

Re-Homing a Feral or Semi-Feral Cat

Thank you for adopting one of our hard-to-home cats. You are helping a nervous or semi-feral cat which is not suited to life in a household. The following guidelines will help you during the crucial settling-in period.

These cats are not suitable as indoor pets. They are happy to live in large gardens, stables and smallholdings. Outdoor cats need a regular supply of food, water and a sheltered place to sleep. Given time and encouragement, an outdoor cat may become more sociable and want to come indoors.

Outdoor cats are homed on the understanding that the new owner will provide food, water and shelter. A well fed cat is a more efficient hunter than a hungry cat. A hungry cat only catches enough prey to feed itself. A well fed cat will also hunt for sport.

All of our outdoor cats have been neutered and vaccinated.

Settling In

Confine your outdoor cat to one building for 2-4 weeks to become used to the smells and sounds of its new territory. Make sure that there are no gaps in the walls or broken windows through which it could escape. Please put mesh or curtain net over the windows. If the cat panics it may not recognize the glass as a barrier and could injure itself. If there is not a sufficient building for this, a large dog crate will suffice. We can also loan crates if we have them available.

During this time the cat needs food, water and a litter tray. Be careful that it does not escape when you go in to feed it or scoop and change the litter tray.

Spend time with the cat while it is confined. Talk to it, read the newspaper out loud etc. This way it will get used to the sound of your voice. Although it may hide at first, it will be watching you.

Letting the Cat Out

After 4 weeks, leave the door open so that the cat can come and go as it pleases. Continue to feed it in the same place for a while so that it knows where to find its food. You can move the feeding site once the cat knows its way around its new territory.

Sprinkling used litter (after flushing away the feces) on the ground will help the cat to recognize its territory - and will let it know which areas to use as its toilet. This mimics its natural marking behavior.

Although a semi-feral cat cannot be stroked or petted, it will come to recognize you as a food provider. It may greet you or follow you (at a distance) when you put food down. This is a great compliment.

If treated kindly, nervous and semi-feral cats may turn into friendly, even affectionate, cats. It will do this in its own time. Do not force attention on an unwilling or nervous cat.

Health

All cats must be wormed at least once a year. This is very important for cats living outdoors as they quickly pick up worms from their prey or from the ground. Add the crushed wormer to strong smelling food.

All cats require rabies vaccination updates. Tip Me Frederick will help you secure a vet appointment or clinic space to accomplish this.

If the cat is injured, ill or is due for vaccination, you will need to borrow a cat trap from Tip Me Frederick or other rescue organization. You will be shown how to operate the trap. When transporting the cat, cover the trap or carrier with a blanket to keep the cat calm and put several layers of newspaper underneath the carrier (in case of 'accidents').

When taking an outdoor cat to the vet, warn the vet that it is semi-feral as he must use special equipment when examining it.

Most semi-feral cats settle into their new territory well. They may disappear for a day or two on exploration trips, but will return for food. Continue to put food out as normal. If the cat does go missing, please let the rescue organization know. It may turn up as a stray elsewhere.