

# GardenSmart

## composting with care in bear country

On-site backyard composting is the most effective and environmentally-friendly way to manage the organic 'waste' your home produces. Your compost will not be a bear attractant if it is maintained correctly and other attractants are managed responsibly.

**Did you know...** Bears require up to 20,000 calories per day before hibernation. That's equivalent to 40 hamburgers and 40 ice cream sundaes! Once they find an easy food source they will keep returning to it. Don't let them discover food at your home!

### STEP 1 Be Unattractive

Ensure that your yard does not provide easy, unnatural food sources for bears.

#### Bear attractants include:

- odorous garbage
- unwashed recycling
- fruit-bearing plants
- bird feeders
- dirty barbecues
- accessible pet food
- poorly-maintained compost

**It's good to know...** Only 2% of bear sightings in 2010 involved a compost bin. Over 85% of bear sightings involved garbage or fruit. **It's up to you** to keep your property free of bear attractants and help keep black bears wild and in the forest.



Photo courtesy Michael Allen

STEP

2

### Work Together

Collaborate with your neighbours to ensure that your immediate neighbourhood follows all the preventative measures to reduce human-bear conflicts.

STEP

3

### Go Big on Brown

Maintain a healthy compost bin to prevent odours that can attract bears. The key to a healthy compost bin is equal proportions of **brown** materials and **green** materials. The bacteria that do the majority of work in your compost bin require nitrogen-rich **greens** and an equal or greater volume of carbon-rich **browns** (carbon-rich material) in order to create healthy, odourless compost.

**Browns** should be added with every single addition of kitchen scraps, covering the scraps completely in layers no more than 4 inches thick. You will need to collect **browns** (fallen leaves) in the autumn to have enough to last the year, or use other materials listed on the reverse.



STEP

5

### Bury Fruit

Large volumes of fruits or other particularly odorous **greens** should be composted in the following manner to make their odours undetectable to bears: dig a hole in the compost and bury under at least 12" of soil.

**Make it a habit...**  
Put your garbage out only in the morning on your collection day. Don't encourage bears to scavenge while you sleep.



**Did you know...** low quality household paper products, such as tissue paper, egg cartons, paper towels, paper bags and cardboard rolls, are a great source of browns for your compost bin!

### Add Oxygen

Frequent aerating is necessary to encourage the oxygen-loving aerobic bacteria in your bin, especially at the compressed bottom of your heap. Lack of oxygen can result in an anaerobic, smelly compost bin, which is not acceptable in bear country. Aeration is best done with a "Wingdigger"-type tool or a strong straight stick. Poke holes all the way down at least every couple of weeks, always finishing off by covering with more **browns**.

### GardenSmart Tip:

A simple electric fence can be used to keep bears away from fruit trees, vegetable gardens and beehives.

## What to Compost:

### Greens ✓

Fresh grass clippings  
Plant trimmings  
Fruit and vegetable scraps  
Coffee grounds  
Tea bags  
Human hair  
Animal fur  
Manure

### Browns ✓

Fallen leaves  
Sawdust  
Straw  
Newspaper (torn into 1" strips and crumpled)  
Tissue paper or kraft brown paper  
Paper towels or napkins  
Cardboard (toilet paper rolls, egg cartons, corrugated cardboard torn into small pieces)  
Coffee filters  
Dried grass clippings

### Other Acceptable Materials ✓

Rinsed and pulverized eggshells  
Small amounts of fireplace ash  
Floor sweepings  
Dryer lint

### Unacceptable in Bear Country ✗

Meat  
Fish  
Bones  
Grains, rice or pasta  
Dairy  
Grease or oil  
Charcoal briquettes  
Dog or cat feces and kitty litter (for health, not bear reasons)