

People and Bears Can Live Together

It's our personal responsibility!

BC is Bear Country. As communities continue to develop and encroach on wildlife habitat, the need for us to protect our bears increases.

Whether you're hiking a backcountry trail or strolling through the neighbourhood, you may encounter a bear. Bears may be active from mid-March to November. Their constant search for new food sources may draw them into urban areas and into your backyard.

People and bears can live in harmony. Communities can be *porous* to bear activity, so that bears can pass through, but are not tempted to stop and get into trouble with people and their non-natural attractants.

Be 'bear smart' and follow these few, simple guidelines to ensure any encounters with bears are positive and free from conflict.

Bear Safety at Home

Respect bears! If you see a bear in a residential area: Act responsibly!

- *Remain Calm*
Often the bear is just passing through, and if it finds no food source, will simply move on.
- *Keep Well Away*
Do not crowd the bear – give it plenty of space. Warn others to be respectful; bring small children and pets in the house.
- *Let the bear know it is not welcome in your backyard*
Do not allow the bear to feel

comfortable. Make lots of noise and make your presence known to let the bear know it is in human territory. Ensure the bear has a safe avenue of escape/exit. After the bear has left the area, remove any non-natural foods that attracted the bear.

- *When to call for help*
If the bear appears to be threatening human safety, pets or destroying property – call the police or Conservation Officer Service at 1-800-663-WILD (9453). Ask them to use non-lethal alternatives (see next page).

Managing Backyard Attractants:

Bears are often attracted to residential neighbourhoods by food odours. Once a bear has located a good food source, it has the ability to remember that location and return. This can initiate a process of conditioning. Bears in pursuit of an easy meal may damage property, or in rare cases, cause injury to people. It is important for everyone living in bear country to follow precautions. Encourage your neighbours to participate, as well.

Wildlife managers called to deal with 'problem' bears may try using non-lethal tactics or relocating the bear. If these methods fail, however, the bear is usually destroyed.

You can prevent the unnecessary destruction of bears by following these simple guidelines:

Dispose of garbage properly

- Dispose of household garbage in bear-proof containers or store indoors until it can be properly disposed of.

- Keep garbage securely inside prior to disposal.

Bear-proof your property:

- Keep doors and windows closed and locked. Food smells can lure hungry bears inside your home.
- Do not store food of any kind outside, even if it is inside a locked refrigerator or freezer.
- Don't leave trash, groceries, animal feed, coolers, or any odorous item in your vehicle. Bears can easily pry open car/truck windows and doors to access the food inside.
- Do not use any type of birdfeeder during bear season. Store all birdseed securely indoors, until bears are hibernating.
- If you don't want bears in your yard, it's best not to have any fruit-bearing trees/bushes or gardens on our property. Harvest fruits and vegetables as they ripen. Remove fallen fruit from the ground below the tree. Keep your lawn mowed and free of weeds, especially dandelions and clover.
- Burn your barbecues clean immediately after use, wash and store them covered out of the wind – preferably indoors.
- Feed your pets inside and store their food inside. Don't leave dog bones lying around your yard.
- Keep your compost clean. Use the community composting system.
- Use electric fencing to protect orchards and livestock.

***The best way to avoid conflict
is to prevent it!***

Become a Bear Smart residence:

Proper management of garbage and other non-natural attractants is key to reducing human-bear conflict situations.

***We want YOU to be part of the solution.
Please do your part to help!***

Contact the Canadian Bear Alliance for a BEAR SMART household checklist or download one from our website. By filling out the checklist and abiding by the *bear smart* practices laid out, you will be recognized as being devoted to protecting our bear population. Upon receipt of your completed checklist you will be sent a "WE ARE BEAR SMART" sticker that you may proudly display at your home.

Non-lethal Bear Management

Non-lethal Bear Management uses negative conditioning to modify undesirable bear behaviour without destroying the animal. By using an arsenal of rubber bullets, pyrotechnics and pepper spray, bears are taught to stay away from people and non-natural food sources.

This approach requires a new way of thinking for humans. Using human dominance, and demonstrating a body posture and vocalizations that speak the language of the bear, officers command the bear's respect and reinstall its natural wariness for humans. By using a variety of non-lethal tools combined with aggressive 'alpha' male posturing, officers can send bears a clear message of who's boss.

When a human-bear conflict situation arises, non-lethal tactics provide an effective

management tool. It must be stressed that negative conditioning should aid, but not be a substitute for preventive measures that eliminate or reduce the potential for human-bear conflicts.

We must all do our part, so that people and bears can live in harmony!



**To learn more about living with bears
contact:** Canadian Bear Alliance
(604) 905-4209 or info@bearsmart.com.

Visit us online at www.bearsmart.com.

I would like to support the Canadian Bear Alliance in their educational efforts to keep both bears and people safe.

Please accept my donation of: \$15 \$25 \$50 \$ ____

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204-3300 Ptarmigan Place
Whistler, BC V0N 1B3



BEAR SMART B.C. Resident's Guide



*Prepared by the
Canadian Bear Alliance*