

Grooming your cat

Shorthaired cats such as the Siamese, Oriental, Korat and Burmese have single coats and require a minimum of grooming. The Russian Blue, Abyssinian, British Shorthair and Domestic Shorthair (moggie) are among those which have a "double" coat and are best given a weekly brush to remove shedding hair. The Rex breeds, Cornish and Devon, have no guard hairs and a very short and curly or wavy coat which means minimal shedding but require the cats to be protected from the elements by leading an indoor life.

Although cats are relatively easy care companions, some breeds and coat types require regular care and unless owners are willing to devote the time to grooming a long coated cat, they are advised to choose a cat with a shorter and easier care coat.

A cat's coat is comprised of three types of hair: the long, stiff "guard" hairs which form the outermost layer of the coat and keep the cat warm and dry, "awn" hairs which have stiff pointed tips, and, "down" hairs which are shorter and softer.

Longhaired cats come in a variety of coat lengths. The most profuse coat belongs to Persian and Chinchilla cats which require daily grooming. Other longhairs, such as the Birman, Somali and Ragdoll have less profuse coats and a weekly grooming will keep them in good condition.

Longhaired cats which do not receive sufficient grooming can quickly become matted. Unless the shedding hairs are removed by regular grooming, they become trapped in the guard hairs and



form solid matts. Owners should never attempt to remove matts with scissors as it is very easy to cut the skin.

All coat types will shed some hair as they renew dead coat or shed undercoat with the changing seasons. Some cats which are enthusiastic self groomers will ingest a great deal of hair, which lodges in the cat's stomach causing "fur balls". These are very uncomfortable for the cat, cause vomiting, and in some cases may be life threatening so regular brushing is a must.

During warmer weather it will be necessary to take preventative measures for flea control. Spot on treatments are very effective and your local veterinarian or pet store will be able to offer advice on a flea control program.

GARDEN TIPS

Planting by the moon - Part 2

This is an ancient planting system known to every early culture throughout the world. One again it is becoming popular as people search for alternatives to chemical pesticides and fertilizers, and their frightening side effects. Working with the appropriate phase of the Moon for all aspects of planting, cultivation, and harvesting will increase quality as well as quantity in your crops. Many herbalists are using this system and producing vastly more potent medicinal and culinary plants.

The Moon phase is the dominant influence in lunar planting.

FULL MOON PHASE - 12 hours after Full Moon to Last quarter.

There is a peaking of the electromagnetic energy of all living things at the exact time of the Full Moon, and then a slow withdrawal of energy for the next two weeks, as the Moon wanes.

Plant perennials, biennials, bulb and root crops and anything that produces below ground. The sap flow is downwards into the roots. Pruning is most successful now, and it is an excellent time to harvest all crops. Medicinal herbs and plants are most potent when picked now. This is a great time for sprouting seeds to eat, but not so good for sprouting seeds for planting, as there is a good initial growth spurt with only spindly follow through.

LAST QUARTER PHASE - Last Quarter to 12 hours before Dark Moon

This is a barren phase, where it is most appropriate to rest or to prepare for the next New Moon. It is great for cultivation - pulling

weeds, turning the earth, pruning, spraying. Apply organic fertilizers any time during the Waning Moon, from Full Moon onward. Mow lawns to decrease growth.

This is the best phase for harvesting crops that you want to store for a period of time without rotting or losing flavour. Transplant close to the end of this period for an easy recovery with little trauma.

Set fence posts, spread manure. Weeds pulled now have no strength to sprout again.

