



Green Cat Toys

Hello, cats for the environment!

I'm Cleo, aka Eddie's BKF, and I'm going to be writing here from time to time about feline issues. Me and my smaller-pawed, less slobbery friends noticed not too long ago that despite his best intentions, Eddie occasionally forgets to mention the cat side of things. So he's asked me to step in as his Cat Editor in Chief. (Thanks, Edmund!)

So let me answer one of the first kitty questions to come up this week: cat toys

It took tons of research--mostly playing, and rolling around in catnip--but I hope you find my hard work answers your questions.

BAD STUFF:

Plastic, especially painted plastic: Plastic has all sorts of chemicals in it, and it can have some really nasty ones, like lead, in its paint, so avoid plastic toys that are meant to end up in your mouth!

Little bits and pieces: Keep away from string, ribbon, rubber bands, that thing that peels off of milk jug lids, and anything small enough to be swallowed.

Ingestible fillings: Nutshells and polystyrene beads are the usual offenders.

Catnip sprays: They aren't usually cat nippy enough to really get us going, and they don't always list ingredients. I like Eddie's advice to stay away from stuff we can't identify.

Plastic bags: Hope I don't have to explain this one, but for you kittens out there, a plastic bag is just about the last thing you want to get stuck in.

GOOD STUFF:

Lightweight balls that can't be eaten: Ping-pong, sisal, wool, and natural rubber balls with bells inside (as long as the bell isn't going to get out). These are especially fun in a dry bathtub--little ball, you are mine, you cannot escape!--but not all balls are appropriate for doggy households. You know how they are. Whatever you've got, they want, and they're always chewing and jumping ... see, I'm flicking my tail just thinking about it. [Eddie: I can't

help but get excited!]

Paper bags, paper towel rolls: Fun for rolling around, pouncing on, hiding in, and tearing apart. Humans should remove handles from bags first, and make sure we're not actually eating the paper. (I know this from experience. The first step is admitting you have a problem.)

Catnip-stuffed toys: These are fine as long as your humans remove any strings, ribbons, buttons, eyes, or anything else that may come off and get stuck in your throat.

Catnip, plain: Sprinkled on a towel, the floor, your scratching pad, your ... keyboard? (No relation to the musical cat in the video.) Doesn't matter where you put it, good times shall be had. But beware the newbie: some cats can get over-stimulated and even aggressive. Stick to organically grown catnip when you can--some of us really enjoy eating the stuff, and we don't need the added pesticide exposure. Extra green pet points for growing it at home.

Paper: Crumple, toss, repeat. How's that for recycling? Silly humans and your environmental problems.

Cardboard boxes: What's in the box can be much more dangerous than the box itself, so humans, please remove packing peanuts or your new set of knives before letting a feline go wild on it. We especially like boxes that are a little too small for us.

Stuffed toys: These are okay if humans remove string, ribbon, eyes, buttons, and other swallowable bits. And stuffed toys are the ultimate DIY earth-friendly recycled project: crumple some paper, stuff it into a sock, sprinkle a little catnip inside, et voila!

HUMAN-CAT-PLAY STUFF:

Humans, if you want to play fetch you're meowing up the wrong tree. (Well, some cats fetch. But they're really more like dog-cats.) Here's some other ways to spend cat-approved quality time:

Hide and seek with a toy: It's not the toy, it's how you get it.

Hide and seek with a human: It's not your human, it's how you pounce on it.

Cat yoga: Not exactly my style, but some groovy felines dig it.

Flashlight: Make sure they're rechargeable batteries, of course, but a good rousing game of I Must Kill That Spot on the Floor can be a blast for cat and human alike. More fun than you'd think, considering it's just some cardboard at the end of a wire. (I smell DIY!) But humans, be sure you're around when this is used--wire isn't the safest cat toy out there.

If you've read this far and you're not playing yet, you should probably get going. But if you have any kitty-related questions, leave me some comments below. I'll answer what I can and it might help me think up a topic for my next post!