

# A BALCONY PARADISE FOR CATS

Particularly in cities, the balcony is a welcome change to the snugness of the living room. Experts from the specialist retail chain Maxi Zoo know just how cat lovers can turn such an outdoor sitting area into a safe paradise for their furry favourites.

## Step one: secure the balcony

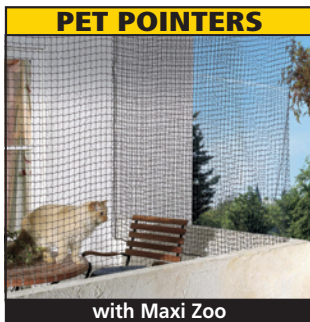
A special cat net is a must... for all cats. Before you fix it up, you should obtain the consent of the other tenants and the property management. There have been various court judgements on this but one thing is sure: you must not impair the substance of the building when erecting the net.

## Step two: create free access

That works best with a cat door or cat-flap – above all if there's no one around all day to let the cat in or out. Tilting windows onto the balcony are a source of danger. So make them safe by fitting window tilt locks - without fail.

## Step three: design it to your heart's desire

Here, it depends on the size of your balcony - but it should certainly be furnished with a small viewpoint. This could be a board fixed firmly to the wall or a scratching tree. The main thing is that the cat can lie in a raised position and enjoy the view. Herbs and flowers are the most fragrant of perfumes to a cat's nose and they also attract insects which are exciting for the little hunter. Find out which plants are harmless to cats. Spicy herbage such as sage, thyme, lavender or mint and flowers like roses, daisies



and bluebells are all suitable. The balcony will become a jungle if you let climbing plants grow up the net. This applies to all plants: do not treat with insecticides which are poisonous for cats and do not use flower compost which has been enriched with fertiliser. Nursery soil for herbs is healthier.

## Step four: attention to detail

Sandpit, pond, playground or lawn - if there's enough space let your fantasy run free. It doesn't have to be professional and ostentatious. A small piece of lawn or a large earthenware dish filled with water and a floating ping-pong ball will enthrall your cat.

## Your checklist for the cat balcony

**The right net:** slim cats need a smaller mesh (3 to 4 cm) while for older cats, even a 5 cm mesh width will suffice. **The right material:** natural branches of wood impart the right ambience but must be firmly anchored down. Large plants in tubs are also suitable - best are winter hardy plants (hardy bamboo, elder, fruit trees).

**The right place:** raised viewpoints are ideal and also a choice between sun and shadow. A covered retreat is also worthwhile if your balcony is to be enjoyed at any time of the year. **The right furnishings:** you can conjure up a lawned surface even on a small balcony using turf rolls from the garden centre. Lay out some flat plant or cat-loo trays with it. Put down a layer of soil under the turf for the grass roots to grow into.

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