



## Fun Spring & Summer Activities For Your Cat

By Tiffany Lutnick, Cat Program Supervisor

Although some cats are more active than others, every cat needs some play-type stimulation in their life to keep them happy and healthy. Spring and summer are especially important for this because as the days grow longer, cats' tend to be more active. Here are some ideas for fun activities that will help keep your cat happy:

- Hang a bird feeder outside a window: cats love watching birds and letting their hunting instincts run wild. Hanging a feeder outside a window will allow your cat to get the excitement of watching the birds in all their spring and summertime activities, while keeping your kitty safe inside.
- Grow wheatgrass in a pot indoors: Outdoor cats get to eat grass whenever they want and it helps aid in digestion. However, you can still help your indoor cats get the benefit of eating grass by growing it inside! Wheatgrass seeds are easy to find and easy to grow. You can also buy some from a health food store and don't have to worry about growing it at all. Even better, you know that the wheatgrass or catnip you grow yourself won't have any potentially dangerous chemicals on it!
- Grow catnip in a pot indoors: Cats love catnip and if your cat hasn't had the pleasure of access to fresh catnip, you should give it a try! Catnip is a member of the mint family and very easy to grow! Catnip does just fine with partial light from a window and only needs to be watered every few days. Seeds are easy to find and so are small plants at nurseries. One warning though: keep your catnip away from your cat until the plant has a chance to grow a little. Many cats love the fresh new sprouts of baby-catnip and will eat it all before it has a chance to grow!!!
- Simulate hunting with interactive toys: Help exercise your cat's natural instincts by playing with interactive toys. These toys are often called fishing-pole type toys and usually involve a rod with a string attached and something at the end of the string that the cat likes to play with. Interactive toys simulate hunting and stalking that really give your cats a workout and the mental stimulation they crave. 'Da Bird' is a great toy with a special feather attachment that mimics the movements and sound of a bird in flight. Cat charmers are also a great toy that simulates a snake or other wiggly prey. These toys give your cat an outlet to expend the energy they generate while watching activities outside your windows. Don't forget to let your cat catch the toy occasionally too – they need to experience the rewards of the hunt to feel satisfied for their efforts and continue wanting to play.
- Teach your cat to walk on a harness: training your cat to walk on a harness isn't hard and many cats learn to enjoy it. Pet stores commonly stock harnesses and leashes specifically made to fit cats. Once you buy one, take off the tags and leave

it on the floor in an area your cat frequents often for a couple days to give your cat a chance to investigate it. Next start putting the harness on your cat for very short amounts of time. As your cat starts to tolerate it, you can leave it on longer and longer until it doesn't bother your cat at all. At this point, you are ready to venture outside!