

Is Your Yard Wildlife-Safe?

We are so lucky to share our communities with a wide variety of wildlife! While we want to attract some wildlife to our yards like bees, butterflies and birds, there are definitely some we would prefer to stay at a safe distance. Wildlife that becomes too used to people is not good for animals or people.

Materials: Checklist, pencil and clipboard or hardcover book to write on

Directions: In this activity, we look around us in our own environments to check that our spaces are not tempting wildlife like bears to come in looking for food. Use the checklist to do an audit of your yard or surroundings. Then see if you can find all of the things in the colouring sheet that would attract bears or other wildlife. Put an "X" beside them, and colour the sheet.

Why does it matter so much?

Having wildlife-safe yards is about keeping everybody safe, including the animals! It might seem cool to see bears, coyotes, or other wildlife in your space, but wild animals who get too used to being around people and eating food that comes from humans can be very dangerous. The animals come to depend on eating garbage or human food and keep coming back. It is hard to relocate those animals. It is better for wildlife to STAY WILD!

Wildlife attractants

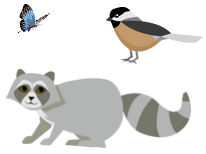
Attractants are things that smell or taste good to wildlife, that brings them into areas they would not normally go, like yards, parks, or campgrounds.

Could include:

- pet food left outside
- garbage not properly secured
- compost piles
- coolers with food
- birdfeeders
- gardens
- dirty BBQs
- fallen fruit
- berry bushes

Dive Deeper

Want to learn more about bear safety? WildSafeBC has some great resources on staying safe in our beautiful wild spaces.



Wildlife-safe checklist

Use this checklist to investigate your yard!
Make a checkmark for each wildlife-safe practice you find.

Garbage - smells yummy to all wildlife

- Garbage put out early in the morning (in urban areas wildlife is most active at night)
- Stored in secure, closed containers preferably inside a shed or garage
- No litter left around your yard or sidewalk

Birdfeeders - bears LOVE high-calorie birdseed

- Birdfeeders taken down in spring when bears are out
- If you still feed the birds, make sure feeders are high and the ground is cleaned up

Fruit trees and gardens

- Grass mowed regularly - long grass with dandelions and clover is delicious to bears
- Ripe fruit picked off trees and ground
- Ripe vegetables and fruit picked from garden

Compost

- Compost bin located in the open (less inviting to bears!)
- Compost doesn't smell (pile is well-aerated and composting only vegetable waste, not meat or dairy)

Pets and pet food

- Pets fed indoors only and food stored indoors

Barbecue

- Grease can has been removed and stored indoors
- Cleaned after use



What is wrong with this picture?
Can you find at least seven things that might attract bears to this yard?