



## **AVOID ATTRACTING BEARS!**



**Black bears are actively looking for food this time of year.**

**Prevent bear encounters by securing garbage and other attractants!**

As the air is getting crisp in late summer and fall, New Jersey's black bears begin their pre-winter preparations and enter a state of **hyperphagia**. What in the bear's world is that you might ask? It's when black bears eat huge amounts of food – **at least 20,000 calories a day!** – to pack on the pounds and build up fat reserves to sustain them during winter denning. **To reach this daily nutritional goal, a bear would have to eat 11.5 lbs of acorns, 69.4 lbs of wild cherries, or 46.5 lbs of eastern tent caterpillars.**

Acorns, beechnuts, and hickory nuts comprise much of a black bear's diet this time of year. However, unnatural foods like garbage, bird seed, and pet food can also make an easy meal for a bear. Bears that learn to find food near people may become nuisance bears that cause property damage, seek handouts from people or become dangerous.

### **Avoid attracting bears with unnatural foods by following these tips:**

- Never feed bears. It is illegal in New Jersey and can carry a penalty of up to \$1,000 for each offense.
- Store all garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids and place them in a secure location where bears are unlikely to see or smell them.

- Use certified bear-resistant garbage containers. They offer the best protection.
  - Wash garbage containers with a disinfectant solution at least once a week to remove odors.
  - Put out garbage on collection day, not the night before.
  - Empty and clean recyclables before storing them in a secure location.
  - Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost piles.
  - If you feed pets outside, do so during daylight hours only. Pick up any leftover food and remove bowls after they have finished.
  - Clean outdoor grills and utensils thoroughly after each use. Dispose of grease properly.
  - Only use bird feeders during daylight hours between December 1st and April 1st. Suspend feeders from a free-hanging wire at least 10 ft off the ground and 10 ft from other branches. Bring feeder indoors at night. Clean up spilled seeds and shells.
  - Pick up fruit that falls from fruit trees daily and discard it in secured garbage containers.
  - Consider installing electric fencing to protect crops, beehives, and small livestock.
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**Report black bear damage or aggressive bears to your local police department or to NJ Fish & Wildlife by calling 1 (877) WARN DEP (1-877-927-6337).**

**For all of New Jersey's Bear Resources including Bear Safety Tips, Preventing Bear Damage and Bear Basics go to our [Know the Bear Facts](#) webpage.**