

# TIPS TO KEEP BEARS IN THE WILD

## Garbage:

- Eliminate odours. Put garbage in containers that have tight fitting lids, and only put it out on the morning of garbage day, not the night before.
- Whenever possible, store garbage in bear-resistant containers, or indoors (house, shed, garage). Do not store garbage in plywood boxes, old freezers or vehicles.
- Put meat scraps in the freezer until garbage day.
- If you do not have curbside pick up, take your garbage to the dump often.
- Frequently wash garbage cans and recycle containers and lids with a strong smelling disinfectant.

## Bird/Pet Food:

- Fill bird feeders only through the winter months.
- Do not leave pet food outdoors. Feed pets indoors, not outside or in screened in areas or porches.

## Fruits/Vegetables/Compost:

- Avoid landscaping with trees, shrubs or plants that produce food known to attract bears (some examples include crab apple trees, mountain ash, beech and oak).
- Do not put meat, fish or sweet food (including fruit) in your composter.
- Remove vegetables and fallen fruit from the ground.
- Pick all ripe fruit from trees and bushes.

## Smells:

- Be aware that cooking odours can attract bears.
- Remove grease and food residue from barbecue grills, including the grease cup underneath, after each use.
- Learn about bears, their needs and behaviour. Share your knowledge with others.
- Encourage your neighbours and your community to practice Bear Wise habits. It takes everyone working together to keep bears away.

Every encounter with a black bear is unique. The following information is what experts recommend you do. There is no guarantee that what works in one instance will work in another.

## **Black Bear Safety Basics:**

- Never approach the bear to get a better look.
- Do not attempt to feed a bear.
- Anticipate and avoid encounters.
- Know what to do if you encounter a bear.
- Learn about bears and their behaviour.
- When outdoors, supervise children and never leave pets unattended.

## **If You Spot a Black Bear:**

- Stay calm. Often the bear is simply passing through.
- Do not run away. Walk towards a building or vehicle and get inside.
- If you have children and pets, bring them inside too.
- Once indoors, observe the bear. Did it move on or did it stay on your property? If the bear stayed, what was it doing or eating?
- Encourage the bear to leave. Bang pots and pans, or blow an air horn or whistle. The more stressful a bear's encounter with you, the less likely it is to come back.
- If the bear got food (like garbage or bird food), or if the bear tried to get food, you will need to remove or control the item that attracted the bear.
- Once the bear leaves, remove the attractant and assess your property for other possible attractants like garbage; dirty barbecue; bird or pet food or fruit or berries from your trees or bushes.
- It is possible for a bear to return even though you removed the attractant. Bears do return to places where they have found food. Once the bear does not get food, it will move on.
- Alert your neighbours about bear activity, and work together to keep your neighbourhood free from items that attract bears.
- Work with your municipality to solve problems before they happen.
- If a bear is in a tree, leave it alone. Remove people and dogs from the area. The bear will usually come down and leave when it feels safe.

As part of the Bear Wise program the Ministry of Natural Resources operates the toll-free Bear Reporting Line **(1-866-514-2327)** 24 hours a day, seven days a week from April to November, with trained staff handling calls and determining the appropriate response. Please visit the Ministry of Natural Resources web site for information on tips to help avoid these unwanted visitors. [www.bears.mnr.gov.on.ca](http://www.bears.mnr.gov.on.ca)

**If you have done everything you can to remove attractants, and the bear persists, call 1-866-514-2327.**

**If a bear is damaging your property, breaking into your home or threatening your personal safety or that of others, call 911 or your local police.**