By Amy Engle

There's little doubt that kitties can be persnickety critters, especially when it comes to their litter box preferences. One in every ten cats will have a litter box lapse in his or her lifetime, and finding the right litter can go a long way towards preventing or resolving litter box aversion issues. So how do you choose the "right" litter for your feline companion? Ask your cat! No, seriously, we mean it.

Cats are not shy about letting their humans know how they feel about a particular product, so if you're in the market for a new type of litter, start by looking at the features that matter to you, the human, and then bring a bag home for your kitty to try out. If your cat is not currently having litter box problems, it's probably a good idea to look for a new litter that resembles the old one either in terms of smell (scented or unscented), texture or scoopability. On the other hand, if you are dealing with some inappropriate urination issues, you might want to look at litters that differ from what your cat is currently using, or not using, as the case may be.

In the end, the ideal litter is one that your cat likes and will use every time, all the time. As you begin your search for that perfect litter, be prepared for a few test runs along the way. Invest in a second litter box and place the old and new litters side-by-side at home. Once your cat goes through the old litter, replace it with the new "test" litter. If the cat won't go near the second box, it is probably the wrong choice of litter.

Choices, Choices

Today's cat litter market is awash in choices, and it can be difficult to navigate the marketing hype when trying to decide which littler best fits your, and your kitty's lifestyles. Here at Pet Pangaea, we're dedicated to finding the best products to fit your pets' needs, while keeping an eye out for products that are also kind to the earth. Traditional cat litters typically contain sodium bentonite (clay) that must be strip-mined, creating a long-term environmental impact, while low-maintenance silica versions are manufactured overseas, making them incredibly resource-intensive.

Thankfully there are many greener alternatives on the market these days, and Pet Pangaea carries all the best varieties! It's true that many of these options cost a bit more than traditional litters, but they last longer and perform better than the dusty, old-school stuff. Plus, natural litters are safe and nontoxic, even if ingested, and many are also dust-free, an important feature for cats with respiratory issues (or if you want to prevent such problems from developing in the first place). Natural litters are also biodegradable, and many are even flushable – just be sure to check local laws before flushing any pet waste down the toilet (it is illegal in many places), and dispose of biodegradable litter in an equally biodegradable receptacle in order to take full advantage of this earth-friendly feature!

Is It All About the Litter?

Finally, it’s important to remember that while litter selection can often play a part in resolving litter box aversion, sometimes there are medical and behavioral involved that must be identified and resolved first. If you have a cat that’s exhibiting inappropriate urination behaviors, it’s always a good idea to check with your vet to make sure that the issues is not health related. Next, look for environmental factors – a dirty litter box, a new cat in the house, etc. – that may have an impact on your cat’s behavior. As you search for the underlying cause, keep in mind this list of the 20 most common reasons for litter box lapses:

1. The cat is suffering from a medical problem involving the urinary tract.
2. The cat experiences a bout of geriatric constipation.
3. The caretaker does not keep the box as clean as the cat wants it to be.
4. The owner changes the brand or tries disposable plastic liners.
5. The owner changes the location of the litter box.
6. The owner switches to deodorized or perfumed litter.
7. The owner buys a new box and throws out the old one or covers the box with a hood.
8. The owner cleans the litter box with too harsh a cleaning product.
9. The location of the litter box is too busy or not private enough for the cat.
10. The home is too large for just one litter box.
11. The cat inadvertently gets locked out of reach of the litter box.
12. The cat is kept from using the litter box by another animal in the house.
13. There are too many cats and not enough litter boxes.
14. There are too many cats and not enough territory.
15. Stray cats can be seen/smelled near the cat’s territory.
16. The unneutered male cat has come of age and is marking his territory.
17. The un-spayed female is in heat and advertising for suitors.
18. Over time, the cat has developed an aversion to the texture of the litter.
19. The cat was never properly trained to use the litter box in the first place.
20. The cat is stressed by a change in routine or environment, including new baby, new furniture, work schedule changes, vacations, overnight guests or a move.

Cat Litter at Pet Pangaea

Once you’re ready to shop for your cat’s new ideal litter, take a stroll down to Pet Pangaea and we’ll be glad to help you choose an option that will make both you and your cat purr with satisfaction.

Here's a quick look at our favorite cat litter brands, along with a few features that are sure to impress both you and (we hope!) your cat!

Blue Buffalo

This earth-friendly litter is made from walnut shells, an annually renewable non-food agricultural product. It boasts superior odor control and greater absorption capacity than leading brand litters and is 100% natural, environmentally friendly and biodegradable if composted or disposed of in similar fashion. It is low tracking with virtually no dust, and comes in quick-clumping, multi-cat and pellet formulas. Blue Buffalo is also made in the USA.

Feline Fresh Pine

A safe, all natural 100% pine product, Feline Fresh Pine is a natural byproduct of the lumber industry. It’s very absorbent and completely clean and sterile with no dust and no tracking. This litter is flushable, scoopable, biodegradable with no chemicals or additives, and is veterinarian approved for post-surgery care. It’s long lasting, low maintenance and lighter weight than traditional cat litter, and 100% non-toxic and completely safe for all pets and people, even if ingested. As an added benefit, this pine litter can be discarded into the compost pile or used as mulch (once the cat waste has been removed).

Integrity Natural Pine Cat Litter

Another natural pine option, this litter is made from heat-treated pine pellets that absorb odors and liquids from the bottom up, leaving top layer dry for the cat. Made of reclaimed pinewood from sustainable forestry products in a zero-waste production facility, this is a 100% renewable, 100% biodegradable option that is also non-tracking and low-dust.

Nature's Miracle Natural Care Litter

Made from natural corncob granules, Nature’s Miracle Natural Care Litter is lightweight, non-toxic, and four times more absorbent than conventional clay litters. This fast-clumping litter

features Nature’s Miracle’s Advanced Bio-Enzymatic Odor Control System to destroy and prevent odors. It’s also easy on wounds since it contains no clay or dyes, and is virtually dust-free.

Dr. Elsey's Precious Cat Litter Cat Attract

Developed by a veterinarian in a feline-only practice, Cat Attract is a good choice of litter for cats with litter box aversion issues or as a training litter for kittens. Blended with a natural herb attractant to help solve litter box problems, Cat Attract combines an ideal texture and particle size with hard clumping properties and superior odor control. It is all natural and 98% dust free, and is ideal for multi-cat households and sifting/mechanical litter boxes.

Ultra Clumping Formula

Dr. Elsey's Precious Cat Ultra formula combines the heavy non-tracking granules of the Classic formula with a medium grain clay to create an excellent clumping litter that prevents moisture from reaching the bottom of the tray. This formula is perfect for multi-cat families and sifting/mechanical litter boxes.

Swheat Scoop Natural Clumping Litter

This sweet, wheat litter is a better-for-the-earth option that lasts two times longer than traditional litters and is both clay and chemical free. Swheat Scoop contains natural wheat enzymes that destroy litter box odors on contact, and its natural wheat starches form firm, solid clumps you can scoop out with ease. In addition, this litter is low-tracking and low-dust, so it will help keep your cat healthy and your litter box area clean and tidy.

World's Best Cat Litter

Made from renewable whole kernel corn and other plant materials, World’s Best Cat Litter’s naturally absorbent structure keeps odors inside the litter. It is 99% dust free, quick clumping and easy scooping. Because it’s made from all natural ingredients with no added chemicals, it's safe for cats and easy on the earth.

Multi-Cat

World’s Best Multi-Cat formula has an added all-natural plant derivative for enhanced odor control, which makes it an ideal choice for homes with two or more cats.

Scented

The scented formula is made with 100% all-natural scented lavender oil and is a perfect option for multi-cat households or owners who prefer a scented litter. This formula contains no synthetic chemicals, clays or perfumes.

Advanced Natural Original

With added ingredients for better clumping, this special blend of naturally absorbent plant fibers makes for makes this multiple cat strength litter a great choice if you’re in search of powerful odor control and smaller, tighter clumps.

Advanced Natural Pine Blend

This formula combines the fresh scent of pine with added power of high performance clumping. Made with a blend of naturally absorbent plant fibers and real pine, Advanced Natural Pine Blend is a great choice for multi-cat households or anyone looking for easy cleanup and a fresh pine scent.

Yesterday's News

Made from recycled materials that include newspaper, corrugated cardboard and reclaimed industrial sawdust, Yesterday’s News is a great, earth-friendly litter that is also highly absorbent (three times more absorbent than clay), 99.7% dust free, and low tracking. This paper litter is unscented yet naturally tough on odors, and completely non-toxic, even if ingested. As an added eco-bonus, the packaging for Yesterday’s News is also recyclable (where facilities exists).