



## **BEARS ARE BACK!**

It's that time of year again when we are blessedly graced by the presence of our friend the Black Bear. They are cute and even look cuddly, but don't be fooled. These are wild animals and you actually do them great harm by feeding them and trying to make friends with them. In the words of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (see Reference section below) **"Fed Bears Become Dead Bears"**.

So, what is the best way for us to interact with bears, so that we can both enjoy the wonderful wooded landscape within which we live?

### **DO and DON'Ts:**

- ◆ Stop feeding birds, squirrels, chipmunks, and any other wildlife, and take down feeders by April 1st. Do not plan on feeding birds and putting up feeders again until November (**Feeding of birds, squirrels, and chipmunks is not accepted from April 1st through October 31st**)
- ◆ Use Bear-proof compost bins and do not add meats or sweets to a compost pile. Also, According to Vermont's Fish and Wildlife Department: "When composting, use three times as many browns as greens. This minimizes smells and speeds up the composting process. Browns include: dead leaves, grass clippings, wood chips, sawdust and low-quality household paper products that are shredded or cut up, like tissue paper, egg cartons, paper towels, junk mail, newspaper, paper bags, and cardboard rolls. Greens include: kitchen scraps, vegetables, and small amounts of fruits. Regularly turn your pile so materials compost more quickly." (<https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/living-with-black-bears/composting-in-bear-country>)



- ◆ Do not store any food or garbage outdoors. If you use outdoor trash barrels make sure trash inside is sealed in a plastic bag and that the trash barrel has a locking lid.
- ◆ Close the doors on the Park's main trash bin after each use (bin next to the red barn)
- ◆ Clean outdoor grills off after every use.
- ◆ Bring Humming Bird feeders in at night, but if bears get into them you will need to take them down altogether. (Note that humming bird feeders more than likely fall under Laurie Park's general bird feeding rules - **(Feeding of birds, squirrels, and chipmunks is not accepted from April 1st through October 31st).**
- ◆ Do not leave any pet food outside.
- ◆ Do not feed bears or encourage interaction with them.
- ◆ Consider placing a bell on your dog's collar.
- ◆ Make noise when you are out walking (talk, whistle, carry a bell - anything to pre-alert bears to your approach) to give bears time to react to your approach and move out of the area.

### **IF YOU ENCOUNTER A BEAR:**

Here is what the Pennsylvania Game Commission Recommends: <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/BlackBear/Pages/LivingwithBlackBears.aspx>

- ◆ **Alert the bear** — If you see a bear, make some noise to alert the bear of your presence, giving it ample time and space to turn and leave.
- ◆ **Slowly Back Away from the bear** — If you have a close encounter, back away slowly while facing the bear so you always know where the bear is and how its reacting. Wild bears rarely attack people. Slowly backing away diffuses the situation and gives the bear room to flee.
- ◆ **Stay calm** — While backing away, avoid sudden movements and talk to help the bear keep track of your retreat. Don't turn and run or attempt to climb a tree. Running may prompt the bear to give chase, and climbing a tree could be interpreted as a threat to any cubs that are present since cubs often climb trees when startled.
- ◆ **Pay attention** — Bears will use all of their senses to figure out what you are. If they recognize you as a person, some may stand upright or move closer in their efforts to detect odors in the air currents. Don't consider this a sign of aggression. Once a bear identifies you, it will usually leave. If it begins to slowly approach you, face the bear, wave your arms wildly and shout while continuing to back away. The idea is to intimidate the bear into retreating. Swing a stick, your backpack or whatever is handy if the bear gets close.
- ◆ **If suddenly surprised, some bears may feel threatened and give warning signs** that they are uncomfortable. They may clack their jaws together or sway their head; those are signs for you to leave. Some bears have been known to charge to within a few feet when threatened. If this occurs, wave your arms wildly and shout at the bear.

- ◆ **Fight back** — Black bear attacks are extremely rare. If a black bear attacks, fight back. Bears have been driven away when people have fought back with rocks, sticks, binoculars and even their bare hands.

### **Laurel Park Bylaws, Rules, Guidelines and/or Policies:**

<https://homeownersatlaurelpark.com/wp-content/uploads/documents/Rules%20and%20Regulations%20Summary.pdf>

### **Rules, Regulations, Useful Information for Living in Laurel Park (see By-law 1.5)**

#### **...Courtesy**

“Feeding of birds, squirrels, and chipmunks is not accepted from April 1st through October 31st, in order to lessen the presence of wildlife predators. This is a safety concern and Laurel Park complies with City of Northampton Article III, section B. Feeding of Wildlife Prohibited.”

### **Northampton Laws:**

City of Northampton, MA / Code of Ordinances / Part II: General Legislation / Animals and Fowl  
Article III Feeding of Wildlife: <https://ecode360.com/16141186>

#### **...WILDLIFE-PROOF DUMPSTER ENCLOSURE (WPDE)**

A fully enclosed structure consisting of four sides and a roof or cover of sufficient design and construction to prevent access by wildlife. The door or cover must have a latching mechanism sufficient to prevent entry by wildlife. The sides of the structure must extend to within two inches of the ground, and ventilation openings must be covered with a heavy gauge steel mesh or other material of sufficient strength to prevent access by wildlife. Mesh openings shall not exceed one-quarter inch in width.

#### **WILDLIFE-RESISTANT REFUGE CONTAINER (WRRC)**

A fully enclosed container that can be constructed of pliable materials or nonpliable materials (e.g., steel), but must be reinforced to deter access by wildlife. The container must employ a sturdy lid that has a latching mechanism preventing access to its contents by wildlife.

### **B. Feeding of wildlife prohibited.**

(1) No person shall intentionally or knowingly feed, use, place, provide, give, expose, deposit, scatter, distribute, leave or store any refuse, food product, pet food, or other material or nutritive substance on any premises in a manner which would constitute a lure, attraction, or enticement of wildlife on property within the City of Northampton. Feed that is deposited by natural vegetation or found solely as a result of normal agricultural or gardening practices, as well as standing crops planted and left standing as wildlife food plots that may be used by wild animals, is not considered feeding for the purposes of these regulations and is allowed.

### **C. Conditions requiring new containers or enclosures.**

(1) In responding to wildlife complaints, the enforcing persons shall make a determination whether or not refuse containers on the premises are the source of the wildlife feeding problem.

(2) If refuse containers are determined to be the source of the wildlife feeding problem, the landowner or person responsible for the premises will be required to replace them with a WRRC or WPDE as defined in this section. Failure to comply with an order to replace refuse containers within the time set forth in the order will constitute a violation of this section.

(3) Damage and repair of containers and enclosures. If a WRRC or WPDE is damaged or defeated so that it may allow access by wildlife, repair or replacement must be made within 24 hours after the damage is discovered.

(4) Acceptable outdoor compactor design. Any outdoor compactor containing any material edible by wildlife must not be accessible by wildlife. No trash or material may be exposed and doors must be kept closed and latched with a wildlife-proof mechanism except when loading or removing refuse. If damaged, allowing access by wildlife, repairs must be made to the outdoor compactor within 24 hours after written notification by the City of Northampton.

**D. Exceptions.** The following entities or actions are exempt from the requirements of this section:

(1) **This section shall not be interpreted so as to prohibit bird feeders, provided that if a bird feeder is determined to be the feeding source of wildlife feeding, public safety threats, the bird feeder and seed debris are removed within 48 hours.**

(5) This section shall not be interpreted so as to prohibit the feeding of pets or feral cats, provided that if food intended for pets is determined to be the source of wildlife feeding, the landowner or person responsible for the premises will be required to take steps to render such pet food inaccessible to wildlife, including the requirement that the pet food be removed. If any wildlife gains access to pet food, the condition allowing access must be corrected or the pet food removed within 48 hours.

## **References**

**Black Bears in Massachusetts** (Massachusetts' State Government) - <https://www.mass.gov/black-bears-in-massachusetts>

**Composting in Bear Country** (Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department) - <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/living-with-black-bears/composting-in-bear-country>

**How to live with Black Bears** (U.S. Forest Service) - <https://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/epubs/ht66.html>

**Living with Black Bears (Connecticut State Government)** - <https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Wildlife/Nuisance-Wildlife/Living-with-Black-Bears>

**Living with Black Bears (Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department)** - <https://vtfishandwildlife.com/learn-more/living-with-wildlife/living-with-black-bears>

**Living with Pennsylvania Black Bears** (Pennsylvania Game Commission)- <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/BlackBear/Pages/LivingwithBlackBears.aspx>

**How to live with Black Bears** (U.S. Forest Service) - <https://www.ncrs.fs.fed.us/epubs/ht66.html>

**What to do about Black Bears** (The Humane Society) - <https://www.humanesociety.org/resources/what-do-about-black-bears>