



PEOPLE AND  
CARNIVORES

# At Home Bear Safety Toolkit



# LIVING IN BEAR COUNTRY



Living in the Northern Rockies means living, working, and recreating alongside wildlife, including bears. Taking precautions to ensure your property does not attract bears will keep you and your property safe, and wildlife wild.

## STASH YOUR TRASH

- Garbage and food odors attract bears. Store garbage in a secure, hard-sided building until trash pick-up time or until you dispose of it.
- Use bear-resistant containers to secure trash and ensure they are properly closed and locked. For trash pick-up service, please contact your trash collector to request a bear-resistant can or information on how to obtain one. If you do not have or want trash pick-up service, bear-resistant cans can be found at Ace Hardware, Lowe's, Home Depot Online, and other hardware stores. For a full list of bear-resistant products, check [igbconline.org](http://igbconline.org).
- If you compost, secure it with bear-resistant containers or electric fencing.



Bears can smell odors from up to 20 miles away!

## DON'T INVITE BEARS TO BBQS

- If you barbeque, clean your grills after each use and store them in a secure, hard-sided building. Make sure fire pits are cleared of food residue.

## BEARS LIKE PET FOOD TOO

- If you have pets or animals, keep their food in secure, hard-sided buildings. Avoid feeding pets outside or be sure to bring in food dishes at night, as even empty dishes can attract bears.

## KEEP BEARS AWAY FROM...

- Garbage
- Human and pet foods
- Birdseed
- Fruit trees
- Dirty grills
- Coolers
- Small livestock
- Anything with a food scent!

## ATTRACT BIRDS, NOT BEARS

- Bird food is also bear food! Bird feeders, including hummingbird feeders and suet, should be removed during bears' active season, March through November. Instead of using feeders, consider planting native trees, flowers, and bushes that provide birds with shelter and food.
- If you must keep bird feeders, protect them with electric fencing.
- Bird houses, nest boxes, and bird baths are other great ways to attract birds to your property.

## BEAR SAFE YOUR YARD

- If you have fruit trees, berry bushes, or a garden, secure them with permanent or temporary electric fencing. Pick up dropped fruit, or replace fruit trees with non-fruit bearing varieties.
- Chickens and bee boxes are an easy food source for bears. Permanent and temporary electric fencing can help protect them. Keep livestock or animal feed in bear-resistant containers or in a secure, hard-sided building.
- Install motion-censored lights around the home as these may discourage bears from staying in the area.

## BE BEAR-Y CAREFUL

- Never intentionally leave out food for bears. Bears easily become food conditioned and may associate residential areas with access to food. This can put you, your neighborhood, and bears at risk.
- If a bear is observed on your property and you are in a safe location to do so, make loud noises using a horn, pots and pans, a loud bell, or other item to scare the bear away. Never approach a bear.



## REPORT BEAR ACTIVITY

If you see a bear or evidence of bear activity, it doesn't necessarily mean there is a problem—it may just be passing through the area. If a bear appears to be hanging around human areas or is causing concern, report it to your nearest wildlife management agency bear specialist.



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Various tools and methods can help prevent conflicts with bears, keeping people and property safe, and wildlife moving. For more information on conflict prevention solutions, visit **PeopleAndCarnivores.org**.



Living in **BEAR COUNTRY**

- ✓ Secure garbage
- ✓ Keep pet food inside
- ✓ Remove bird feeders when bears are active
- ✓ Clean and store grills
- ✓ Store items with odors



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# Keep Bears Out of Garbage and Waste

*Things we throw away can be food to a bear, including solid and liquid waste, recycling, and compost. Bears can smell food and trash from miles away, and if they get into them once, they're hooked. Secure these items for your safety, your neighbors' safety, and the bear's safety.*

## Garbage

Garbage is the most common source of human-bear conflict. Recycling waste can also attract bears due to food and drink residue in packaging.

To keep bears out of garbage and recycling, store it in a certified bear-resistant container or in a secure building at all times—doing both is ideal—until the day of disposal.

### **If you use a trash hauling service:**

Contact your trash hauler directly to request a bear-resistant canister or information on how to obtain one. These cans may come with a small additional service fee. Do not buy your own can without first talking with your trash hauler, as they may require using their cans.

### **If you haul your trash to a dump or transfer station:**

Buy a certified bear-resistant canister. Look for cans sold as bear-resistant from the brands Toter (in 64 and 96 gallon cans) or Kodiak (in 65 and 95 gallon cans). You can buy these products at some hardware stores, including Home Depot, Lowe's, and Ace Hardware. If they are not available in-store, they can often be purchased online. Kodiak cans are also sold online by Bearicuda as the "Stealth 2" can.

Kodiak and Toter cans are certified "bear-resistant" by the Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC), meaning they've met specific criteria and passed a live bear test using captive grizzlies. To check if a product is actually bear-resistant or to see the full array of bear-resistant products, visit: [IGBOnline.org/programs/bear-resistant-products](http://IGBOnline.org/programs/bear-resistant-products).

### **No matter how your trash gets to the dump:**

- Don't overfill your can.
- Make sure the lid is closed and locked.
- Keep your garbage inside a hard-sided, secure building, even if you have a bear-resistant can, until the day of disposal.



*Toter can*



*Kodiak can*



*A grizzly bear tests a trash can for strength*

## Recycling

Recycling waste attracts bears just like garbage does because of food and drink residue left in packaging. There is no specific certified bear-resistant container for home recycling. Many people use a second bear-resistant trash can or simply keep recycling inside until disposal.

## Compost

Food smells from compost attract bears. If you compost outside, surround compost piles or containers with an electric fence. You may also choose to use a bear-resistant container. There are no IGBC certified bear-resistant composters, but some brands hold up to bears better than others, like the Good Ideas brand Compost Wizard Dueling Tumbler, available online.



*The Wizard composter's round shape helps to keep bears out*



*This certified bear-resistant Toter garbage can is being used to store compost that hasn't yet broken down*

Beyond securing your compost, decrease the smell with these tips:

- When adding new food scraps, mix them in to the pile instead of leaving them on top.
- Avoid adding meat, bones, dairy products, fatty items, and unrinsed eggshells.
- Make sure you have a mix of ingredients to help compost break down more quickly and reduce odors. Combine “green” items (kitchen scraps, vegetables, small amounts of fruit) with at least double the amount of “brown” items (dead leaves, dry garden and grass clippings, wood chips, egg cartons, newspaper, cardboard).

Learn more about reducing compost odors at [bearwise.org/six-bearwise-basics/food-garbage](https://bearwise.org/six-bearwise-basics/food-garbage).

If you need financial assistance to purchase a bear-resistant garbage can for your property, People and Carnivores may be able to help. Email us at [info@peopleandcarnivores.org](mailto:info@peopleandcarnivores.org) to learn about our cost-share or garbage canister rebate programs.



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# Bear-Safe Property Checklist and Resources

Bears are curious animals that can smell odors miles away. Use this checklist to reduce bear attractants at your home.

## GARBAGE AND FOOD WASTE

**NO** **YES**

- Garbage is stored inside a secure building or in a bear-resistant trash canister.
- Trash is put out the morning of pick up—not the night before.
- Trash cans are not over-filled and are shut and locked properly.
- Recycling is kept inside or in a bear-resistant canister until disposal.
- Compost is kept inside, in a bear-resistant compost container, or fenced.

## PETS AND ANIMALS

**NO** **YES**

- Pets are fed inside, and food is kept inside or in a bear-resistant container.
- Chickens and bee boxes are secured with electric fencing.
- Food is not left out for strays or other animals.

## HOMES AND OUTBUILDINGS

**NO** **YES**

- Doors to buildings are kept closed when people are not around.
- Windows are closed when people are not home or away overnight.
- Pet doors are locked at night.

## FOOD AND GRILLS

**NO** **YES**

- Food is not left unattended outdoors.
- Freezers and refrigerators are kept inside.
- Grills, smokers, and ovens are stored inside when not in use; if not possible, they are cleaned and covered.
- Fire pits are cleaned and do not contain trash or food scraps.
- Coolers are stored inside.

## YARD AND GARDEN

**NO** **YES**

- Veggie, fruit, and herb gardens are secured with electric fencing.
- Fruit trees are gleaned and fallen fruit is picked up.
- Bird feeders are not used or are removed March through November.
- No food, trash, or anything with an odor is left outside, including in vehicles.

Tips and resources  
on reverse side



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[info@PeopleAndCarnivores.org](mailto:info@PeopleAndCarnivores.org)

# TIPS and RESOURCES

## to help you make your property bear-safe

**Making your home bear-safe can seem like a lot of effort, but every action can help deter a bear from being drawn to your property. Bear-safe is people-safe!**

To keep bears out of garbage and recycling, store it in a bear-resistant container or in a secure building at all times—doing both is ideal—until the day of disposal.



A grizzly bear tests a trash can.

**If you use a trash hauling service:** Contact your trash hauler directly to request a bear-resistant canister.

**If you haul your trash to a dump or transfer station:** Buy a certified bear-resistant canister. The Interagency Grizzly Bear Committee (IGBC) certifies bear-resistant products. To see the list of products, visit <https://igbconline.org/programs/bear-resistant-products/>. We recommend Toter or Kodiak cans. You can buy either or both products at some hardware stores, including Home Depot, Lowe's, and Ace Hardware.



The Wizard composter is at left.

**If you recycle:** There is no specific certified bear-resistant container for home recycling; some people use a second bear-resistant trash can or simply keep recycling inside until disposal.

**If you compost:** If you compost outside, surround it with an electric fence. You could also use a bear-resistant container. There are no certified bear-resistant composters, but some brands hold up better than others, like the Good Ideas brand Compost Wizard Dueling Tumbler, available online. Learn more about reducing compost odors at [bearwise.org/six-bearwise-basics/food-garbage](http://bearwise.org/six-bearwise-basics/food-garbage).



Many things we enjoy in our yards draw bears in, like gardens, bird feeders, and fruit trees. Glean fruit as often as possible, fence gardens if possible, and remove bird feeders except in winter. Instead of bird feeders, try bird baths or nest boxes to attract birds instead of bears!



Electric fencing can be simple and effective for smaller areas, as seen around these bee boxes.

## Still need help?

Contact People and Carnivores for ideas, or to see what equipment rebates are available. Email us at: [info@PeopleAndCarnivores.org](mailto:info@PeopleAndCarnivores.org)





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