



Fido Files: Should Pet Cats be Allowed to Roam Free?

Should pet cats be allowed to roam free outside?

With pet dogs having so many constraints and rules, what has happened to let fluffy slip through the cracks?

The biggest argument that can be made from a dog owner's point of view is that if my dog can't trespass or poop in your yard, why can your cat trespass and poop in mine?

Also, I would worry about cats that roam into my yard. See, my dogs are not aggressive by nature, but should an intruder cat roam into my yard – I don't know what might happen. And, normally it's the big, old, mean dog that gets the rap for it (like the scenario of the burglar suing the home owner for slipping and falling on their hardwood floor).

There are also some real risks for letting your cat roam free. Traffic is the most obvious. And, most of us in Calgary have seen coyotes roaming through our neighbourhoods and would hate for our cats to be someone's snack! There is also a chance your cat could get lost or stolen. I can't tell you how many times people come into my pet food store asking if they can put up a "missing cat" poster. It's very heartbreaking.

If your kitty REALLY needs to go outdoors (everyone needs fresh air and sunshine!), you might consider an outdoor enclosure. There are now enclosures made especially for cats to roam in your backyard. They have tunnels and everything that allow your cat to wander throughout the yard – enclosed and protected from the elements. It even has a "cat" door that allows your cat to go in and out of the house as they please. The best part is that the enclosure can move with you should you leave your current home.

Check out: <http://www.thecatsden.net/>

I also know a few cat owners that harness and leash their cats and walk them just like their dogs! Why not?!

To sum it up, I have two cats and I don't allow them outside. I would worry too much about their wellbeing and I would also worry that they would be causing havoc to someone or something. My dogs only go outdoors when enclosed by our fence, or supervised by me. I would not treat my cats any differently.

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