GardenSmart
composting with care in bear country

On-site backyard composting is the most effective and environmentally-friendly way to manage the organic waste from your home products. Your compost will not be a bear attractant if it is maintained correctly and other attractants are managed responsibly.

Did you know... Bears require up to 20,000 calories per day before hibernation. That's equivalent to 40 hamburgers and 40 ice cream sundaes! Once they find an easy food source they will keep returning to it. Don't let them discover food at your home!

Work Together
Collaborate with your neighbours to ensure that your immediate neighbourhood follows all the preventative measures to reduce human-bear conflicts.

Go Big on Brown
Maintain a healthy compost bin to prevent odours that can attract bears. The key to a healthy compost bin is equal proportions of brown materials and green materials. The bacteria that do the majority of work in your compost bin require nitrogen-rich greens and equal or greater volume of carbon-rich browns (carbon-rich material) in order to create healthy, odourless compost.

Be Unattractive
Ensure that your yard does not provide easy, unnatural food sources for bears.

Bear attractants include:
- odorous garbage
- unashed recycling
- fruit-bearing plants
- piled grass clippings
- bird feeders
- dirty barbecues
- accessible pet food
- poorly-maintained compost

Browns should be added with every single addition of kitchen scraps, covering the scraps completely in layers no more than 4 inches thick. You will need to collect browns (fallen leaves) in the autumn to have enough to last the year, or use other materials listed on the reverse.

Did you know... low quality household paper products, such as tissue paper, egg cartons, paper towels, paper bags and cardboard rolls, are a great source of browns for your compost bin!

Add Oxygen
Frequent aeration is necessary in order to encourage the oxygen-loving aerobic bacteria in your bin, especially at the compressed bottom of your heap. Lack of oxygen can result in an anaerobic, smelly compost bin, which is not acceptable in bear country. Aeration is best done with a “Wingdigger” type tool or a strong straight stick. Poke holes all the way down at least every couple of weeks, always finishing off by covering with more browns.

Bury Fruit
Large volumes of fruits or other particularly odorous greens should be composted in the following manner to make their odours undetectable to bears: dig a hole or trench in the garden and bury organics under at least 12” of soil.

It's good to know... Only 2% of bear sightings in 2008 involved a compost bin. Over 90% of bear sightings involved garbage or fruit. It's up to you to keep your property free of bear attractants and help keep black bears wild and in the forest.

This brochure was modified from www.NorthShoreBears.com website - North Shore Black Bears, Vancouver BC