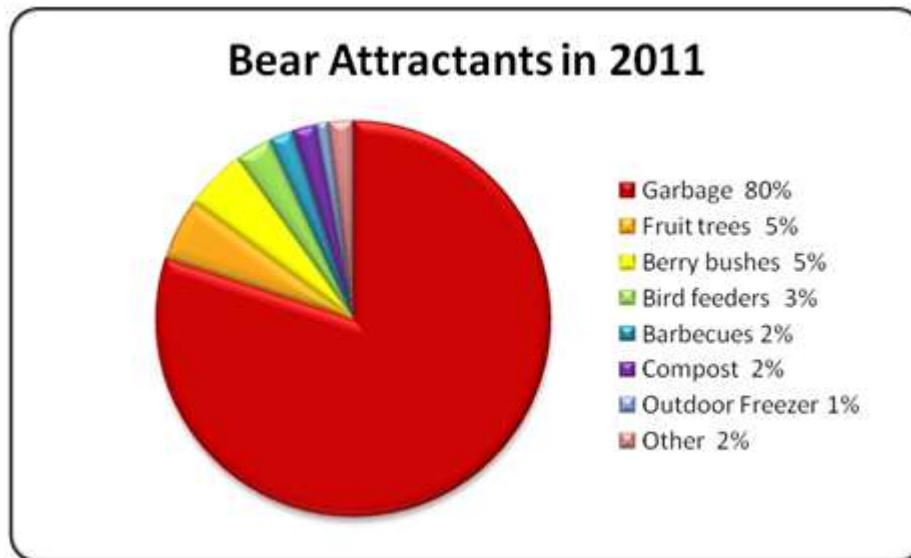


# Be Bear Aware

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It's spring again!! We are now hearing the concerns of community members regarding the sightings of black bears in our residential and business areas.

The following is a compilation of general information to assist us in managing this yearly issue in a positive and proactive manner with as little damage as possible to our resident bear population or us.



**There's a bear in my yard!**

**What to do when you find a bear in your yard:**

1. If you, members of your family or pets are outside, move slowly and quietly inside. Do not turn your back to the bear, but do not make eye contact either.
2. Telephone your neighbors and advise them that a bear is in the area.
3. Sit back and wait. If the bear has no reason to stay, it should soon leave.
4. If the bear does not leave within an hour or so, becomes aggressive, or attempts to enter your residence, you should immediately call the **Conservation Officer (1-877-356-2029) and ENDERBY RCMP (250-838-6818)**.

**Once the bear is gone, ask yourself the following questions:**

1. Why was the bear in my yard? What attracted it here? See our list of [bear attractants](#) below and suggestions for handling them.
2. Remove all attractants.
3. Ensure there are easy paths of escape for any wild animal that may enter your yard. If you have large areas of unruly bush that may provide cover, consider removing them.

Bears are fascinating to watch; however, we must ensure they are not rewarded with food when they visit us. A bear that finds food will return, becoming bolder and more curious. By leaving attractants on your property, you are putting the bears, yourself, your family, and your neighbors at risk.

**Under the *Wildlife Act*, it is unlawful to provide food to wild animals, either purposely or by neglect. If you do not remove food sources, you may be facing as much as \$15,000.00 in fines.**

**Bear proofing means managing bear attractants**

Bears are driven by their stomach. An enormous amount of energy is stored in fat over the summer and fall months so that a bear can survive a winter without eating. Hibernating bears can lose as much as 25-30% of their body weight over the winter. As a result, bears become increasingly active in their search for food as summer wanes and fall approaches. Their keen sense of smell allows them to identify potential food sources from considerable distances.

When hungry bears come into town, they shouldn't find attractive smells or food. We want them to continue on their way and not linger in our neighborhoods. Becoming Bear Aware is not difficult. A small change in your behavior and habits requires little effort but produces large benefits.

**Our garbage pickup days are on Tuesdays of each week**

**Garbage Management**

In most communities, improperly stored garbage is the main attractant for bears. By altering our storage habits, we can eliminate garbage-conditioned bears with very little effort. Here are some steps to bear-proofing your garbage.

1. **Do not put your garbage to the curb until the morning it will be picked up.**
2. **Use a heavy-duty container with a secure lid.** This not only deters bears, but also ravens, dogs, and other animals that may get into your garbage.

**3. Store your garbage in a secure location, and ensure it is odor-free.** A secure location is *not* your carport or a flimsy shed that a bear could easily enter. A shed with a door that closes securely or the interior of your house is best. A simple way to reduce odors is to place any smelly food articles in a Ziploc bag and freeze it until garbage day.

**4. Use our community recycling services** as much as you can. Separating your paper, glass, plastic, tins, and cardboard from your "smelly" garbage will leave an average household with only a few bags per week - easy to toss into your freezer or keep in a tightly closed bag in your basement.

### **Fruit Trees and Berries**

In our community you don't have to look far to find a lovely fruit tree growing in someone's yard. These beautiful trees, however, pose a serious public safety issue.



Domestic fruit trees are not a natural source of food for bears. They are acknowledged as a bear attractant, and bring bears into our community. You may not mind if a bear feasts on your fruit, but what you are doing is not only dangerous, it is an offence under the *Wildlife Act*. These bears become used to humans and our surroundings; they become more bold in exploring urban areas. Though you may tolerate a bear's presence, your neighbors may not.

If you leave your fruit tree unmanaged and untended, you are endangering members of our community. You are creating a food-conditioned and habituated bear who will come into contact with humans. The greater the amount of contact, the greater the potential for a negative incident. Are you willing to accept responsibility if a person is harmed by one of these habituated and food conditioned bears?

Bears do not care about the condition of your trees. They may break branches and stems, causing irreparable damage and weakening the tree. By following the steps below, your fruit trees will also benefit!

Please consider the following options:

- 1. Prune your fruit trees**, so they will produce only the amount of fruit that you are able to pick and consume.
- 2. Clean all fallen fruit** from beneath the trees and shrubs daily, and pick fruit and berries as soon as they ripen.
- 3. A small, inexpensive electric fence system** will act as a bear deterrent for your trees.
- 5. If you do not use the fruit from your trees and shrubs, consider replacing it.** There are many beautiful flowering trees and shrubs that do not produce fruit.

## Compost and Gardening

Our area is a green, fertile community where gardening is a hobby of many people. For the most part, bears are not attracted to our vegetable gardens or flowers. However, the compost pile, if managed improperly, can attract bears into our backyard. To eliminate this attractant, take the following precautions:



- 1. Never add meat, oil, or cooked food to your pile.** Dairy products, baked goods, and un-rinsed eggshells are strong attractants for many animals, not just bears. Avoid adding these items.
- 2. Reduce the odors emanating from your pile.** Turn the pile regularly, and ensure that it contains enough moisture. Bury all new kitchen scraps with grass clippings or garden refuse. Sprinkle lime on the pile, which helps to reduce odors.
- 3. During the most active bear season, avoid adding kitchen scraps.** These scraps can be placed in the freezer until the bears begin to hibernate. To increase the rate of decomposition, break down your scraps into smaller pieces. Consider an indoor worm composter, which is odor-free and convenient.

For more information on composting, visit the following web sites:

How to Compost – A Complete Composting Resource  
<http://www.howtocompost.org/>

Composting with Red Wiggler Worms  
<http://www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html>

EarthEasy Composting  
[http://eartheasy.com/grow\\_compost.htm](http://eartheasy.com/grow_compost.htm)

## Birdfeeders

Birdfeeders attracting bears? Most people are surprised that bears would frequent a birdfeeder. But consider that nuts and seeds are very high in protein and fat, nutrients that bears require in quantity as they try to gain weight for the winter. Hummingbird feeders, with their sugar content, are also an attractant for bears.

The purpose of most birdfeeders is to supply food to birds when natural resources are scarce - in the winter and early. Many people also enjoy watching birds, and use feeders to entice them into the yard. However, if you live in an area where bears are a problem, you may be unwittingly participating in habituating a bear to being in your neighborhood.



*Bears are clever at finding food!*

Bears and birdfeeders are a bad combination. What can you do?

**Remove birdfeeders during the spring, summer, and fall months.** Be sure to clean up uneaten seed and nuts from the ground. There are plenty of natural food sources for birds in the wild.

If you wish to attract birds to your yard in the summer, **create a “bird friendly” yard.** Supply perches and natural food sources that your favorite birds enjoy. Plant shrubs and bushes as refuge and nest sites. Instead of a hummingbird feeder, plant bright red, deep-throated flowers that hummingbirds enjoy. Ask at your local gardening center for a list of plants that attract birds.

For more information on bird friendly gardening:

<http://www.home-herb-garden.com/birds.html>

### **Barbeques and Smokers**

Nothing says summer has arrived like the scent of a barbeque wafting on the breeze. However, these lovely odors also appeal to bears. Since bears have an incredible sense of smell, your sizzling steak may bring in a bear from quite a distance.



Please take the following precautions:

- 1. Thoroughly burn off or clean your barbeque after every use.**
- 2. Keep your barbeque covered, and if possible, store it in a secure location.**
- 3. If your barbeque has a grease catch, ensure that it is removed and cleaned after each use.**

### **Smokers**

Many residents enjoy smoking fish and other products. These tasty treats are very tempting to not only bears, but birds, dogs, and other animals. If you use a smoker on a regular basis, follow the same precautions listed for the barbeque. If you must run your smoker for extended periods of time, especially overnight, consider a small, portable electric fence as a deterrent.

### **Pet and Livestock Feed**

If your pets or animals eat it, a bear will eat it. How do you store your pet and livestock feed? Here are some suggestions to keep bears out of feed:

- 1. Feed pets, and store pet food, indoors.** If you feed pets outside, place their dishes in a secure location during the night. Store food in a secure shed or in the house.
- 2. Store livestock feed in bear-proof containers,** within electric fencing, or in secure buildings.

### **Cultural activities:**

Please keep in mind that in our community we have many people that hunt and have or will have hides hanging. The smell of these hides is a big attractant to bears. Place them in your freezer or give them away as soon as possible if you are not intending to use them yourself.

### **Important numbers to have on hand:**

**Conservation Officer:**

**1-877-952-7277**

**RCMP: 250-838-6818**

