

Lions? No. Tigers? No. Bears? Oh, Yes.

The American black bear is the smallest and most common bear species found in North America. In the wild, male black bears weigh 130 to 550 pounds, females weigh 90 to 370 pounds. Black bears are omnivores and eat plants, nuts, berries and small mammals. So why do bears choose to venture into urban areas? The answer is food. Urban areas are an easy place for bears to find a meal. Food for an urban bear can be an unsecured trash can, a garden, birdseed, pet food and fruit trees. Golf courses provide water and lush grass. Black bears in urban areas are found to weigh approximately 30 pounds more than those found in the wild due to their diet. While many animals, like coyotes, adapt well to living in urban settings, urban life for a bear is rough!

So how can you avoid attracting black bears?

- Don't feed or provide water for bears.
- Feed your pets inside or remove uneaten pet food between feedings.
- Remove garbage regularly or keep in secure buildings.
- Remove other food sources, such as birdseed, hummingbird feed (sweet liquid), and fruit from trees or shrubs located near buildings.
- Bears are excellent climbers. Fences should be at least 6 feet tall and constructed of non-climbable material.

“Black bears that live around urban areas weigh more, get pregnant at a younger age, and are more likely to die violent deaths.” - *Wildlife Conservation Society*

Left photo - - A bear climbs a tree near a home. Right photo - A young bear plays with a flag on a golf course.

