

## **Cat Behavior-Cat Fence**

### **Do you know where your cat is?**

**Consider the following hazards to outdoor cats:** \*Outdoor cats get injured by fighting with other cats, dogs or wildlife. They will require more medical care than indoor cats. \*Outdoor cats often get hit by cars. \*Outdoor cats can get caught and seriously injured in the fan belt of a car as they try to find warm spots in the cold weather. \*Outdoor cats can be poisoned, either accidentally or intentionally by malicious people. \*Outdoor cats are exposed to serious diseases such as infectious feline anemia, upper respiratory disease or rabies. \*Outdoor cats often get fleas, ticks or worms, all of which can threaten their health. Outdoor cats can be used as live bait to train dogs for fighting. \*Outdoor cats cannot "fend" for themselves. Domestic cats depend on humans for food and shelter. \*Outdoor cats, in general, have half the life span of indoor cats. Outdoor cats are simply not as protected as indoor cats.

#### **Fixing to fence In**

If you are owned by a cat that just absolutely must go outside, it is possible to cat proof your enclosed yard so that your cat cannot get over the fence. This protects your cat from many dangers that outdoor cats' face. There are several companies that sell ready to install cat-fencing or you can do it yourself with supplies from the local hardware store.

All these fences work on the same basic principle-they attach to the upper portion of your fence and keep the cat from jumping up and reaching the top, effectively confining the cat in the enclosed area .

Do it yourself cat fencing takes an afternoon to do. You will need \*28"wire garden fencing (enough to install on your entire fence plus a few extra feet), \*U-shaped nails, \*wire cutters & pliers, \*Optional: additional wire & flexible netting. You will be cutting the fencing into manageable sections, usually 8-10 feet or so will work, and then bending each section down the middle lengthwise.

Garden fencing usually has one square that is large squares and one square that is smaller rectangle squares-use the half with smaller rectangles at the top horizontal portion. This would prevent the small cat from wriggle through the larger squares. You will be tacking it to the fence in an upside down L-shape. Tack sufficient nails in the vertical portion so that it is attached securely. Connect the top portion of all sections with wire or cut edges of fencing. Corners can be overlapped. For a gate that opens inward you can use flexible netting and tack that to the top instead of the garden fencing if necessary. For trees that are close to the fence use either the leftover fencing or use netting.

Be creative. You need to think like a cat and block any areas that they get through or over-trees, sheds, spaces under the fence all need to be covered. You will need to keep a good eye on your cat for the first few days to see if they discover any areas that you have missed. The fence will not keep other animals out initially until they learn to avoid your yard. So if any neighbor cats or wildlife get in, make sure that your cat is inside the house, then prop open the gate and give the intruder a chance to get out. They usually don't make the same mistake twice!