

Beat the Bears to the Attractants!

[More work to be done to manage attractants to reduce Human-Bear conflicts]

PRINCE GEORGE, July 7, 2022— The Northern Bear Awareness Society (a non-profit that aims to reduce human-bear conflicts and create a Bear Smart city) urges the residents of Prince George to do more to manage bear attractants to reduce the number and frequency of human-bear conflicts.

We live in bear country so it is not a bad thing to see bears in our neighbourhoods. The big problems arise when bears have access to attractants such as garbage bins, bird feeders, and fruit trees, which will quickly attract a bear's attention. If bears don't have access to easy food sources they will move on to more natural foods.

Over the years residents have improved the management of their attractants, but more work needs to be done. Many people wait until there is a problem before they begin to properly manage their yards and garbage disposal, but we ask citizens of Prince George: why invite the problem, why invite bears into our community? Just because a bear hasn't got into your unsecured garbage, birdseed, or fruit trees, doesn't mean it won't happen.

Bears are intelligent animals that are highly motivated by food. Our garbage and bird seed offer high calories at low energy expenditure and bears will take advantage of that opportunity. An average of 33 bears are killed in the Prince George area each year - 231 total since 2015 and the highest in BC (The Fur-Bearers, 2022), because they become food conditioned and habituated to people, creating a public health risk. If we don't constantly manage all of our attractants, we cannot break this cycle and more bears will be killed.

The Northern Bear Awareness Society is asking residents to get serious about managing attractants. We know what causes "problem" bear behaviour, and we ask that you take down bird feeders during bear season and store your garbage indoors, in a bear-resistant location, or at a minimum secure the lid with a ratchet strap. Please be proactive - don't wait until a bear comes looking for food in your neighbourhood.

Visit our website (www.NorthernBearAwareness.com) for tips on how to better manage attractants. Email or call us with any questions. Together we can become a Bear Smart city!