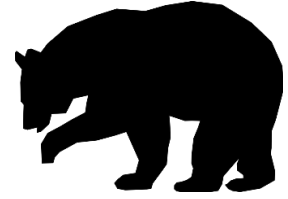


Managing Food Scrap Carts in Bear Country

It is possible to collect food scraps for a hauler without attracting nuisance bears.



Tips for bear-proofing food scrap totes:



1. **Minimize odors.** Bears have a strong sense of smell. To contain odors, cover food scraps with a thick layer of sawdust, straw, or another smell-capping compostable material. Ask your hauler what material they recommend.
2. **Keep things clean.** Ensure no food scraps spill on the ground or the outside of the tote.
3. **Store food scrap totes where bears cannot access them.** If space allows, store totes in a shed, garage, or shipping container, and bring them outside immediately before pick-up. Consider at least bringing totes inside at night, when bears are most active.
4. **Connect with neighbors.** Ask neighbors to only feed birds when there is a foot of snow or more and to follow VT Fish & Wildlife's [Living with Black Bears](#) advice (secure garbage and bird seed, feed pets indoors, surround bees & chickens with electric fences, etc.).
5. **Keep totes away from forest edges.** Most bears do not like to cross open areas, like yards and parking lots. Keeping totes near buildings may deter bears.
6. **Latch totes closed.** Locks, bungees, or other latches can keep bears (and other animals) out of totes. Make sure your hauler approves your latch system or undo latches for pick-up. These [instructions](#) explain how to install metal latches on plastic carts.
7. **If outside, strap totes to a tree or pole so they are harder to tip over.** This will help the latches hold.
8. **Surround totes with electric fencing.** Either top a wooden or chain-length fence with electric fencing or set up a ground-level electric fence. Consider baiting the electric lines with peanut butter or bacon grease; if a bear has a negative experience near your bin, it might be less likely to return.
9. **Install a motion-sensor alarm and/or light.** Bears may be deterred by bright lights and/or alarms that go off as they approach a tote. Some are solar and/or battery powered so they can be installed anywhere.
10. **Soak a rag in ammonia every 2-3 weeks.** Keep the smelly rag in a plastic tub next to the cart.
11. **Train staff.** Make sure all staff know the importance of following good practices to avoid attracting bears and what to do if a bear is spotted.
12. **If a bear is seen trying to get into a tote, try to scare it away** by banging pots together or shouting from a safe distance. If you are in a car, drive toward it (not too close!) slowly and blow the horn. Report all bear visits to VT Fish and Wildlife.



Contact VT Fish and Wildlife for more advice on deterring a bear **before** it becomes a problem. **Fill out this form to get in touch:** Anrweb.vt.gov/FWD/FW/WildlifeBearReport.aspx