

NATURAL CAT

Flower Power

Treat four common feline behavioral problems with flower essences.

FLOWER ESSENCES, USUALLY MADE by infusing flower petals in pure water, are meant to change negative emotions into positive ones. Before using them, take your cat to the veterinarian to rule out any medical causes for the behavioral problems. For the best results, consult with a holistic veterinarian or practitioner who's experienced in using flower essences on cats.

"Flower essences stimulate the body to heal itself," says Kim Rockshaw, DIHom (Diploma of the Institute of Homeopathy), BFRP (Bach Foundation Registered Practitioner), of San Clemente, Calif. "They promote physical and emotional healing by permanently changing emotional and behavioral patterns. Neither allopathic [traditional] medicine nor herbal treatments can address the reason and cause behind an emotional imbalance, as you can with flower essences. I've been able to greatly reduce the severity of animals' seizures on numerous occasions by placing a few drops of Rescue Remedy, a combination remedy for panic and trauma, on the animal's tongue."



Cats are extremely sensitive to changes in their environment or routine. Even seemingly minor changes, such as rearranging the furniture or working longer hours might distress your cat enough to alter her usual attitude and behavior, for instance, making her more timid or hostile.

Each situation is unique, however. Take a good look at why your cat is acting differently, and try to match her actions to the behavioral descriptions accompanying each flower remedy.

"The more specific you can get in understanding your cat's behavior, the more successful you will be at picking the correct essences," Rockshaw says. "One wonderful quality of flower essences is that they're extremely safe and gentle. Even if you choose the wrong essences, you won't hurt your animal."

Here are four common cat issues and suggested flower essences.

Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviors

Crab Apple is usually recommended to treat obsessive cleanliness, fastidiousness

and compulsive behaviors such as excessive grooming. It is also used on pets with rashes.

"Consider Crab Apple for any skin problems like excessive chewing or itchiness," Rockshaw says. "I use White Chestnut for compulsive-obsessive thinking and activity."

Impatiens can help a cat who is excessively nervous, annoyed or impatient, while Vervain soothes and relaxes high-strung, extremely enthusiastic cats who want to be involved in everything.

Aggression Issues

Vine can help excessively authoritative and domineering cats who even want to dominate their owners. Tiger Lily also can help with overaggressive, competitive or hostile cats.

"For animals having trouble getting along with others, always consider Beech and Holly," Rockshaw says. "Beech is used to instill tolerance and flexibility to new situations. Holly is a specific jealousy remedy for animals who display more aggressive tendencies."

For the cat being picked on, Larch can increase self-esteem. For a submissive cat who lets others boss her around, try Centaury. If a cat has been deeply terrorized or panicked, use Rock Rose.

Serious Illness or Trauma

Olive can help with cats who are physically worn out, and Crab Apple's cleansing effect can help flush toxins out of the body and aid healing.

With the shock and trauma of surgery and treatment, a Rescue Remedy-type combination or Quaking Grass and Star of Bethlehem can help.

For a cat mourning the death of another pet or person, there are several options.

"Grief warrants the help of flower essences," Rockshaw says. "The essence of Honeysuckle is most helpful here, along with Walnut and (continued on page 58)

ADMINISTERING RESCUE REMEDY

A standard remedy for extremely stressful situations, terror and shock is Bach's Rescue Remedy, which consists of Star of Bethlehem, Clematis, Cherry Plum, Impatiens and Rock Rose. Several other companies make similar formulas.

To minimize negative reactions before a stressful situation, "dose two or three times (15 minutes apart), starting at least 45 minutes before the event," Rockshaw says.

During an emergency or sudden attack of illness, panic or fear, one dose of Rescue Remedy will often stop the panic immediately,

Rockshaw says.



Lisa Hanks is a freelance writer based in Southern California. As she writes each day, her three cats rotate lap duties to be sure she is never catless.

Siamese are Eager to Please

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both minds and bodies require exercise.

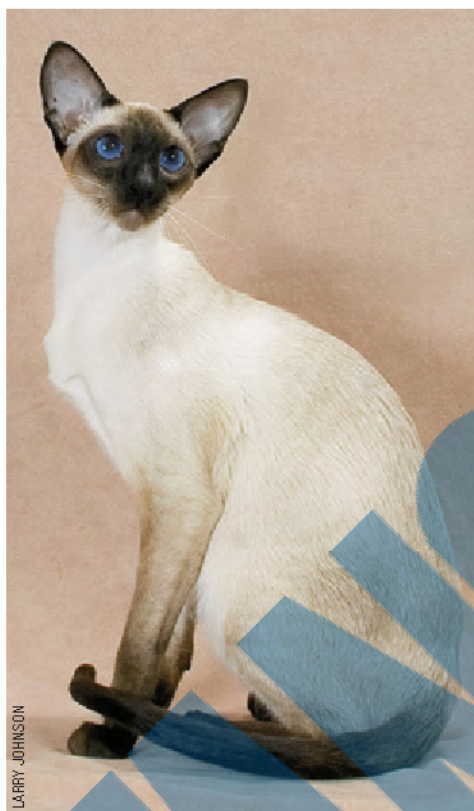
"They like to play fetch a lot," Stevenson says. "If you can't play games with them they'll invent one for you. They're really intelligent, and they like to do things with people."

Nearly everything they do is reminiscent of a clown in a cat's body, which is probably why their humans are delighted to spend so much time with them.

"They just want to investigate whatever you happen to be in the middle of," Stevenson says. "If you happen to be cooking something on the stove and you let them, they'll be up there trying to help you stir whatever is in the pot."

Certainly, those ancient monks knew what they were doing when opening their lives, hearts and temples to this unique breed. Maybe that's why they continue to thrive with people today.

"It's a very special breed," Wheeldon says. "And I think it's worth preserving." 🐾



LARRY JOHNSON

Everything about the Siamese is long — except for its short, fine coat.

Food Makes Friends

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yummy food — with being physically close to their housemate, they will feel more comfortable with each other. You might even notice the cats getting along better in general as tension between them decreases.

"We can use [food] to reinforce behaviors that we like," Sueda says. "So, if we reward cats with food for tolerating the

presence of another cat, it can actually help increase their bond and the social ability of the cat."

When your cats exhibit consistently friendly mealtime behavior, try this: Coat both sides of a spoon with some tasty canned food and offer it to them before their regular meal. Many cats that once growled and hissed at each other will happily share this treat and lick their respective sides of the spoon clean.

Whether you are dealing with longtime roommates who tolerate each other or a new cat who has joined your household, you can use food to help your cats get along.

House of Plenty

From dining side by side to playing with food puzzle toys, eating can be a positive shared experience that will help your cats bond as they equate being together with filling their bellies. Having plenty of food available in multiple locations will allow your cats to enjoy their meals in an accessible, stress-free atmosphere.

After all, a good meal shared with friends is enough to make anyone happy, including your feline family. 🐾



BIANCA LUNDEN KENNEDY

If one cat always causes trouble at mealtimes, try feeding him away from the others.

Flower Power

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Gentian. If the cat's depression is severe and the animal seems to have given up hope [has stopped eating or socializing, for example], consider Gorse along with the other three."

Some treatments can start to work in seconds, while others might take months or longer, depending on the cat and her situation. Often, you have to try a few remedies before you find the right ones, and long-term, chronic issues might not respond quickly.

"A common error is not giving the essences enough time to work," Rockshaw says.

"Be patient," Rockshaw says. "Your animal friends are beautiful little individuals, and flower essence therapy is a highly individualized form of healing. The time and effort you put into this will be wonderfully rewarded. As you watch your animal's personality blossom, fears dissolve and emotions balance, it will all be worth it!" 🐾

FLOWER ESSENCE DOSING TIPS

To apply, drop the essence on your cat's tongue. Flower essences work best and fastest by mouth, but you can also rub it on her gums, paw pads, ear leather or nose, or add a few drops to her drinking water or food. Because many flower essences are preserved with alcohol and cats hate the taste, it's important to dilute the essences in spring water.

Give at least four doses daily for a week, then do it three times a day until the behavior or attitude visibly improves. Next, consider if you need to switch essences or discontinue the treatment altogether as your cat's normal attitude and personality emerge.

"If you are consistent with how often you dose, you'll be more successful," says Rockshaw, who prefers adding a few drops in the cat's wet food (rather than water), giving it in the mouth or rubbing it on the ear flaps. "Oral dosing always works best, but very sensitive animals will respond if you rub it into their ear flaps, paw pads or on gums."

Once you've established a good dosing schedule, stay on it until you see the maximum results.

"If your animal's emotional progress keeps up and then plateaus for a few days, stop the current essences," Rockshaw says. "You may need to pick out other essences."