

What Exactly Is Catnip, Anyway?

Catnip, or *Nepeta Cataria* to be appropriately scientific and technical about it, is a perennial herb of the mint family. When one asks "What is catnip" one could also be referring to catwort or catmint. It's obvious enough by the name catnip that we are dealing with an association to the feline persuasion. The cats on catnip effect will be addressed momentarily. From its European beginnings, catnip has spread throughout the world. Mints in general are viable and rabidly proliferate. Aspiring to a meter tall, the multi-branched stem has small, purple-spotted white flowers on them. These delicate leaves contain catnip oil, which is the primary ingredient of catnip and is emitted when the leaves are split or smashed. How does catnip affect cats? Cats on catnip are a sight to see, and generally quite playful and energetic. A small percentage of cats will actually become rather aggressive, so you should be careful not to give it to them. Who wants to cause themselves problems? Now of course, that said, some cats are not affected by catnip at all. Kittens and sometimes senior cats tend not to be affected, and somewhere around a 1/4 to 1/3 of cats are not genetically predisposed to react to catnip at all. Those who do will become hyperactive or super-loving, as if sexually aroused. They will lick, sniff, roll all in it to get it all over their scent pads, and eat it. After a few minutes of delirium, they'll saunter off to something else, "immune" to the effect for an hour or two. What is catnip if not a drug for cats? Luckily the effects are short lived, it's cheap, and it isn't harmful. You can dose your cats on catnip any of a number of different ways, from catnip cat toys to catnip seeds. They all love catnip mouse and you can also get sprays for your cat scratching post, to encourage them to claw it instead of your nice furniture. You can buy bulk catnip or even grow your own. You will want to keep the catnip fresh in a sealed container in fridge or freezer to preserve its affects. Catnip is a joy and delight for cats and their voyeuristic people. In future, if you get the question from someone on the street "What is catnip, anyway?" then you can safely say, "I know All Things Catnip, so let me tell you just that!"

About the Author

Robert Blake runs several websites, among them All Things Catnip (<http://allthingscatnip.com>) and Happy Healthy Cats (<http://happyhealthycats.com>).

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