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 barbeques
- 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.

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!

STEP 4 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.

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.

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)

1000/03.2011

GardenSmart Resources

Donate Surplus Fruit to:
Bear Aware
604.815.5066
mtoom@squamish.ca

or

Squamish Fruit Tree Project
krystletenbrink@gmail.com
604.562.0446

Published by
District of Squamish
604.815-5066
bearaware.bc.ca

RAPP
Report All Poachers and Polluters
Conservation Officer 24 Hour Hotline
1-877-952-RAPP (7277)
(cell #7277)
British Columbia rapp.bc.ca Conservation Officer Service

Bear aware

GardenSmart

SQUAMISH™
OUTDOOR RECREATION CAPITAL OF CANADA