

## **Prevent conflicts with Bears with these Spring tips**

With bears emerging from hibernation in the coming weeks, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources reminds homeowners to check their property for food sources that could attract bears.

“Please take the time now to remove or secure anything that could attract a bear,” said Eric Nelson, DNR wildlife damage program supervisor. “Prevention is key. Once a bear finds a food source, it will likely return again.”

As bears emerge from hibernation, their metabolism gradually ramps up and they will begin looking for food at a time when berries and green vegetation are scarce. Home and cabin owners should remove or secure attractants such as birdseed, garbage, livestock feed, or compost to reduce potential conflicts.

Avoid bear conflicts by following these tips:

### **Around the yard**

- Any time you feed birds, you risk attracting bears. Avoid feeding birds from April 1 to Nov. 15. If you still wish to feed birds, hang birdfeeders 10 feet up and 4 feet out from the nearest trees.
- Do not put out feed for wildlife (like corn, oats, pellets or molasses blocks).
- Do not leave food from barbeques and picnics outdoors, especially overnight. Standard coolers are not bear-proof. Clean and store barbeque grills in a secure shed or garage away from windows and doors after each use.
- Harvest garden produce as it matures, pick any fruit left on trees and collect any fallen fruit. Locate gardens away from forests and shrubs that bears may use for cover.
- Store pet food inside and feed pets inside. If pets must be fed outdoors, feed them only as much as they will eat.

### **Garbage**

- Store garbage in bear-resistant garbage cans or dumpsters. Standard rubber or plastic garbage cans are not bear-proof.
- Keep garbage inside a secure building until the morning of pickup.
- Properly rinse all recyclable containers with hot water to remove all remaining product.
- Store recyclable containers, such as pop cans, inside.

### **More bear information**

People should be cautious around bears and give them space. If bear problems persist after cleaning up food sources, contact a DNR area wildlife office for advice. For the name of the local wildlife manager, contact the DNR Information Center at 651-296-6157 or 888-646-6367, or find [wildlife area office contact information](http://mndnr.gov/Areas/Wildlife) (mndnr.gov/Areas/Wildlife) on the DNR website.

For more information on how to coexist with bears visit the [DNR website](https://www.mndnr.gov/LivingWith_Wildlife/Bears) (mndnr.gov/LivingWith\_Wildlife/Bears) and [bearwise.org](https://www.bearwise.org).