

# Storage Bin Cat House

There are many feral cat house designs out there, but I like this one for Pacific Northwest winters for several reasons:

- They are simple to make.
- The materials are inexpensive and easy to find at local hardware stores.
- It can be easily modified by adding an interior box, additional insulation or heated cat pad.
- The reflective Mylar is durable, reflects heat in addition to insulating and doesn't contain any itchy or noxious materials.
- It is safer than Styrofoam style shelters. Cats tend to scratch or chew on these and the pieces cling to their fur. If ingested while grooming, it can cause bowel obstructions.



## Materials

- Storage Bin
  - The example shown is 27 gallons. This size will fit 2 to 4 cats.
  - Expect to pay \$5 - \$15 for a new bin.
- Duct Tape
- Mylar Double Foil Bubble Wrap
- Scissors
- Round Template for Door
- Marker
- Drill
- Jig saw



## Step 1

- Find a round template to use for tracing the doors.
- A small paper 6 inch paper plate is being used here.



## Step 2

- Use a marker to trace the door on opposite sides of the bin.



## Step 3

- Using a drill with a large bit, make a pilot hole or two that will be large enough for a jigsaw blade to fit through.



## Step 4

- Use a jigsaw to cut along the lines you traced.



This 10 pound cat easily fits through the 6 inch door.

## Step 5

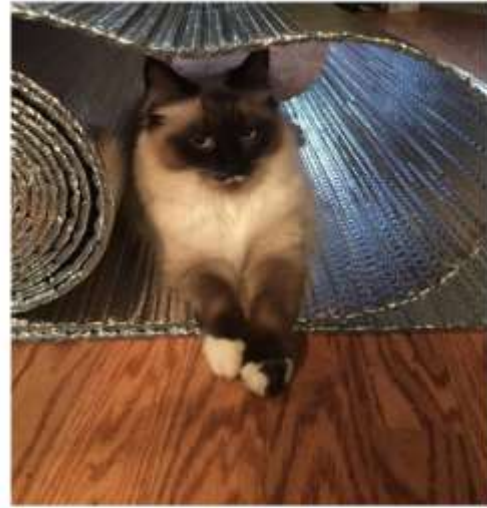
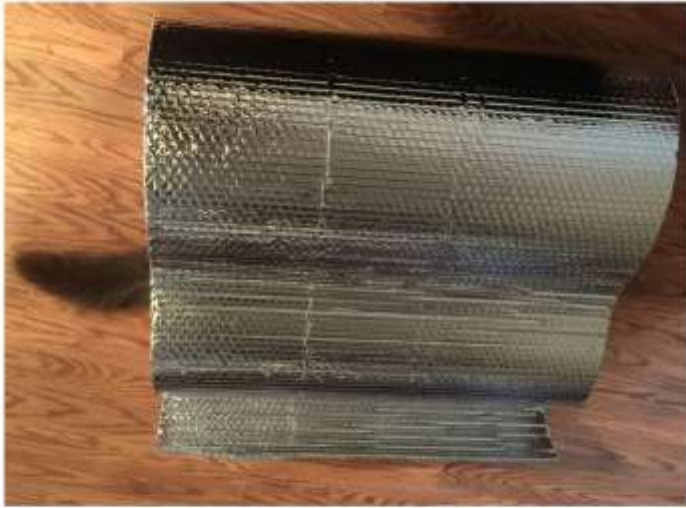
- Line the sides and bottoms with Mylar bubble wrap.
- If needed, use two layers for additional insulation.



## Step 6

- Cut the excess with scissors.

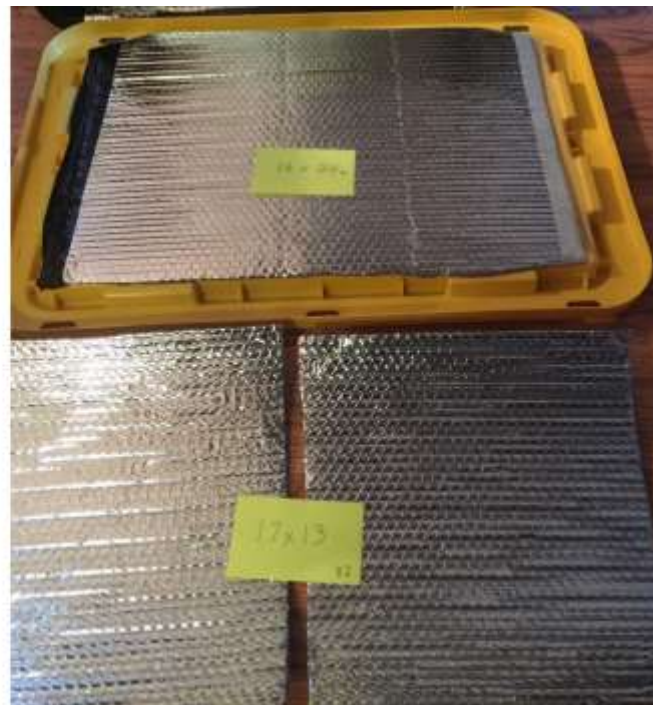




Remove cat helpers from Mylar before going to step 7

## Step 7

- Cut out Mylar for the roof and two sides.



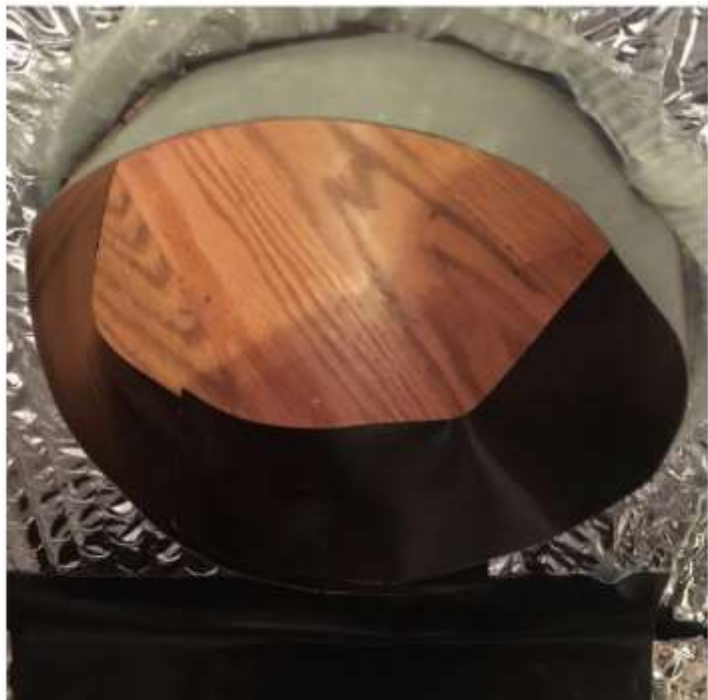
## Step 8

- Wedge Mylar bubble wrap for door covers in place indicated by cat helper and trace the door with a marker.
- Cut out the door. Save the Mylar circle. It can be used as a door flap later. To get them used to the door, start by duct taping it above the door. After they are using the shelter, gradually lower it a little every few days or weeks until it is covering the door.



## Step 9

- Attach the door panel to the inside of the bin using duct tape.
- Cut a length of duct tape and tack it loosely around the door entrance.



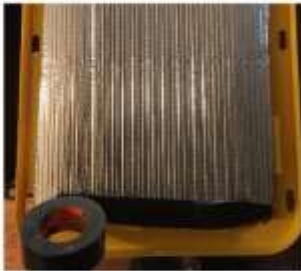
## Step 10

- Clip the duct tape about every inch or two on either side.
- Fold the duct tape over as you go.



## Step 11

- Using duct tape, seal the Mylar insulation around the roof and edges.





## Step 12

- Make it warm and cozy.
  - Straw
    - Good insulator
    - Inexpensive
    - Some cats are allergic
    - Cats will sometimes use the straw as a litterbox.
  - Fleece Bedding \*(P.E.T.)
    - Washable
    - Repels water / moisture
    - Cats can burrow into it
    - Stays warm when damp
  - Outdoor heated pad.

\*Polar Fleece

AKA polyethylene terephthalate



## Location

- Place the shelter near natural cover like under a deck or carport or next to a building or shed. This will provide extra warmth and will serve as a windbreak.
- If the shelter is in a public area, place it away from high traffic areas. **Don't** place the shelter in the same general area as your feeding station.
- If you find that the cats aren't using it, try adding one in a different location. Failure to use it may mean that they feel unsafe in that location. They may be rejecting the place you've chosen, not the shelter itself.
- Make the shelter as invisible as possible.
  - Conceal it in vegetation.
  - Cover it with a tarp. Stretch it over the top and attach with garden or tent stakes. This will also give them a covered front and back porch
  - Make it look like something else.
    - Arrange wood lattice around it to make it look like a planter. Some potted plants on top will add to the disguise and provide some extra protection too.
    - Stack firewood around it.

## Tips

- Place the bin on boards or bricks to keep it off the cold ground and provide more protection from rain.
- Add a tarp to make the shelter less drafty and to provide a dry "porch area". Be sure to anchor the ends with tent stakes, bricks or firewood to hold it down. A flapping tarp may scare the cats.
- If electricity is available, consider getting a heated pad for the shelter bottom. There are a variety of low wattage, outdoor pads made for cat shelters and dog kennels. Be sure to read the directions carefully before using. Do a search for "outdoor heated pad" on your pet supply store or Amazon.



For more information and a wonderful gallery of shelters, copy this Alleycat.org link into your browser window.

<http://www.alleycat.org/ShelterGallery>



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