

How to Get Your Cat Out of Your Potted Plants

CatChannel expert Jeanne Adlon, offers suggestions for keeping your cat from digging in your houseplants.

By Jeanne Adlon

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Q: How can I stop my cats from digging in my flower pots?

A: Cats are diggers by nature. They like digging in their litterbox and might do the same to your favorite planters if they can get away with it. The mess this creates can be bad enough, but what you don't want them to do is to begin mistaking your indoor flower pots for their litter pans!

I often am asked what can be done to stop cats from digging in the wrong places. Here are some suggestions to deter your kitty from ruining your plants and your rug: Place aluminum foil around the top of the soil in the planter.

Get some large smooth stones and put them on the soil. Place a few of them upright so your kitty cannot get their paws inside the planter. Make sure the stones are smooth — you do not want to hurt your cat.

The smell of oranges can be offensive to some cats. Try putting orange peels on top of the soil.

Buy a repellent specifically made for this purpose at the local pet store. Make sure you follow all instructions, and stick with it. Very often, one dose is not enough.

Keep in mind that some plants are poisonous to cats if they are eaten. These include all lilies, dieffenbachia and mistletoe. If you have any of these in the house, make sure they are safely out of reach. Check the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals website for a complete list of toxic plants.

Lastly, consider giving your cat its own flower pot with kitty grass that is safe to eat. Buy kitty grass seeds at the pet store, and place the pot in an area that has an easy cleanup for you. It is good for cats and helps them pass hairballs.

Jeanne's Tip of the Week: The best cat toys often are the simplest. Try crumpling small squares of aluminum foil into balls, or you can remove the plastic cap of a milk container. Both are great to toss around the room.