity. If you have kittens that you think would be good canidates for our foster or adoption programs, please contact our intake department at receiving@austinhumanesociety.org or 512-646-7387×104.

 **Easy Solutions to Community Cat Behaviors**

Problem: Cats are getting into my trash.

**Explanation**: Cats are scavengers and are looking for food.
**Quick solutions:**

* Place a tight lid on your trash can. Exposed trash bags will attract wildlife as well.
* See if neighbors are feeding the cats. If they are, make sure they are doing it on a regular schedule.
* Start feeding the cats yourself if you find no regular feeder — at a set time, during daylight hours, in an out-of-the-way place. Feeding cats regularly and in reasonable quantities, which can be consumed in less than 30 mins or so, will help ensure they don’t get so hungry that they turn to your trash.

Problem: There are cat paw prints and/or scratches on my car.

**Explanation:** Cats like to perch on high ground.
**Quick solutions:**

* Gradually move cats’ shelters and feeding stations away to discourage cats from climbing on cars or other private property.
* Purchase an appropriate cover for the car.

Problem: Cats are digging in my garden.

**Explanation:** It is a cat’s natural instinct to dig and deposit in soft or loose soil, moss, mulch and sand.
**Quick solutions**:

* Scatter fresh orange and lemon peels or spray with citrus-scented fragrances. Coffee grounds, pipe tobacco, or oil of lavender, lemongrass, citronella, or eucalyptus also deter cats.
* Plant the herb rue to repel cats, or sprinkle dried rue over the garden.
* Use plastic carpet runners spike-side up, covered lightly in soil. They can be found at local hardware or office supply stores. Or, set chicken wire firmly into the dirt with sharp edges rolled under.
* Cover exposed ground in flower beds with large, attractive river rocks to prevent cats from digging and deter weeds.
* Establish a litter box by tilling the soil or placing sand in an out-of-the-way spot in your yard. Keep it clean and free of deposits.
* Use an aromatic spray product, such as Dog and Cat Repellent.

Problem: Cats are lounging in my yard or on my porch.

**Explanation:** Cats are territorial and will remain close to their food source.
**Quick solutions:**

* Apply cat repellent liberally around the edges of the yard, the tops of fences, and on any favorite digging area or plants.
* Install an ultrasonic animal repellent or a motion activated water sprinkler, suck as ScareCrow or CatStop.

Problem: Cats are sleeping under my porch or shed.

**Explanation:** The cats are looking for a dry, warm shelter away from the elements.
**Quick Solutions:**

* Physically block or seal the location the cats are entering with chicken wire or lattice once you are certain the cats are not inside. Be sure to search for kittens before confirming that the cats have left — especially during the spring, which is prime kitten season.
* Provide an alternative shelter (similar to a small dog house). Or, if they are feral and part of a nearby managed colony, ask the caregiver to provide shelter for the cats. Shelters should be hidden to keep cats safe, and placing them well can help guide cats away from unwanted areas.

Problem: Feeding the cats attracts insects and wildlife.

**Explanation:** Cats need to be fed under proper guidelines. Leaving food out can attract other animals.
**Quick solutions:**

* Keep the feeding area neat and free of leftover food and trash.
* Feed cats at the same time each day, during daylight hours. They should be given only enough food for them to finish in one sitting, and all remaining food should be removed after 30 minutes.
* For more information on colony management guidelines, visit [**www.alleycat.org/ColonyCare**](http://www.alleycat.org/ColonyCare).

Problem: Cats are yowling, fighting, spraying, roaming and having more kittens.

**Explanation:** These are all mating behaviors displayed by cat that have not been spayed or neutered, and they will breed prolifically.
**Quick solutions:**

* Spaying/neutering and vaccinating these cats will reduce the sex-drive hormones causing these behaviors. Consider participating in our TNR program.
* To combat the urine smell, spray the area thoroughly with white vinegar or with a product that uses natural enzymes to combat the smell, such as Nature’s Miracle.