

Cat Tails

No Deposit, No Return

My best friend and garden buddy happens to be a big, longhaired Siamese cat. He goes by the name of Mister Wu, and if you've ever had the pleasure of meeting him, you'd probably never forget him. He has a way of charming everyone, even those who didn't know that they liked cats. Mister Wu loves to follow me around the yard while I do my gardening. And even though he's a big twenty-pound tough guy, I've seen him stop to smell the flowers, too. He especially shares my love of digging in the dirt. When I dig a hole to plant something new, he's right there beside me, watching my every move. Being a good little gardener, he knows that it's good idea to add some fertilizer. Unfortunately he prefers his own to what I like to use. I can start digging a hole for my plant and as soon as I put my shovel or hand tool down, he jumps in and starts making his own deposit. This has become such a routine for him. I let him have his fun with the flowers and shrubs but distract him when it comes to the vegetable beds.



A Barrel of Fun

I have a half whiskey barrel that I grow catnip in for my two cats. I keep it covered with chicken wire until the plants are well established and about six to eight inches tall, then I take off the wire and let the cats have at it. They will jump in the barrel, have a little catnip and sometimes take a nap right in the middle of it all. On a hot summer afternoon it's a cool spot to take a catnap in, especially after over indulging. This barrel is not only a

favorite of my cats, but several cats in the neighborhood like to stop by and do time in the barrel. I've caught other cats taking naps there, too.

Feline Frenzy

It is not unusual for stray male cats to come "a botherin'" our little spayed females that stay near the home. Sometimes there are fights and, of course, our cats get the worst end of the deal. We have been able to live trap most of the strays and then with the help of Second Chance Companions, place these kitties in other homes.

Now we always have our ears open to that very distinctive yowl and growl you hear when things are heating up. We keep our cats in at night and let them out in the morning, fearing the coyotes more than anything. One very early morning near dawn we heard a fight in progress. My husband went to the back door and found flying fur balls under the patio furniture. It was all a blur. So he picked up the pellet gun near the back door and with the butt end of it, jabbed at the frenzy. Cats separated and as one tore off the deck and into the woods, he noticed it was not an ordinary stray male cat, but a fairly good size bobcat. We have observed bobcats since in our yard, but so far, no more kitty attacks.



The Critter Capture Caper

Our pond project began over 10 years ago when we reclaimed a dark corner of our yard under some Port Orford cedars. It was a smallish woodland pond with a three foot deep hiding hole to protect an eventual fish population from potential predators. As we lived with this pond, we discovered that nothing much would grow under the dry darkness of the tree canopy. However, a variety of birds, squirrels, frogs and the occasional raccoon loved it! On a hot summer day, it was a cool secluded retreat.



Each year it took us half the summer to clean out the winter debris, restack the rocks that tumbled off the rather steep bank, and restart the fountain. After congratulating ourselves on completion of this chore, we would return to find tumbled rocks and a mangled fountain. Battle with the phantom critter began. The next summer the pond rocks were mortared and the fountain pump was encased in a plastic cage. Still we would wake to a toppled over and clogged fountain. The following year we found the perfect bowl shaped rock drilled for a small bubbler. It sat on a concrete collar protecting the pump and hose

mechanism. Critter proof, we thought. To our dismay the phantom critter had its way with our project.

Peaceful coexistence was not possible. Armed with a rented humane trap baited with peanut butter, we embarked on our own trap and release program. Horrendous yowling, scratching and rattling woke us early the next morning. Aha – the pond vandal trapped at last! Cautiously we approached. Our phantom critter was the largest, puffed-up, angriest cat we had ever seen. Upon release, he bolted in a flash. Who knew cats liked peanut butter! It was several years before we told the neighbors about the capture of their rather elderly mostly indoor feline. After several more neighborhood cats were captured, we discovered the true nature of the problem – engineering deficiency!

Cat Watching

Anyone who has shared space with a cat gets to know their slight behavioral quirks which alert their people to their moods and gives one a brief glimpse of their intentions. One morning I got up to find my two cats mesmerized in front of the fireplace. The guilty looks they both shot me caused me to look for the proverbial canary. There were no feathers present, but I knew they were up to something that I would most definitely not approve of. Since I was already late for work I left, hoping for the best.

Upon my return home, my husband informed me that a bird had somehow flown in through the chimney. He found the bird cornered on the counter with four hungry eyes staring at it. Since these were two sheltered inside kitties, neither one really knew what to do next. My husband successfully ushered the bird safely out of the house.

Now with a bird feeder hung right outside their favorite perch, they can enjoy cat TV.

