

Preventative Measures for Black Bears

Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources

Bureau of Wildlife, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation

"Good housekeeping" is a requirement in black bear country. Simple sanitation measures can be the key to preventing bears around houses and in camp areas. The following list contains techniques that we recommend to prevent attracting bears.

1. Discontinue the practice of feeding suet and/or bird seed to birds for the entire summer. Bird feed is a very strong attraction even if they can't reach it.
2. Do not leave garbage outside of houses or garages. (Grease, fat, bacon and other meats are extremely attractive to bears. These items should be disposed of in sealed containers.)

Note: Burning makes garbage more attractive.

3. Clean garbage cans and other refuse containers frequently with ammonia, bleach or Lysol.
4. Place camphor disks (available from some drug stores) in garbage cans to mask food odors. Other items may work as well, e.g. mothballs, air fresheners, Lysol and ammonia-soaked rags.
5. Use plastic bags inside garbage cans to help hide odors.
6. Store garbage cans in a secure place such as a garage, rather than storing them on a porch.
7. Empty garbage dumpsters at camping areas after dinner to decrease the chance of attracting bears. Construction of a garbage storage facility may be necessary when dump facilities are not open daily.
8. Remove the grease can from gas and charcoal grills after every use. Turn the grill on "High" for several minutes after you are done cooking.
9. Clean barbeque pits and grills thoroughly before leaving them outside. (We recommend using aluminum foil and cleaning these items with an ammonia cleaner.)
10. Do not place food outside to attract raccoons, squirrels or other wildlife.
11. Clean old refrigerators and other insulated containers that are left outside.

12. Turn off kitchen exhaust fans that vent to the outside when not in use. Make sure the vent screen is cleaned regularly.

13. Do not feed family pets outside. An empty dish can attract a bear.

14. Leave outdoor lights on, or a radio playing, all night.

15. Do not hand-feed bears from cars at campgrounds and dump sites.

Note: A bear is a wild animal and should be respected. We discourage feeding practices of all types.

16. Do not leave dirty diapers or diaper pails outside.

Remember: Bears are attracted by smells....With the exception of ammonia, Lysol, camphor and other strong smells, everything smells like potential bear food.

Remove the Food Attractant and You'll Remove the Bear.