



Be Bear Aware.....

Some tips to assist with wildlife conflicts in your neighborhood

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Bears come into regular contact with people in B.C., especially black bears because they are more adaptable to humans and human settlement than grizzlies. Like most of BC, this is bear country. Bears frequently wander into populated areas drawn by human food and/or garbage.

If people allow these visiting bears to access garbage and other non-natural food sources, they help to create "problem" bears. "Problem" bears are bears "that act on their learned behavior to such an extent that they produce a threat to human safety and property when seeking out human food and/or garbage" (Ciarniello, 1997, p 17).

A PROBLEM BEAR IS A DEAD BEAR. Every year hundreds of "problem" bears are killed in B.C. as a result of poor human management of non-natural food sources. From 1992 to 1996, approximately 245 grizzlies and 4246 black bears were shot in British Columbia because of perceived and actual threats to human safety.

Backyard Bears

Once bears learn that it's okay to seek out food in your backyard, they can damage your property and they pose a potential safety hazard. **You can help keep bears away from your home by removing any bear-attracting food sources and clearing away any dense brush that could provide cover.**



If a bear comes into your backyard try to startle and scare it away by flashing lights and making lots of loud noises. Let the bear know that it is not welcome in your home. **However, if the bear is already food-conditioned leave it alone and contact your local Conservation Service Officer for help as these bears can be aggressive.**

Bears are lured into peoples' backyards by household garbage, pet and livestock food, bird feeders, food scraps and smells from un-cleaned barbeques, compost bins, fruit trees, garden produce and orchards.

How can you help?

Household garbage is the single biggest killer of bears. When people allow bears to access garbage, they help create "problem" bears that are usually destroyed.

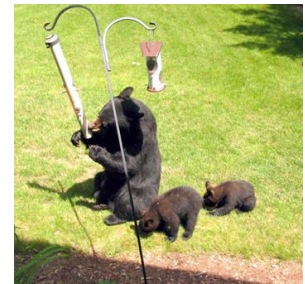
During early spring to late fall, keep your garbage behind closed doors in your garage, basement or storage area until your collection day. Garbage that is left in open carports or in your

backyard is an easy target for bears. **Put your garbage out on the morning of collection day and not the night before.** Avoid stockpiling garbage as this is a good way to attract bears. Use your weekly service. Thoroughly clean your garbage containers every 2-3 days.

Bears help themselves to all kinds of pet and livestock food so store the feed appropriately.

To avoid attracting bears, feed your pets indoors. If you must feed them outside, only put out enough food for a single meal and keep empty pet dishes inside.

Bird feeders can easily be turned into bear feeders. Avoid hanging bird feeders during bear season. If you choose to use bird feeders hang them out of reach of bears and don't overfill them. Avoid spilling seeds and take your feeders in at night.



During bear season, **clean your barbeque immediately after every use.** Wash the grill or burn off the smells, food residue and grease. If you can smell your barbeque then it is not clean enough.

Rotting, inappropriate food waste such as meat scraps and fats in compost bins attract animals such as bears. Use good compost practices to reduce odors. Washable, plastic compost bins with lids are recommended for outdoor use. **They should be cleaned from time to time.**

Picking ripe and excess fruit and removing windfall on a regular basis will discourage bears from seeking food. Store your fruit securely behind closed doors. The best way to keep bears out of your **fruit trees, gardens and orchards** is to enclose them with electric fencing and for many homeowners, this just isn't practical.

Once the Terrace Area Curbside Collection Program is underway, please discuss any wildlife incidents directly with Regional District Kitimat-Stikine By-Law Officer. If he is unavailable or for more information on Bear Aware programs and the Conservation Officer Service please see: <http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/cos/info/bearaware>

