



Be a Good Neighbor – Be BEAR Aware

As part of a public-education effort, the NJ Department of Environmental Protection prepared the following information to help residents learn more about living safely near black bears. Each municipality has been asked to help DEP distribute this public safety message.

“New Jersey is home to all kinds of beautiful wildlife, including black bears. Black Bears are getting a lot of attention these days, for the wrong reasons. They are venturing too close to homes and into backyards, looking for food. Bears that look for food near your home or in your yard likely have learned bad habits from people who feed them intentionally, or unintentionally by carelessly leaving out food or garbage.

People who feed bears think they’re helping them. It only invites trouble. It can make them a nuisance or even aggressive. When that happens, the bears must be destroyed to protect your family and neighbors. It’s illegal to feed bears in New Jersey. Anyone who feeds bears could face a penalty of up to \$1,000 for each offense.

Here’s what you can do to *Be A Good Neighbor – Be BEAR Aware*:

- . Use bear-resistant garbage containers, if possible. Otherwise store all garbage in containers with tight fitting lids and place them along the inside walls of your garage, or in the basement, a sturdy shed or other secure area.
- . Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before..
- . Wash garbage containers with disinfectant solution at least once a week to remove odors. Draping rags soaked in bleach over your garbage bags also helps to eliminate odors.
- . Clean outdoor grills thoroughly after each use. Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.
- . Avoid feeding birds, especially if you live in an area frequented by bears. If you choose to feed birds, do so during daylight hours only, between December 1 and April 1, when bears are least active.
- . Report black bear damage, nuisance behavior or aggressive bears to your local police department or the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fish and Wildlife at (908) 735-8793. During evenings and weekends, call (877) 927-6337.