



FieldHaven Feline Rescue

Indoor vs. Outdoor

The FieldHaven Philosophy

Opinions abound on whether cats should be indoor only pets or allowed to go outside. We are often asked if our adoptables are allowed free access to the outdoors, primarily because our photos often depict cats and kittens amongst the flowers in our gardens. No, our adoptables are not allowed free access to the outdoors although there may be an occasional adoptable kitty that is allowed to play in the gardens unescorted. Those “indoor/outdoor” kitties get that distinction only after every attempt has been made to restrict that cat to the indoors without success. The others are taken out only for photo shoots.

So, where do we stand on the indoor vs. outdoor philosophy? We believe in most situations an indoor-only home is the best and safest solution for our feline friends. Let’s face it; it’s a nasty world out there in most places for our purr therapists. Cars, dogs, nasty people, snail bait, anti-freeze, coyotes and other hazards are common in our suburban environments and present a plethora of dangers to our cats. Each time I observe a cat lying dead alongside the road I shiver imagining the heartbreak some family will go through when they find their friend’s lifeless little body was no match for a car.

However, there are scenarios where it may appropriate to allow a cat access to the outdoors. Here are a few:

- If you live in a rural and safe area you may want to allow your cat outdoors during the day. While no environment is guaranteed hazard free, those of us fortunate to live on rural property enjoy having our friends share chores with us around the ranch. However, coyotes are a very real danger in most communities, both rural and suburban. Be very aware of them and know they will come very close to your house. After dusk, it is simply not safe – get your cats indoors.
- Our feral friends are definitely not suited to the indoor life and simply would not be happy restricted to the inside of a house. The only chance they guys have is to have an environment where they are fed, watered and a barn or other safe place to get out of the elements and away from predators.
- An outdoor enclosure or “habitat” is a nifty solution for allowing adventuresome felines a perfectly safe place to get in touch with their “inner lion”. There are a lot of ways to build an outdoor enclosure. Check out the outdoor habitat at FieldHaven for one example. Here’s a couple of links for some more ideas:
 - <http://cats.about.com/od/outdoorenclosures/>
 - <http://www.cdpets.com/index.html>
- Walk your cat! Yes, cats can be leash trained – well, somewhat. But, you can go outdoors with your kitty on a leash. Many cats will adapt well to a harness and leash. A couple of rules to follow: Always use a harness, never attach a leash to your cat’s collar. And, do not leave them unattended. We know how kitties can climb and jump – not a good thing when they’re attached to a leash!

The bottom line is to use common sense when deciding to allow your cat outdoors.