



# VILLAGE OF BELCARRA

*"Between Forest and Sea"*

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## Bears in Belcarra

All bears are wild, intelligent creatures. If you see a bear in the wild, always remember that you are in its territory, and act accordingly. If you see a bear in your backyard, remember that it is in your territory, and do what you can to discourage it or scare it off.

### Bears in Urban Areas

**Prevention is key.** Bears are attracted to food and garbage smells (e.g. fruit trees, bird feeders, garbage cans, barbecues and diaper pails). Remember that bears are very inquisitive and have a strong sense of smell. They will return to your home if attracted by new attractants. If bears do not find food, they will move on. You can prevent a bear from becoming a problem by keeping your yard free of food sources. More than 1,000 bears are destroyed each year in British Columbia because they are attracted to residential food sources.

### If you see a bear in a residential area:

- **Remain Calm.** Speak in a normal voice to let the bear know you are there. If the bear finds no food, it will often move on.
- **Give the bear lots of space.** Take your children and pets and go indoors. Give the bear a chance to get away.

### Bear Safety:

- Respect all bears — they all can be dangerous.
- Never approach a bear.
- Never attempt to feed a bear.
- Be defensive about bears. Anticipate and avoid encounters.
- Know what to do if you encounter a bear.
- Each bear encounter is unique. Never surprise a bear.

### The Bear Facts:

- Bears can run as fast as horses uphill or downhill.
- Bears can climb trees, although black bears are better tree-climbers than grizzly bears.
- Bears have excellent senses of smell and hearing, and better sight than many people believe.
- Bears are strong. They can tear cars apart looking for food.
- Every bear defends a "personal space". The extent of this space will vary with each bear and each situation; it may be a few meters of a few hundred meters. Intrusion into this space is considered a threat and may provoke an attack.
- Bears aggressively defend their food.
- All female bears defend their cubs. If a female with cubs is surprised at close range, or is separated from her cubs, she may attack.
- A female black bear's natural defence is to chase her cubs up a tree and defend them from the base. However, she is still dangerous and may become aggressive if provoked.

### Children should not:

- Play unsupervised in bear country.
- Approach bears.
- Pet, feed, or pose for a photo with bears, even if they appear tame.

## Managing Bear Attractants

**Garbage** — Points to remember:

- Store your garbage bins in an area inaccessible to bears (garage/basement/sturdy shed) or in a bear-proof container (wooden sheds or bin enclosures are easily damaged by bears).
- Clean your garbage bins on a regular basis with ammonia or vinegar.
- Double bag smelly garbage like diapers and, if necessary, freeze it until you take it to the dump.

**Fruit Trees** — Pick fruit from trees before it falls.

**Bird Feeders** — Take-down bird feeders during bear season; there is plenty of natural food for birds throughout the year and you can attract birds by providing a flower garden, bird bath, dusting site, or nesting boxes.

**Compost** — Add lime to your compost and do not put in:

- Meat and fish scraps
- Fruit or other sweet remains
- Cooked or seasoned food
- Unrinsed eggshells
- Coffee grinds

**Food left outside** — This includes pet food, outdoor fridges and freezers.

**Barbeques** — Remember to clean your barbecue after each use.

**Water** — This includes ponds, pools, and hot tubs (especially plastic covers).

**Bears require large ranges and should be allowed to live freely. Through understanding and knowledge, we can live with bears and share the beauty and wilderness of Belcarra.**

## If you encounter a bear, remember the four S's

- **S**tay calm
- **S**tand still
- **S**peak softly
- **S**lowly back away

## Home Bear Encounters Tips

- If you see a bear in your backyard, remember that it is in your territory so do what you can to safely discourage the bear and let it know who is boss.
- Give the bear lots of space, and go inside with your pets.
- If the bear is eating, let it finish.
- From a safe vantage point, shout loudly, bang pots, and wave your arms to let the bear know it is not welcome.
- When the bear has left, remove all attractants from yard (keep in mind that it may return once or twice to check for attractants).
- Let your neighbours know about the bear and tell them to remove attractants.
- Report your sighting to: 1-800-663-9453
- If you see a bear up a tree, give it some space by leaving the area or going inside if you are at home. A black bear will climb a tree because it is anxious and stressed. Let the bear come down in its own time (it may take until nightfall). Do not bring extra attention to the bear by calling over your neighbours.
- If you have a chance, when the bear is leaving and away from the tree, shout at it from the house or use noisemakers to reinforce that it is not welcome.

## Trail Bear Encounters Tips

- In the wilderness, you are in the bear's territory. This is its home, so give the bear the space it needs.
- Make sure the bear has a clear way to retreat.
- Once a bear has started to leave, continue to back away.
- Leave the area immediately but do not follow the bear.
- Report your sighting to: 1-800-663-9453