

## Back in the garden

Meet Callie. Callie is a neighbor's cat. She's such a sweetheart; a lovable long-hair who doesn't get enough attention at home. She loves to hunt prey at my house. She sits with me some mornings when I have breakfast or coffee on the patio and in the afternoon when I'm relaxing and enjoying the garden.

But Callie was at one time a nuisance. It was for a brief period because I was unaware that she was the problem. She thought one particular area in my herb garden was her litter box.

My vegetable garden at that time consisted of three raised beds and I grew herbs in one of the beds.

I would check the veggie beds every other day to see if they needed watering, weeding, or any other attention when I noticed a few of my herbs had been dug up. Well I thought it might be squirrels or a raccoon so I replanted what I could salvage and continued checking every other day. After replanting the herbs twice I started checking the area every morning & afternoon.



I fought this unknown critter for two weeks before I realized my garden pest was something more domestic when I actually caught Callie in the garden sniffing around my herbs. Oh well (as I through my hands up in the air) I guess there is no fighting it. I gave up. There would be no herbs this year or anything else from that bed...and I hadn't even planted any catnip.

The weekend after I resigned to one useless garden bed, I was visiting my mom in Mississippi. My grand daughters were out in mom's yard gathering pine cones for a craft project when one complained about them being prickly. As I handled one, I immediately thought of my kitty-potty problem. I gathered a bunch of pine cones for myself, bagged them, and took them home with me.

It was work, but I removed and disposed of the soil from the garden bed, replaced it with fresh composted soil, and planted a new crop of herbs. By placing the pine cones about the bed within 3 to 6 inches apart I deterred Callie from visiting the garden bed all together. By the way I have had no sign of raccoons either.

Now if I could find a way to keep another neighbor's dogs from using my yard as their bathroom.