

# Reducing Human-Bear Conflicts

In New York State, people and black bears often find themselves living nearby one another. Bears are intelligent and opportunist animals that will find and consume whatever food they can access most easily. Not all bears are problem bears but available human food sources can quickly turn them into one. Most conflict scenarios in New York can be resolved or minimized by removing or adequately securing whatever served to attract the bear.

**Good housekeeping** is a requirement wherever black bears are found. Frequently, humans unknowingly create potential food sources for bears that may attract them into close proximity to residential areas and subsequently results in human-bear conflicts. Simple sanitation measures can be the key to avoid attracting bears. Take responsibility with these guidelines for your safety and encourage your neighbors to do the same!

- **Remove all bird feeders after April 1<sup>st</sup>.** New York’s black bears begin emerging from their winter dens in mid to late March. Bird seed and suet is a strong bear attractant, even if they can’t reach it!
- **Garbage is extremely attractive to bears!** It should always be kept in sealed garbage cans inside a sturdy building like a garage or a shed. If you frequently find bears foraging in your garbage cans, despite proper storage, consider using a bear-resistant trash container or securing your trash lids with ratchet straps. Note: Bungee cords DO NOT work.
- **Mask garbage odors** with ammonia-soaked rags.
- **If you have curbside garbage pickup-** take out trash just before your scheduled pickup. Do not put garbage at the curb the night before.
- **Do not** place meat or bones in compost piles.
- **Remove the grease can from grills after every use.** Turn the grill on “High” for several minutes after you are done cooking to burn residual odors off the grill.
- **Do not place food outside to attract wildlife.** Any food stuff used to attract birds, squirrels or other wildlife will also attract bears.
- **Do not feed pets outside.** Leftover food or even an empty dish can attract a bear.
- **Do not operate refrigerators or freezers outside or on porches.** Bears can smell what is inside.
- **Electric fencing** is an effective tool for keeping bears out of apiaries, chicken coops, compost, and gardens.



*Bear resistant trash cans are used all over the country to eliminate human-bear conflicts*

## The Feeding of Black Bears is Prohibited in New York.

DEC has adopted a regulation prohibiting the deliberate and intentional feeding of black bears. The incidental, indirect feeding of black bears also is unlawful after a written warning has been issued.

For more information you can contact the DEC at (845) 256-3098

Or visit our website at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/>