

NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection  
Division of Fish and Wildlife

Bear Facts for Homeowners

## Compost Piles/Gardens/Fruit Trees

Compost piles, vegetable gardens and fruit or nut trees can attract black bears. This is especially true when wild food sources are scarce. The odor and food rewards from compost piles, gardens and fruit trees can encourage bears to return to the area. Follow these tips to avoid attracting bears.

- Do not place meat or any sweet foods in compost or mulch piles. Adding lime can reduce odors while helping decomposition.
- Harvest gardens immediately as vegetables mature. Keep vegetable gardens free of vegetable wastes.
- Residents that have fruit or nut trees on their property should recognize that bears will be attracted to any residual fruit or nuts left on the ground. To minimize bear activity in your yard, pick up any fruit or nuts that fall from trees daily. Discard them in bear-resistant garbage containers and do not let fruit rot on the ground.
- Locate compost piles, gardens and fruit orchards at least 50 yards or as far as possible from forest tree lines or other sources of cover for bears.
- Consider installing electric fencing around compost piles, vegetable gardens and fruit trees and orchards. It is the most effective way to deter bears.
- Electric fencing should be simple and as strong as possible. Use a minimum voltage output of 3000 volts and use bait like bacon strips on the fence. Fencing is only effective if it is maintained.
- Detailed fencing and maintenance instructions are available at the following link:  
[www.njfishandwildlife.com/pdf/bear/bearfacts\\_agriculturalists.pdf](http://www.njfishandwildlife.com/pdf/bear/bearfacts_agriculturalists.pdf).



Avoid Placing Meat or Sweet Foods in Compost Piles



Pick Up Fruit that Falls from Fruit or Nut Trees