



*Revelstoke  
Bear  
Aware* 

## **Composting in Bear Country**

Compost that smells will attract bears, but a properly maintained compost does not smell. To compost correctly there are a few simple rules to follow:

1. Never add meat, fish, dairy products, oil, unrinsed egg shells, cooked food, or large amounts of fruit. These items will attract bears and other animals long before they decompose.
2. Always layer the waste that you are adding. It is best to layer kitchen scraps between a dry layer of leaves or grass clippings.
3. Ensure the compost is kept moist, like that of a wrung out sponge. If the contents are too dry, it will take too long to decompose and if too wet, the contents may begin to smell.
4. Mix or turn your compost on a regular basis. The microorganisms and fungi at work require oxygen to break down the organic material. Bad smells can mean there is not enough oxygen.
5. Sprinkle wood ash or lime over your compost if odors develop.
6. Don't place your compost close to a door. If a bear does come to your compost, you don't want to startle the bear.

If a bear has visited your compost in the past, and been rewarded with easy food, they will likely revisit. There have been cases where bear have learned to identify the black dome composters as a food source and have even gone after new empty composters. If this is the case, even a properly maintained odor free compost will not keep the bear out.

Compost with extra care during the fall months, when bears are most actively searching for food. Avoid adding a large amount of kitchen scraps at this time, instead place these scraps in the freezer until the bears have started denning.

Indoor worm compost systems are also a very effective means of composting. For more information on indoor composting visit [www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html](http://www.cityfarmer.org/wormcomp61.html).