

## **Bear Facts**

Parsippany is “bear country” and black bears are preparing for winter and are now actively foraging for food as they prepare for the denning season.

This means that bears need to consume large amounts of food in the fall. Feeding bears either deliberately or unintentionally by carelessly leaving out food or garbage can have serious consequences. Bears that learn to associate food with people readily become a nuisance and are more likely to damage property or exhibit aggression, which may lead to the bear’s destruction in order to protect the public. Reducing conflicts with bears is a community effort. It only takes several households with unsecured food to create a nuisance bear that could affect an entire neighborhood.

### **“Bear-proof” your yard**

- Storing garbage in an airtight container in a secure area is the best method for prevention of nuisance problems. Garbage cans should be stored inside the home or in a shed until the morning of pick up or be equipped with bear-proof lids.
- Wash garbage containers at least once a week with a disinfectant solution to remove any odors.
- The outside feeding of dogs and cats should be done during daylight hours. All uneaten food scraps, as well as the food bowl, should be removed immediately after feeding.
- Birdfeeders should be suspended from a free hanging wire so that the bottom of the bird feeder is at least 10’ off the ground. Feed birds only from January 1 to April 1, when bears are least active.
- Clean up spilled seeds and shells daily.
- Do not place meat or sweet food scraps in compost piles.
- Feed outdoor pets during daylight hours only. Immediately remove all food scraps and bowls after feeding.
- Clean outdoor grills thoroughly after each use. Grease and food residue can attract bears.
- Never feed a black bear. It is dangerous and against the law.

### **If a bear enters your yard**

- Remain calm. Make the bear aware of your presence.
- Never feed the bear.
- Keep at least 15 feet away from the bear.
- Make sure the bear has an escape route.
- Yell, bang pots and pans or use an airhorn to scare the bear away.
- Note that the bear may utter a series of huffs, snap its jaw and swat the ground. These are all warning signs that you are too close. Slowly back away.
- If the bear will not leave, notify the police immediately.

Remember, use common sense in a bear encounter – never approach the animal!

- If a bear stands on its hind legs or moves closer it may be trying to get a better view or detect smells in the air. Make your presence known by clapping, talking or waving your arms.

- Black bears will sometimes “bluff charge” when cornered, threatened or attempting to steal food. Stand your ground, then slowly back away. Do not run from the bear.
- If you encounter a bear at close range, remain standing upright, avoid direct eye contact and slowly back away.

Black bears learn very quickly. Bears that associate food with people may become aggressive. This may lead to personal injury, property damage and the need to destroy problem animals. Please note that the mere presence of a black bear is not considered a problem, but if a bear is unyielding or aggressive, contact the Parsippany Police Department. Parsippany P.D. has “bear officers” who are trained to use a system of “Adverse Conditioning” and coercion to remove a bear from an area. Loud noises and tracking of the animal are used in an attempt to move the bear out of the vicinity of the public. If verbal conditioning and coercion does not work, then non-lethal rubber buck shot rounds may be discharged *only* if the surrounding area is clear and safe. The rounds are fired at the hindquarters of the bear and only cause minor discomfort. Lethal force is only a last resort if the Officer feels that he or the public is in imminent danger due to the bear’s aggression.

For more information on New Jersey’s black bears, visit the NJ Division of Fish and Game website at [www.njfishandwildlife.com](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com) and/or call 1-877-927-6337.

PARSIPPANY POLICE DEPARTMENT 973-263-4300

ALWAYS DIAL 9-1-1 IN AN EMERGENCY