

# How to Avoid Problems with Black Bears



For those who choose to reside in a rural area, increased interaction with wildlife is bound to occur. Real black bears aren't the cuddly critters portrayed in cartoons. They are large powerful animals that should be treated with caution and respect.

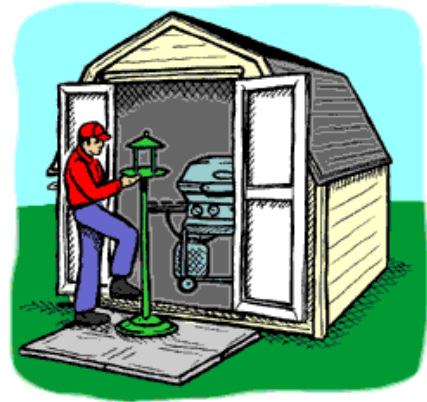
Black bears are abundant here and can be found in most areas of the province. Normally shy and avoiding human contact, bears will venture into settled areas in search of food when natural food sources are scarce. Their quest often results in property damage and unwanted encounters with people. Nearly all problem bear situations are the result of opportunity - the availability of crops, human food or food waste.

Bears are intelligent and curious. They are resourceful and persistent when it comes to locating and acquiring food. When enticed by the smell of something to eat, bears will overturn garbage cans, green carts and bird feeders, break into buildings or vehicles, and damage crops, orchards and beehives. If a bear is successful at obtaining food, it will continue to return, and in the process will become increasingly less afraid of people. Relocation of these "spoiled" bears is seldom successful as there are few areas in Nova Scotia where they can be released and not become someone else's problem.

Practicing some preventative steps can reduce the odds of attracting bears around your house and property, your campsite or when traveling in the woods.

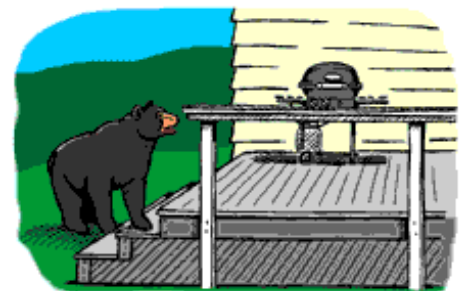
## ...At Your Rural Home

- Store garbage indoors or in metal bear-proof containers. On collection day, put garbage out as close to pick up time as possible. If you're going to miss collection day, take garbage to the disposal site before you leave.
- Never put meat, fish, bones or seafood shells in the compost. Turn compost often to prevent odors and hasten decomposition. Apply lime to reduce odor.
- Keep your green cart in a shady area away from forest cover. Put meat or fish scraps in a plastic container or bag and store in the freezer until collection day. Rinse your cart periodically.
- Keep barbecue grills clean and free of grease. The smell of animal fat and barbecue sauce may attract a hungry bear. Store the barbecue indoors if possible.
- If pets are fed outside, remove spillage and leftovers promptly.
- Remove bird feeders once their natural food sources are available. If you continue bird feeding, and if a bear has been seen in your neighbourhood, put feeders indoors at night and clean up spillage.
- Pick fruit and berries growing near your home that may attract bears. Even if you don't want the fruit, dispose of it before attracts a bear's attention.



## ...At Your Camp or Cottage

- Make sure garbage containers have a secure bear-proof lid and are emptied frequently. Keep garbage containers away from dense forest cover. When leaving camp take the garbage with you.
- Keep the kitchen clean and well ventilated to remove cooking odors.
- Foods with long-lasting odors such as fish and bacon, should be cooked outdoors.
- Never dump food waste or cooking fats near the camp.
- Never leave food that may spoil (meat, bread, fruit etc.) in your camp or cottage when you're not staying there.
- Periodically inspect windows, doors, and siding for signs of rot which can significantly weaken the structure.



## Backyard Composting

Composting is nature's way of recycling food scraps, grass, leaves and other plant and animal matter. With just a little effort, you can easily make valuable compost in your own backyard.

Follow these EASY steps...

1. **Start** your pile: you can purchase a commercial composter, build one (using anything from chicken wire to pallets), or simply have an open pile.
2. **Place** your compost pile in a partially shaded, easy to reach spot in your yard.
3. **Mix** equal amounts of "greens" (fruit and vegetable scraps, fresh grass, egg shells) and "browns" (straw, dried leaves, wood shavings, shredded paper) into the pile. Each time you add "greens" you should add "browns". It's a good idea to keep a pile or bag of dried leaves handy for this purpose.
4. **Omit** certain food scraps that are not recommended for your backyard composter: meat, bones, dairy products, fats. These items take longer to break down and may attract animals.
5. **Moisten** the pile. It should be moist but not dripping wet; turn it every week or two through the spring, summer and fall.
6. **Dig** your "black gold" into your vegetable and flower gardens, or spread it on your lawn and around trees and shrubs. When it's finished, you'll know. It will be dark, rich and earthy smelling.



### What's In

#### From the House:

- Fruit and vegetable scraps
- Baked goods, including bread
- Rice and other grains
- Pasta
- Paper towels/serviettes
- Tea leaves/bags
- Coffee grounds and filters
- Egg shells
- Shredded paper (newspaper, cereal boxes, paper packaging, etc.)

#### From the Yard:

- Leaves
- Grass Clippings
- Weeds
- Brush (break into smaller pieces)
- Plants, plant trimmings (non-diseased)

### What's Out

#### From the House:

- All meat, including chicken
- Fish and shellfish
- Bones
- Fat, grease, oils
- All dairy products, including cheese

#### From the Yard:

- Weeds that have gone to seed
- Diseased plants
- Large branches, roots, etc.
- Dog and cat waste
- Plants previously sprayed with non-degradable pesticides

**Relax.**  
**Compost happens.**

For more information on backyard composting, visit [www.putwasteinitsplace.ca](http://www.putwasteinitsplace.ca) to download the Backyard Composting Booklet. If you don't already have a backyard composter, you can build your own using our Build Your Own Backyard Composter Guide. **RRFB Nova Scotia's Help Line 1-877-313-RRFB (7732)**