

## Deterrents

**While** bears are not as dangerous as many people think, they can certainly cause problems, damage and even injuries if they get accustomed to obtaining food around homes or campsites. Some end up being killed as a result.

There are many ways to deter bears from hanging around. The idea is to make them feel uncomfortable enough that they don't want to return. Of course, **prevention** through elimination of attractants is the first step!

Be sure to vary your deterrent each time a bear returns; this works better than always using the same technique. Bears catch on quickly, get used to it, and soon ignore it.

Be assertive. Use direct eye contact and a take-charge attitude. You must become the "dominant" or "alpha" animal so that the bear will retreat and learn to avoid people and human-use areas. Make yourself appear larger by holding your arms or jacket over your head.

Stare at the bear, stamp your feet and yell at it to leave. Ensure that the bear has a clear route of escape.



A "rattlesnake can" is a soup can 1/4 filled with pebbles and taped shut. It makes an effective noisemaker. Shake it as you yell, and then, perhaps, throw it near the bear.

Whistles – a high pitched whistle works best. Also noise makers, rattles, air horns, a portable siren, or firecrackers.

Banging pots and pans – Bang the bottom of a pot with the lid or a spoon and yell at the bear.

## Deterrents, continued

Beach balls tossed at bears often scare them away. Also opening and closing an umbrella; shaking a tarp or garbage bag.

"Super Soaker" – high-powered squirt gun—add a little vinegar to the water (never ammonia).

Sprinklers or high-powered water hose nozzle – turn it on the bear if you find yourself outside when one comes into the yard.

A well-aimed stone (no larger than a golf ball) or other projectile can help drive your message home. Aim at the bear's rump, never at the bear's face.

Slingshot. Again, aim for the rump, not the face. Try a laser-sighted variety.

Barking dog – Most bears will run from a barking dog, but **don't** let yours off-leash to chase the bear, as serious injury could result. If you don't have a dog, try the radar-activated electronic watchdog "Rex Plus Barking Dog Alarm."

Setting off the car alarm from indoors works great.

Close and lock windows and doors (cars too) when bears are active--bears can easily open them, and once inside, they can wreak havoc!

Shine a bright flash light or use a hand-held marine flare. Install motion-triggered lights.



*"It's up to people to accept the fact that bears live in close proximity, and to educate themselves on the do's and don'ts of living with them." - Mike Sibio*

## Deterrents, continued

Ammonia or cider vinegar- soaked cloth in trash can or hung on doors and windows can deter bears. The smell of Lysol and PineSol also repels bears.

Bear Pepper Spray can be used to defend yourself from an attack; you must determine which way the wind is blowing so you don't get a face full. **Do not** use as a preventative on garbage cans, as the smell can actually attract bears.

"Unwelcome" mats – plywood board full of upward-pointing nails or screws (2" apart, projecting 3/4") placed in front of doors/windows.



Electrified mats – When stepped on, these mats give a non-lethal but painful shock.

"The Scarecrow" --Motion-detection sensor garden hose sprayer

Nuisance Bear Controller System, two 6-volt batteries, 10,000 – 13,000 volts when activated; @ \$300.

"Amtek Critter Gitter" – detects movement and then emits an ear-piercing sound and flashing lights.

Electric fence – will usually deter a bear from your compost, garden, bee hives, chicken coop, or orchard. Portable and solar units are available. Consult an expert.

**Suggested websites:** [www.bearsmart.com](http://www.bearsmart.com), [www.smarthome.com](http://www.smarthome.com), [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org), [www.margosupplies.com](http://www.margosupplies.com), [www.lwf.org](http://www.lwf.org), [www.macecanada.com](http://www.macecanada.com), [www.guarddog.net](http://www.guarddog.net), [www.curleyscrittercatchers.com](http://www.curleyscrittercatchers.com),

## Managing Attractants

*This is THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP in preventing problems with bears.*

Garbage – Never store waste outside unless using a bear-proof container or enclosure. Otherwise, store indoors or in a sturdy, locked building until time of pickup.

Double bag and freeze meat and fish wastes until day of pickup to minimize odors.

Grease – Don't discard grease in your yard. Double bag and place in trash.

Bird feeders – Avoid feeding birds when bears are active, hummingbird feeders included. Bears love birdseed and often destroy feeders to get to it. At the very least, make it bear-proof and use a seed tray. Bird baths are a good alternative.



Berry bushes – Bears eat berries by the gallon. If you don't want to attract bears to your yard, don't plant berry bushes.

Fruit trees and gardens – Harvest ripe and fallen fruit on a daily basis; consider having the trees taken down if this is not possible, or run an electric fence around your garden or orchard.

Compost – Don't throw meat and fish waste in your compost pile. Cover compost with leaves.

Pet food – It is best to feed your pets indoors. Otherwise, remove food bowls after each meal. Store food safely away from doors.

## Attractants, continued

Barbeque grills – Clean the BBQ and empty the grease can after each use. Spray with apple cider vinegar to deter bears. Store in sturdy shed.

Bee hives – Bears get protein from eating bee larvae, and the honey is an added bonus. Keep bears out of bee hives with an electric fence.

Don't leave trash, food, animal food, coolers or any odorous item in your vehicle. Bears can easily pry open vehicle windows and doors, even trunks, to access food. They can also cause a great deal of damage in the process.

Citronella products contain a compound that is very attractive to bears. Bears are also attracted to salt and mineral blocks.

Bears are naturally drawn to the smell of formic acid from ant colonies, and will bite into hot tub covers, refrigerator insulation, bicycle seats, etc. made with formaldehyde, which gives off formic acid.



B.E.A.R. is a task force of the Western N.C. Alliance, a 501(c)3 non-profit. Volunteers and donations make our work possible!

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# Bear Attractants and Deterrents



~ Bear Education 301 ~



Photo by Simon Thompson

Bear Education and Resources

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