



Will Work For Food!

The Garden Cat Adoption Program at The Marilyn & Fred Anderson Community Cat Garden

At Humane Society Silicon Valley (HSSV) we know that traditional home adoptions aren't for every cat which is why we created the Garden Cat Adoption Program. Cats available for adoption in the Garden Cat program are looking for a home in settings such as a barn, warehouse, corporate campus or plant nursery. In exchange for room, board and meals these cats benefit people by keeping rodents away.

HSSV's Garden Cats are not your average cat who enjoys petting and sleeping in front of the fireplace. These cats are anti-social with people and are not able to be placed up for adoption as pets. Even though their adoption may be a little different than house cats, we are just as committed to finding them safe homes and are here to help adopters set these cats up for success.

Frequently Asked Questions

How Does The Process Work?

If you are interested in adopting a Garden Cat please contact us at adoptions@hssv.org or 408-262-2133 x150. Garden Cats that are available for adoption are currently housed at The Marilyn & Fred Anderson Community Cat Garden in our Animal Community Center (ACC) in Milpitas. In order to find you the right cat and provide the tools needed for a successful Garden Cat transition and adoption, we will discuss the program in detail and find out more about what you are looking for. Read about the requirements for housing, transition and ongoing care of Garden Cats below.

Is a Garden Cat For Me?

Not every location wanting a Garden Cat is a safe environment, but we are here to help you decide if your property is a good place for a garden cat to work and live.

Things to consider before adopting:

Is the property near a busy road or in an area with known predators such as coyotes?

- If so, it may not be a safe place for a free roaming cat to live

Is anyone on or near the property using poison or bait to kill rodents?

- If so, find out who and if they are willing to stop or switch to a humane, live trap to remove rodents. Cats that ingest rodents who have been poisoned will also be poisoned

Is there a safe, dry place for the cat to use for shelter?

- Cats are resilient but need a warm, dry place in cold or wet weather. Cats also need places to hide from humans, dogs or scary things like thunder and lightning.

Will you or someone on the property be feeding and monitoring the cat every day?

- Garden cats need caretakers and cannot survive on rodents alone. Food, water, shelter and monitoring health of Garden Cats is necessary for their well being

Are There Multiple Cats?

While Garden Cats don't enjoy the company of humans, most cats do 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.

Is There an Adoption Fee?

Yes, the adoption fee for Garden Cats is \$10 per cat. Donations are always welcome to help cover the cost of this life saving program!

Introducing a Garden Cat to his/her New Home: Steps for Success

Adopters of Garden Cats need a quiet, escape-proof place to confine the cat for the first 3-4 weeks during the acclimation period. Garages, ventilated sheds and tack rooms are ideal because they are enclosed and dry. If your barn or property does not have an escape proof confinement area you can use a large wire dog kennel with a divider. People have gotten creative over the years; check out the pictures below for some of our favorite “do-it-yourself” options from King County’s barn cat program in Washington. (<http://www.kingcounty.gov/safety/regionalAnimalServices.aspx>)



“The landowner went to Goodwill and bought a beat up old chest of drawers for \$5.00. He took the drawers out, installed a shelf with a hole cut in it, and placed it inside a shed equipped with a cat door small enough to exclude predators. The litter box and cat bowls were placed on the bottom shelf, and the top shelf was the cat lounge. After acclimation, the chicken wire was removed and the chest of drawers became the permanent cozy home of two happy barn cats.”

“Where it isn’t possible to close up a barn, garage or shed, a spacious metal cage can be used to confine the cats during the acclimation period. In the setup on the left, the cats could see outside, which helped them orient to their new surroundings.”



Once acclimated to their surroundings, Garden Cats can be allowed out to roam while still allowed access to their confinement area. Ideally, the confinement area is always available for the cats as their designated shelter and safe space. Garden Cats generally do not enjoy human companionship and will be very shy. Adopters should not expect to see the cats often and need to be diligent to keep track of their routine and health.

In addition to being spayed or neutered, HSSV’s Garden Cats have been tested for FIV and FeLV, received vaccines, given a dose of deworm and flea preventative and have been microchipped. Depending on how social the cat is, the adopter should plan on keeping up as much of the preventative medical care as possible. Most often anti-social cats will not allow you to handle them until they are very ill. Sudden changes in behavior may indicate a problem and veterinary care should be sought immediately.

Feeding Recommendations

Cat food both smells and tastes delicious to lots of creatures other than cats. To prevent unwanted wildlife and insect visitors, it’s best to feed on a schedule and not leave food out at all times. Placing food out twice per day for 20-30 minutes gives the cats plenty of time to eat and also encourages your cats to come home for meal time. Picking up leftover food when feeding time is over will help you avoid attracting ants, raccoons, rodents and other unwanted critters. Sealing bags of both opened and unopened food in plastic containers also deters unwanted pests that could otherwise nibble through the bag if tempted!

Follow Up Support

As with all of our adoptions, HSSV is here to help adopters for life! If ever you have a question or need support just give us a call or send us an e-mail, we’re here for you!