

# Feline

# empowerment



## Holistic cat therapist Julie-Anne Thorne explains how herbs can help support our feline friends.

We are all familiar with the fact that most cats like catnip. But did you know that you can offer other herbs and flowers to your cat to support their physical, mental and emotional well-being?

During my 10+ years of experience working with cats, I've found that offering dried herbs and flowers is a wonderful way to give them additional support and enrichment in their environment.

Having the correct number of litter trays and scratching posts is crucial, however guardians can also learn how Valerian, Rose Buds and Angelica Root are vital in helping their cat to feel balanced.

It's well known that Peppermint can help to settle an upset tummy, or that Chamomile can help to reduce

stress and calm the nerves. Did you know that you can offer these same herbs to your cat?

I like to use what I call a 'herb garden' to offer herbs and flowers to cats. You put a towel or blanket down on the floor, in a quiet space in the home where the cat won't be disturbed, and put a good pinch of each herb or flower in a corner.

Then sit back and watch, letting your cat investigate and enjoy.

Some cats will rub, roll and generally get messy with the herbs - which is why they are placed on a mat to try and reduce the amount of hoovering needed! Other cats will simply sit near, next to or directly on top of the herbs.

It depends on a few factors as to how the cats will interact with the remedies:

1. The severity of an issue
2. The temperament of the cat
3. The general level of noise/activity in the home.

Cats are predator and prey animals, so it can take a while for them to lean into the healing properties of the remedies. Don't be disappointed if you put the herb garden down and the cat doesn't do anything with it for a couple of days. Be patient.



It's not easy for a cat to be vulnerable, so they may use the garden overnight when no-one else is around. Or you may see them dive straight in and start licking, eating, drooling or rubbing on a particular herb/flower. There is no right or wrong. It's whatever your cat needs.

Each cat has the innate ability to self-select what they need to heal - we just have to give them the opportunity to do so. Not all cats have the gene that means they are affected by catnip, yet in my experience all cats will select one or more herb/flower.

My favourites are:

Valerian Root - Reduces stress

Angelica Root - Opens the cat up to healing

Jasmine - Releases anxiety

Calendula - Boosts self-confidence

Chamomile - Calming

Violet Leaf - Emotionally supportive

Rose Buds - Nurturing

Although to be honest I could name quite a few more! My mission is to give cats a voice, so after completing a diploma in feline self-selection some years ago, I decided to create an online store where I sell pre-made, organic gardens for cats. The herbs are not treated with perfumes or chemicals, which means they are totally safe to offer to your furry friend.

The herbs and flowers help with a wide range of issues from physical pain and discomfort, to anxiety, aggression and change in the home. Each herb has more than one healing property. For example, Calendula helps to boost self-confidence, so it's great for an anxious cat, but it also helps to reduce inflammation, so can be offered to elderly cats or those recovering from an operation.

As the remedies are dried, they have very subtle energies about them and the essential oil plant particles are very gentle, which is perfect for cats as they are sensitive, emotional beings.

If you have an anxious, nervous or aggressive cat, the herb gardens are a natural way to offer them mental and emotional support. Our rescue cat Leo is very timid, and he loves nothing more than sitting with the Valerian on his herb garden overnight. I often come down in the morning to see it all a little dishevelled.

## ABOUT JULIE-ANNE

Julie-Anne Thorne founded Naturally Cats to provide holistic help for cats and their guardians. She recently co-authored the first book of its kind, *The Aromatic Cat*, which details how to use herbs, hydrosols and essential oils safely with cats. Julie-Anne believes that understanding the emotional state of a cat is key to supporting problem behaviours. She adapts her approach and recommended treatment plan for each unique situation when working with a family. You can find out more at [www.naturallycats.co.uk](http://www.naturallycats.co.uk)

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