

## Deterrents

**While** bears are not as dangerous as most 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 come back. 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.

Always ensure that the bear has a clear route of escape without people or obstacles in the way. If it has no way to escape, it may interpret your efforts to scare it away as an attack and will stand its ground in self-defense.

Be assertive. Use direct eye contact and a take-charge attitude. Make yourself appear large by holding your arms or your jacket over your head. Yell at the bear to GO AWAY!

A soup can 1/2 filled with pebbles and taped shut makes an effective noisemaker. Shake it vigorously as you yell, and then, perhaps, throw it near the bear. This is most effective in areas where bears may encounter rattlesnakes.

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

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

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

Setting off car alarms from indoors works great!

## Deterrents, continued

“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 directly at the bear's face.

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

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

Install motion-triggered lights.

Shine a bright flash light or a hand-held marine flare.

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

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



*“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

Bear Pepper Spray can be used to defend yourself from a bear; 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.

“Bear Be Gone” – resembles a garbage can, trains bears to stay away from garbage cans. The bear receives a shot of pepper spray in its face when it tries to take the bait inside.

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

**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. Both metal and plastic garbage cans with locking lids are available. 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, safe 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 fruit and gather fallen fruit on a daily basis; consider having the trees taken down if this is not possible. You may need to 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, take in their bowls immediately after each meal. Store pet food safely.

## Attractants, continued

Barbeque grills - Always clean the BBQ after each use and empty the grease can. Spray with apple cider vinegar to deter bears.

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.

Hot tub covers made with formaldehyde give off formic acid; 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. looking for ants.



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!

Donations may be made on-line at:  
[www.wnca.org](http://www.wnca.org)

**Mail donations to: "BEAR-WNCA"**  
**P.O. Box 1834**  
**Highlands, NC 28741**

*For more information or brochures*

# Bear Attractants and Deterrents



~ Bear Education 301 ~



Photo by Simon Thompson

Bear Education and Resources

With thanks to the Bear Smart Society and Ann Bryant, Lake Tahoe BEAR League