

The Bear Facts



One of the things that makes Anmore so special is our natural environment. This includes the wildlife that live here. Our bears are particularly vulnerable. There are things we can do to make Anmore safe, for us and our bears.

BC boasts one of the highest populations of black bears in the world with their numbers being somewhere between 120 and 150 thousand animals. Conflicts develop when bears start using the community as a foraging area for human-provided foods. Bears that start using human-

provided foods can become food-conditioned. Once a bear starts equating humans with food, they can lose their natural wariness and become “habituated”. A habituated bear tolerates humans in much closer proximity than what is safe for both bears and humans. This increases the potential for a dangerous interaction between the bears and us. When bears become habituated the sad reality is that they are often killed in order to protect the public, hence the saying “a fed bear is a dead bear”. We are all responsible for keeping our bears from becoming habituated. It is an offence under the BC *Wildlife Act* to leave an attractant out which could (a) attract dangerous wildlife to the land or premises, and (b) be accessible to dangerous wildlife [see *Wildlife Act* section 33.1(2)

http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/00_96488_01#section2].

Bears have a sense of smell far greater than that of dogs and can locate food at great distances. Ways to keep our Village safe for ourselves and our bears include:

Garbage, food scraps and recyclables

- Keep garbage and food scraps (green cart material) in a secure building (e.g. basement, garage, secure enclosure) until collection day - never put them out the night before. Our garbage and green carts are wildlife-resistant, not wildlife-proof. Leaving garbage and food scraps carts outside in an unsecured area, even if the lids are locked, is not adequate. Wildlife, bears in particular, will be attracted to them and will get into the carts, or at least damage them. Our tax dollars are currently being used to replace or repair wildlife damaged carts (sometimes repeatedly for the same residents) that are left outside in an unsecured area. This leads to habituated (i.e. dangerous) bears, unnecessary expense to taxpayers, and a big mess.
- If you cannot store garbage and food scraps securely, freeze smelly items and add to the bin only on the morning of collection. Paper bags or wax-coated cardboard containers (e.g. non-plastic milk or cream containers) are great containers to freeze food scraps in because they are compostable and can go in your green cart.
- Wash all recycling items and keep the bins and carts clean.

Fruit trees and berry bushes

- Pick fruit and allow it to ripen indoors or pick berries and fruit daily as it ripens. Do not allow windfall to accumulate on the ground.

Fruit trees and berry bushes - continued

- If you do not want the fruit, prune the tree vigorously to prevent blossoms or spray spring blossoms with a garden hose to knock them off.
- Consider using electric fencing to protect your fruit trees and berry bushes.
- If you no longer want to manage your tree or berry bushes, consider replacement with a native, non-fruit bearing variety.

Bird feeders

- Birdseed is high in calories and very attractive to bears. A kilogram of sunflower seeds has approximately 8,000 calories – about 20 times the caloric reward a bear would get from grazing the same weight of wild clover.
- Use bird feeders only in the winter when bears are hibernating and natural bird food is limited.

Compost

- The key to great compost is ensuring equal amounts of brown and green materials.
- Layer your greens (e.g. vegetable bits, fresh grass) with browns (e.g. dried leaves and grasses, shredded newspaper, cardboard).
- Do not add fish, meat, fat, oils, un-rinsed eggshells, cereals, grains or any cooked food – these can be recycled in your green cart.
- Add oxygen by turning regularly.
- Avoid overloading the compost in fruit season – freeze material and add gradually.

Pets and pet food

- Feed pets indoors.
- Store pet food in a secure location.

Barbeques

- Clean barbeques after use by burning off the grill entirely.
- Remove and clean the grease trap after every use.
- Cover and/or store indoors (do not take propane tanks indoors).

Even more ways to prevent bears from gaining access to human food

- Store freezers indoors.
- Never leave a cooler outside unless it has been thoroughly cleaned.
- Store petroleum products in a secure enclosure.
- Vegetable gardens may become an attractant if a bear has already gained other food rewards on your property. Consider electric fencing.
- Protect beehives with electric fencing.

Thanks to all the residents who are already “Bear Smart”. Let’s all do our part to make Anmore safe for us and our bears.

Reference: WildSafe BC <https://wildsafebc.com/black-bear/>

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