

Bear Coexistence PSA from Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has begun to receive reports of bears coming out of their dens as the weather warms. Now is the time to take these proactive steps to help prevent bears from looking for food in your yards and neighborhoods:

- **Take down your birdfeeder.** Between late March and December, birdfeeders should not be used. You can attract birds by planting bird-friendly native plants instead. Check out Audubon's Native Plants for Birds Program: <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>
- **Make your garbage inaccessible.** Store garbage in a secure structure and a bear proof container. Learn how to make your garbage can bear proof here: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/sites/fishandwildlife/files/documents/Learn%20More/Living%20with%20Wildlife/Living%20with%20Bears/bear-resistant-retrofit-polycart.pdf>
- **Dispose of garbage frequently.** If you have pick-up services, wait until the morning to put your garbage out.
- **Demand bear proof dumpsters for your community.** Your garbage hauler should be able to provide these.
- **Follow steps for composting in bear country.** Compost needs to be 3 parts brown materials to 1 part kitchen scraps, turned frequently, and kept in a sturdy tumbler or bin: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/node/260>
- **Use electric fencing to keep chickens and bees safe.** Fences need to be 4,000-6,000 volts, tested regularly and baited: <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/node/1996>
- **Clean your grill after every use.** For added effectiveness, keep your grill in a secure outbuilding between uses after cleaning.
- **Make bears feel uncomfortable in your yard.** Yell, bang pots and pans, or use other noise devices from inside your home. Never shoot a bear to scare it. Even BBs can seriously injure bears.
- **Please report your bear encounters to Vermont Fish & Wildlife.** These reports allow us to help you prevent future bear incidents. They also give us information to help all Vermonters better coexist with bears: <https://anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/WildlifeBearReport.aspx>

Following these steps can save bears' lives, and help protect you, your neighbors, and your property. Please do your part to be a good neighbor and help keep Vermont's bears wild! If you have questions, contact the Vermont Fish and Wildlife department at 802-828-1000, or fwinformation@vermont.gov.