



DON'T ATTRACT BEARS TO GARBAGE

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Hundreds of garbage-eating bears have to be destroyed each year.

DESTROYING BEARS OR MOVING THEM IS NOT THE ANSWER.

Each year, about 950 Black Bears and 50 grizzlies have to be destroyed to protect the public.

As more people — and more garbage — move into traditional bear habitat, more bears are becoming garbage-conditioned, and have to be destroyed. It's a terrible waste of life. It's also costly: the Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks' Conservation Officer Service spends about \$1 million a year dealing with bear/people conflicts.

Bears which are moved away may return, and others will starve to death.

Bears which are causing problems are sometimes moved, or “translocated”, especially females with cubs, grizzlies, or bears which are not yet garbage-conditioned. About 150 bears are translocated each year, but it doesn't always work. Bears will travel hundreds of kilometers to return to known food sources. Other bears are chased from their new surroundings by resident bears, are killed by dominant bears, or starve to death.

WORKING TOGETHER TO PREVENT BEAR PROBLEMS

The B.C. government is doing more than responding to bear/people conflicts. We're encouraging people to take responsibility for garbage and other bear attractants to prevent problems from occurring in the first place. That requires the cooperation of the public, local governments, and industry. The Wildlife Act now prohibits the intentional feeding or attracting of bears and can require cleanup or removal of bear attractants.

DON'T ATTRACT BEARS TO YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

Bears have a keen sense of smell, and garbage or other food sources could easily attract a bear to your neighbourhood.

Be careful when bears are active — usually from May to October, but especially during August and September.

Garbage and compost:

- Keep garbage in a secured shed or garage until pick-up day. Don't stockpile or bury garbage.
- Never leave fish or meat remains outside or in your compost. Instead, put them in your freezer or in a cool place until garbage day.
- Cooking oil, grease, dairy products or fruit should never be left outside or put in your compost.
- Try using lime to cut odour from your compost.

Your property:

- If you have fruit trees, pick fruit as it ripens and clean up windfalls promptly. Get rid of any unwanted fruit trees.
- You may want to install electric fencing or strong chain-link fencing around fruit trees.
- Keep composts and other bear attractants away from forests, thickets and natural pathways which a bear might use.
- Consider thinning the bush on your property, or creating a break in the natural pathways that lead to your house.

Barbecues:

- Burn grills clean to remove any food residues, and store barbecues inside. Any barbecues left outside should at least be covered and stored out of the wind.

Pets:

- A dog may help warn you that a bear is nearby, but be sure your dog is restrained or in a fenced yard.
- Store pet food indoors. Any food outdoors should be in bear-proof or air-tight containers.

Livestock:

- Remove all attractants as quickly as possible, especially carcasses or odorous materials, to avoid attracting bears to the property.
- Store feed indoors and in a secure location, preferably in air-tight, bear-proof containers.
- Heavy duty electric fencing can deter bears from areas such as outdoor feed bins, sick pens or calving and lambing areas.

Beehives:

- Electric fencing seems to be the most effective. Or consider elevating your beehives at least two meters, or placing them within a strongly-built railway tie structure.
- Don't set up beehives in early spring when other bear foods are scarce.

Fencing garbage dumps:

The B.C. government encourages local governments to install electric bear-proof fencing at landfills. Before a landfill is fenced, garbage-conditioned bears are killed or translocated, so that they will not look for garbage from other nearby sources such as residential areas. To prevent any further bear problems, residents are informed about the proper handling of garbage and other bear attractants. It may seem cruel to destroy bears, but it breaks the cycle of garbage-conditioning, allowing future generations of bears to lead a natural life.

Public education and research:

More public information and education is needed to change public behaviour about dealing with garbage and other bear attractants. Government is also addressing other issues — studying the effectiveness of translocation, and considering garbage management options such as direct disposal of garbage from homes to bear-proof collection bins, incineration of garbage, and odor control at landfills.

Conserving Grizzly Bears:

Garbage-conditioning of any bear is a problem, but grizzlies are of particular concern. B.C.'s grizzlies are considered vulnerable, and some local populations are threatened. The provincial government's Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy includes support for better waste management practices, and improved public information and education. A Trust Fund has been created to support grizzly conservation efforts.

IF YOU SEE A BEAR IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- **Remain calm.** The bear is likely just passing through and, if it doesn't find food, will simply move on.
- **Keep away** from the bear, and warn others to stay away. Bring children and pets indoors.
- If the bear seems threatening or persistent, **call a conservation officer or the police.**
- One taste of garbage, and a bear can be hooked for life.

Black bears and grizzlies are naturally conditioned to remember easy sources of food. With their keen sense of smell, garbage may be easier to find than natural foods such as fish, berries, bugs, vegetation and wild meat. After one taste of trash from a backyard garbage can, a bear may forever associate residential areas with food.

Our carelessness is creating "problem bears".

Once bears become used to eating garbage and other un-natural foods, they tend to stay close to communities where they can find easy sources of food. While feeding on garbage, they end up eating sharp metal and glass, plastics, and other toxic materials. In their search for food, bears may roam freely through populated areas, damaging property, and even attacking pets or people. Because they pose a threat to local residents and their property, they often end up being destroyed to protect public safety.

Garbage-eating bears can be dangerous.

That's why Conservation Officers now have the authority to issue "Dangerous Wildlife Protection Orders" to owners or occupiers of land to have them contain, move or remove food, food waste, compost or garbage that may attract bears.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Bear problems:

Call Observe, Record and Report at 1-800-663-9453
or contact a conservation officer or the police.

Bear safety in the wild:

Contact [Government Publication Services](#)
563 Superior Street
Victoria, BC V8W 9V7

for Safety Guide to Bears in the Wild, or the Bear Aware video.

Waste management and bear-proof fencing:

Enforcement

Grizzly Bear Conservation Strategy and Grizzly Bear Trust Fund:

Biodiversity Branch