

References + Research list

I believe in **heart-led care** backed by **real-world knowledge**. These references are here for **transparency**—so you can see the research and veterinary guidance that inform the education I share. I've summarized in my own words and linked the original sources so you can read them firsthand and **make grounded choices** for the animals **you love**.

Safety-first veterinary references

These are **trustworthy, mainstream references that reinforce responsible use**:

- **Merck Veterinary Manual: Essential oil toxicoses:** Clear overview; notes cats are at particular risk and advises against applying concentrated oils directly to pets. [Merck Veterinary Manual](#) What outputs are you promising to deliver during the course of the project?
- **ASPCA: Essential oils around pets:** Practical guidance for pet owners on risk and precautions. [ASPCA](#)

Why cats are different

Metabolism matters

- Cats are not “small dogs.” A key reason essential oils require extra caution in cat households is that cats have **species-specific differences in liver metabolism**, including limited capacity for certain glucuronidation pathways (UGT-related). This can affect how some compounds are processed and cleared. [PMC+1](#)

Pets & Aromatics (Dogs + Cats)

Dogs and cats **live nose-first**—and aromatics can shape the emotional tone of a home more than we realize. Here you'll find research and veterinary references that help bring clarity to what's **supportive**, what's too much, and how to approach scent with **respect for both species**.

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| <p>Dogs: These studies explore how certain aromas/olfactory enrichment may influence canine behavior or welfare in controlled settings:</p> | <p>Cats: Direct “benefit” studies of essential oils in cats are limited, but we do have strong evidence that olfactory enrichment can support feline welfare:</p> |
| <p>Lavender + car rides (travel excitement): A clinical study found dogs exposed to ambient lavender during car travel showed calmer behavior compared to control conditions. AVMA Journals+1</p> | <p>Cats + olfactory enrichment & exploration: Study examining how scent/novel objects influence exploratory behavior in captive-housed domestic cats. PubMed</p> |
| <p>Lavender + autonomic activity: A small veterinary study found <i>some evidence</i> topical lavender application affected vagal activity in dogs, while also noting the calming conclusion remains equivocal and needs more research. PubMed+1</p> | <p>Shelter cats + olfactory stimulation: Research evaluating how olfactory stimuli (including catnip and other scents) can influence shelter-cat behavior. ScienceDirect+1 Add as many objectives as applicable</p> |
| <p>Shelter dogs + enrichment (lavender): An open-access study reported differences in shelter dog behavior (more resting/less activity/vocalizing) with olfactory enrichment including lavender. PMC+1</p> | <p>Review: olfactory strategies for feline stress: A 2022 review summarizes what’s known about olfactory interventions and stress markers in cats. Frontiers</p> |
| <p>Rescue shelter olfactory stimulation (multiple scents): A well-cited shelter study evaluated behavioral changes when dogs were exposed to different diffused scents (including lavender/chamomile/peppermint/rosemary). ScienceDirect</p> | <p>Review: olfactory strategies for feline stress: A 2022 review summarizes what’s known about olfactory interventions and stress markers in cats. Frontiers</p> |
| <p>Cognitive bias + cortisol (EO enrichment): A shelter-dog study suggests olfactory enrichment with essential oils may influence affective state measures (including cognitive bias/cortisol), supporting the idea that scent enrichment can be a welfare tool. Dog Behavior+1</p> | <p>Environmental enrichment strategies (foundational): A widely cited practical review of feline enrichment strategies, including sensory/olfactory enrichment.</p> |
| <p>Dose-dependent collar exposure (exploratory): A newer PubMed-indexed exploratory study investigated different concentrations of an EO blend used as olfactory enrichment when dogs entered an unfamiliar environment. PubMed</p> | <p>Silver vine / honeysuckle / valerian / catnip responsiveness: Open-access PLOS ONE paper: many cats respond to silver vine; it can be effective even when a cat doesn’t respond to catnip. PMC</p> |



Disclaimer

Educational note: These references are shared for learning and transparency. They are not medical advice and do not replace guidance from a qualified holistic veterinarian—especially for kittens/puppies, seniors, pregnancy, or pets with medical conditions.

If you want the **calm, clear “what to do / what to avoid” framework** for both dogs and cats, you'll love my Essential Oil Safety Guide inside Paw Approved Guides + Protocols.

Prefer to start small? Visit Paw Prints + Perks – Free Pet Friendly Downloads for beginner-friendly tools.

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