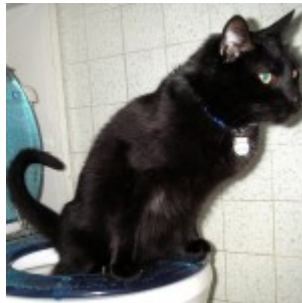




Friday Fun Facts – Number 26:2010
Melissa Shelton DVM – Litteroma – Easy Aromatherapy for Cats



It remains a fact of life. If you have a cat, you likely have a litter box. Which cat litter to use is often overlooked until your cat is not using the box properly. Besides a complete medical work up to look for health concerns, we also question if the type or brand of kitty litter has recently changed. Certainly we have seen cats stop using a litter box, simply because of a purchase of a new brand of cat litter. Often one that has a strong perfume to it. More concerning is that the use of commercial and fragranced kitty litter has been linked to hyperthyroidism and other health concerns in cats. The chemicals and perfumes within the cat litter, may have detrimental effects over time. I would much rather my cats use a litter box with potential health benefits, instead of concerns. By using essential oils in the kitty litter, I not only have odor controlling properties – but I might also reap the benefits of long term health, prevention of disease, and treatment of medical conditions. Here is one easy way to get your cats some aromatherapy on a regular basis.

First, it is very important to make sure that you have clean and new litter boxes. Many people never wash their litter boxes, and never consider that intense urine odors are absorbed by the litter box plastic over time. If your litter box is several years old, chances are you should throw it out and start with a fresh box. I keep

several extra litter boxes, so that while one is being washed, a clean one can be used by the cats. Then each box has a chance to air out between uses. Also, covered litter boxes can concentrate odors within the box, leading to a cat that does not want to use a litter box. I compare it to using a biffy or a porta-potty; most of us do not appreciate going into a plastic box, filled with urine and feces. Your cat does not either. Plastic liners can also create a problem for some cats, as when they scratch in the box, their nails can get caught in the liner, causing an aversion for many cats. Box location must also be considered – if you don't like the deep dark basement – why should your cat? And, of course, you must keep your litter box scooped! We certainly bypass an unflushed toilet in the public stalls – why would your cat be any different?



Now that we have addressed some basic litter box guidelines, you can start to play around. Aromatherapy is obviously not just about smelling nice. Classic French aromatherapy is also well known for treating everything from the common cold to arthritis. My theory is that I can have a great smelling litter box, while my cat is enjoying emotional and health benefits of aromatherapy.

Here's how to do it:

1. Place 1 cup of baking soda into a glass jar.
2. Add 1-4+ drops of Young Living Essential Oil to the baking soda.
3. Stir or place the lid onto the jar and shake.
4. Allow to sit overnight to fully disperse the essential oil within the baking soda.
5. Sprinkle into the cat box directly and mix into the UNSCENTED litter (I would generally pick the same litter brand you currently use, just in an unscented version.)

The best way to make sure your cat is happy with your aromatherapy selections, is to give them some choices. When I first started to use this technique, I really wanted to make sure I was not going to offend my cats' delicate sense of smell or pick an oil that they did not like. So I set up a little experiment. I arranged several litter boxes next to each other. In each litter box was a variation, with different types and amounts of essential oils in a different box. I left one box with their regular litter that they were using. You can do your experiment to find out not only which oil your cat will like, but also how many drops of oil to add to the baking soda, and how much baking soda mixture to use per box or litter amount. The combinations are endless, and completely up to you and your cat.

What I found was that my cats actually preferred the boxes with the essential oils in them. This was great proof to me, that cats would seek out beneficial aromatherapy if given a choice. Of course, not every cat will be as easy to satisfy as my cats. However, if you give them a choice and they use it – your opportunity to give your cat wonderful benefits of aromatherapy are endless.



Here are some of the oils you could use, and some of the main health benefits associated with them. This is certainly not a complete list of the great attributes of each oil. I encourage everyone to look up their chosen oil(s) in the Essential Oil Desk Reference for full information on each oil or oil blend.

Purification: Mainly picked for odor control in the litter box. However, can also be helpful for respiratory infections, antibacterial properties, insect repellent, and so much more.

Copaiba: Wonderful for arthritis pain and inflamed bladders.

Myrrh, EndoFlex or Frankincense: Beneficial for hyperthyroid conditions.

Ocotea: Diabetes.

Frankincense: Anti-Cancer properties, age related changes, senility...

DiGize: Hairballs, diarrhea, or parasite concerns.

The list is really never-ending. Rotating through several oil selections is likely to be the best way to ensure that your cat is receiving long term and broad based benefits. Give it a try, and see what your cat thinks!

Please remember – that I *only* recommend the use of Young Living Essential Oils for your human family and your animal family. With this recommendation, I am certain that you will have safe and powerful oils, with consistent results. I never have to guess at the quality of the oil that you have... If they are Young Living Oils, I know that they are medical grade, and I don't even have to question the safety or efficacy of it. ***In cats – this is especially important – as synthetic fragrances, synthetic additives, and poor grade oils can actually be deadly for your cat.***

Feel free to contact our office for more information on how to order Young Living Essential Oils, or for consultations on how to use essential oils for the health of your entire family – two legged and four legged (and on our farm, sometimes three legged!).

“Mother Nature gave us the gift of healing. Providing our bodies with the nutrients, substances, and care required to heal, lies in our own actions.”

Melissa Shelton DVM

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