

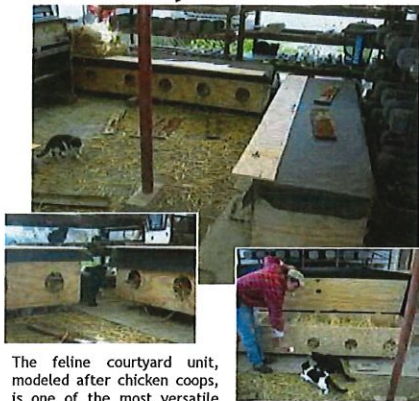
What Can A Feral Cat Shelter Look Like?

18 Gallon Plastic Tub Cat Shelters



The plastic storage tub design can be built to house 1 or more cats, depending on the size of the tub, and the size of the cats. The 18 gallon tubs pictured above are suitable for one medium sized cat or two kittens. Space limitations per tub will depend on quantity/ thickness of insulation used. The tubs are waterproof and can be insulated with a variety of materials. They are lightweight and need to be anchored or weighed down with bricks or other dense material. A 30 gallon storage tub may serve 3 cats, or 4 if the cats are small, if they are friendly, and if the night is cold. A shelter is best heated when it is shared by a group of cats, so the decision on the size of the tub will depend on the number of ferals that will snuggle up together. In the above picture, shelters have been braced for additional stability. See other side for instructions on how to build one of these inexpensive shelters. Tubs should be filled with straw or for a better application; they may be insulated with polystyrene sheets or Reflectix® foil insulation. Pros: Inexpensive, easy to build and transport. Cons: Lightweight nature of shelter provides less protection from predators than a wooden structure.

Feline Courtyard



The feline courtyard unit, modeled after chicken coops, is one of the most versatile designs, allowing for a large multi-cat setting. This design allows for the builder to make the shelter as small or large as desired. It is a simple box design with holes for cat access and a hinged roof, allowing easy access to the interior. The inside can be left open for a communal cat approach, or can be segregated with removable dividers. While the shelters pictured are designed to sit outdoors, they sit under cover and are not waterproof. Simple modifications can be made for their application in unsheltered areas. Pros: Relatively easy to build. Design allows for many modifications for size and maximizing space for cats. Cons: For unsheltered applications, roofing paper and shingles would be recommended.

Pre-Made Insulated Cat Shelter



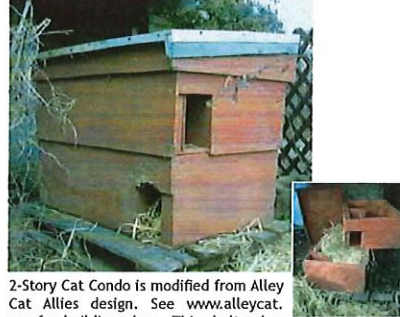
The Feral Villa can be purchased and shipped ready to be assembled. This is a sturdy little cat shelter that is insulated complete with a shingled roof. The Feral Villa can be ordered at www.feralvilla.com. The 2009 cost is \$59.95 plus shipping and delivery may take up to 3 weeks.

2-Story Insulated Wooden Shelter



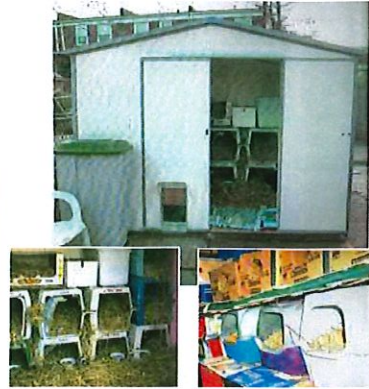
This 2-Story insulated wood shelter offers 2 levels to accommodate more cats. The interior is easily accessed via a lift off roof. The picture on the right shows the use of the polystyrene insulation that has been sandwiched between the interior and exterior wood paneling. Note the base and side openings on right picture and the use of straw as nesting material. Pros: Sturdy design, can house multiple cats, provides protection from predators. Cons: Building requires higher degree of skill.

2-Story Cat Condo



2-Story Cat Condo is modified from Alley Cat Allies design. See www.alleycat.org for building plans. This shelter has withstood a decade of rain and snow, and has protected ferals from attack by free roaming dogs. Note the bite marks at the doorway. Inset picture shows inside of cat condo. Pros: Sturdy design, can house multiple cats, provides protection from predators. Cons: Building requires higher degree of skill. Supplies cost more than some other designs.

Garden Shed as Shelter



This metal shed, was easily transformed into a communal cat shelter. Note that the builder installed a smaller cat door for cat access, which also blocks out larger predators. The metal storage shed is a city innovation where feral caretakers need to be discrete. The shed is lined with polystyrene sheets for insulation. With doors closed, unless the small cat door was visible, a passerby would not consider the unit to anything but a storage unit. The shed is filled with cat carriers (doors removed) and each carrier is lined with cardboard, and filled with straw, providing a cozy retreat for a colony of cats. Inset pictures show options for individual cat units, using pet carriers, covered litter pans and even cardboard boxes. Pros: Shed is easily re-purposed and modified. Houses many cats and provides excellent shelter with options for heating. Cons: Requires larger space and availability of a shed

Is There Is A Need To Provide Shelter For Feral Cats?

"In cold weather, shelter is actually more important for stray & feral cats than food. Even though feral cats build thicker coats for winter, they can quickly succumb to hypothermia, particularly in rain & snow when their fur gets wet and doesn't insulate as well. Also, stray & feral cats are more prone to parasites, respiratory infections and minor illnesses. Combined with cold, wet weather, these relatively minor maladies can quickly prove fatal.

In emergency situations in Winter, if you do not have quick access to a shelter...a strong cardboard box or container preferably weather proofed with plastic, a trash can turned on its side, or a large plastic tub turned upside down with a door added etc, can provide a temporary solution until a more permanent shelter can be obtained. It's more important to do something to protect the cats from the cold and elements than to wait for "the right" shelter. Unless you operate a managed colony, don't underestimate the number of cats in your area...you may only see one or two, but there are probably more. Try to provide more shelter space than you imagine needing." - IndyFeral.Org

Consider Where A Feral Cat Shelter Be Located

"Locating the shelter is also an important topic. IndyFeral recommends using neutral and earth tones to blend with the environment. Shelters should be located away from areas of vehicle & foot traffic. Locating it in a wooded area or in the margin of a wooded area is ideal, as this provides cover from the elements and makes the shelter less obvious. In more developed areas, locate the shelter behind buildings or someplace where it will not be disturbed. Cats will shun shelter if they are disturbed there regularly. Orient the shelter to block the entrances from receiving direct wind and rain/snow. It may also be helpful to place sturdy building materials adjacent to the entrance to provide additional wind protection. Make sure that if you place anything over or around the shelter that it is anchored firmly and will not blow or fall over in front of the entrance." - IndyFeral.org

What Should My Feral Cat Shelter Look Like?

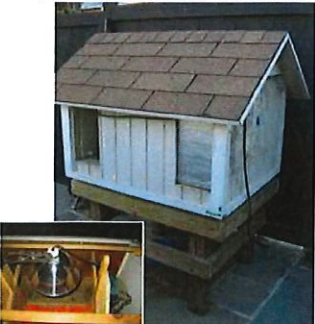
Feral cat shelter designs are as different as the people who build them, and as varied as the site demands. Consider that you can also pack an unused garden shed, a walled off section of a garage, or that space under your covered porch with loosened bales of straw to make a cozy zone for the cats. Keeping the sheltered space out of the wind is a key factor to keeping cats warm. The various insulated wooden shelters and sometimes additional interior walls shown on this page are sturdy, warm and offer protection from elements and predators. They take more time and money to build than the plastic tubs. They are, however, more durable than any of the plastic tubs displayed.

Lattice Wrapped Porch



A simple idea for shelter anywhere a porch is available, is to close off the protected area under the porch with lattice or other material. The lattice covered porch was set up as a cat refuge against free roaming dogs. To enclose the porch, rectangular wooden frames (made of 2X 4s) are first attached to each side of the porch. The cat door openings are then framed. The gate is framed and hinged and the lattice is applied to the perimeter of the porch. The lattice trimmed gate on the far side of the porch gives the caretaker access to plastic storage tub cat shelters that are sitting under the porch. Pros: Easy to install, provides protection from predators and its intended purpose is not noticeable. Cons: Moderate skill level required to frame and apply lattice.

A-Frame Cat Shelter



This cat house has a cute look for a small city backyard and is both insulated and heated. Inset picture shows how this unit is heated using a light dome with porcelain socket (dome protects cat from direct contact) and a ceramic heating element. A waterproof heating blanket would be an excellent option as well. Pros: Sturdy design, provides protection from predators, large A-frame roof allows for heat lamp. Cons: Building requires high degree of skill.