

Alberta

BearSmart



Be Scents-ible about Bears!

Bears live to eat, consuming up to 25,000 calories a day (10 times more than the average person). Although they prefer natural vegetation, bears will eat nearly everything including cereal crops, livestock and other mammals, pellet feed and silage. They will do almost anything to obtain food. That is why it is so important to eliminate access to food and waste around your farm, ranch, apiary, home and yard. Solutions you take for dealing with bears may also be practical for dealing with other problem wildlife.

Bears have a keen sense of smell and are driven to investigate. They are attracted by scents as diverse as pet food and juice boxes.

If your granaries or storage sheds are improperly secured, bears may figure out how to open them. Spilled grain, an unclean yard or household garbage are open invitations.

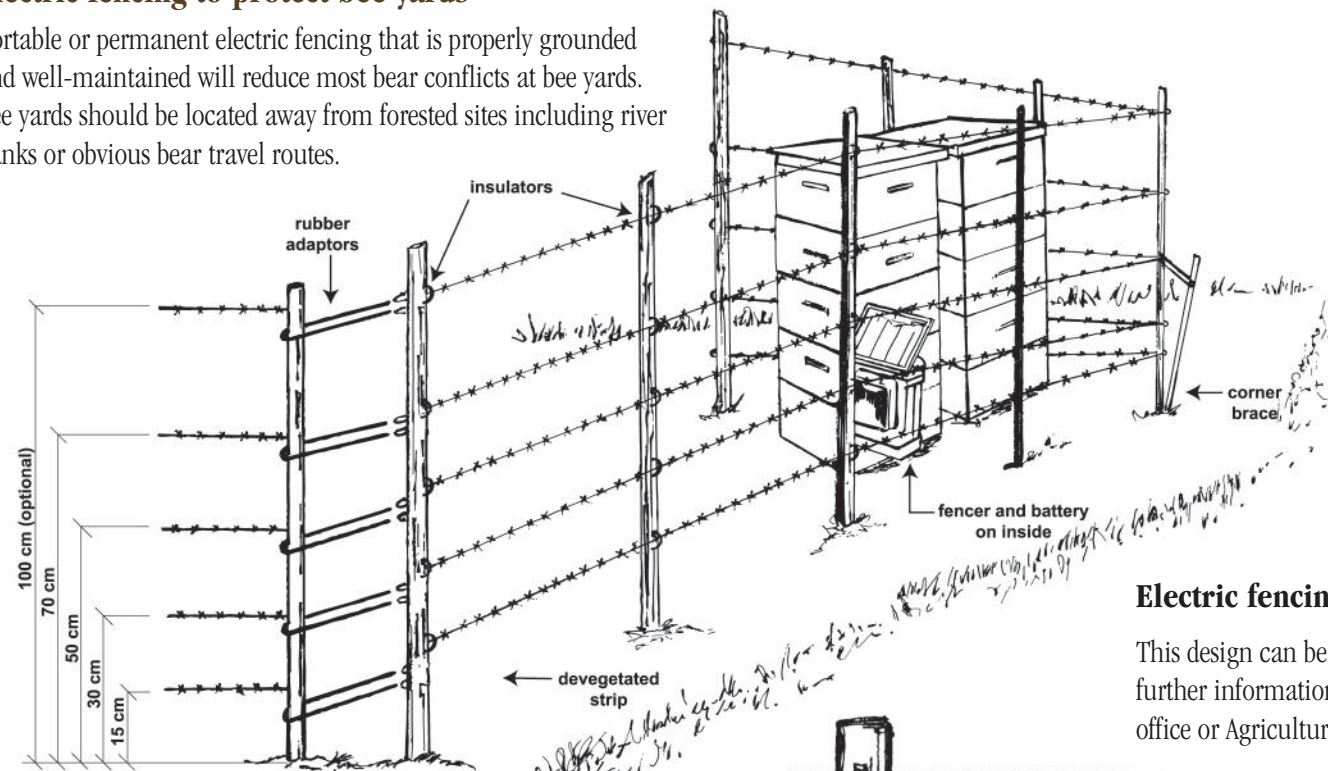
In recent years, some bears have been spotted outside of typical range.



Examples of electric fencing for agricultural producers

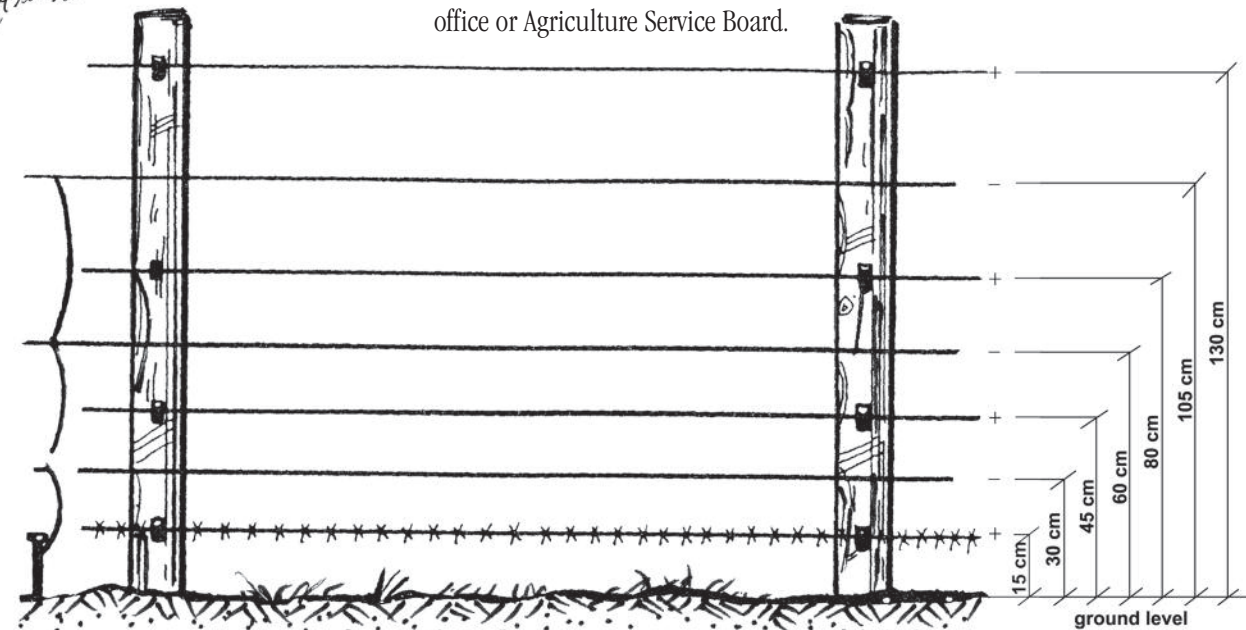
Electric fencing to protect bee yards

Portable or permanent electric fencing that is properly grounded and well-maintained will reduce most bear conflicts at bee yards. Bee yards should be located away from forested sites including river banks or obvious bear travel routes.



Electric fencing to protect livestock

This design can be used for calving and lambing areas. For further information contact your nearest Fish and Wildlife office or Agriculture Service Board.



For More Information

Alberta BearSmart guides focus on:

- residents in bear country
- outdoor recreation
- farming and ranching
- hunting
- industrial worksites

To learn more about the Alberta BearSmart program, contact your local Fish and Wildlife office or visit the Alberta Sustainable Resource Development website at www.bearsmart.alberta.ca

If a bear persistently returns to your yard or community, or if the presence of a bear is a public safety concern, promptly call the nearest Fish and Wildlife office (310-0000 toll-free) or the 24-hour Report A Poacher line at 1-800-642-3800.

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Agriculture in Bear Country

Bears are an essential part of Alberta's natural environment. Because bears are top predators, a healthy bear population is a sign of a healthy ecosystem.

It is important to understand bear behaviour if you farm, ranch or keep bees in bear country. Take steps to incorporate "BearSmart" practices in your agricultural operations. By following BearSmart tips, you will help maintain your own safety, protect your property, and ensure the future of Alberta's bear populations.



Although serious conflicts are rare, encounters between people and bears have been increasing in Alberta. Since 2000, there have been more than 30 serious conflicts involving black and grizzly bears, with three human fatalities. An average of about 2,350 bear-related occurrences are reported each year. Encounters, property damage and injuries can be prevented.

Contrary to common belief, **there is no such thing as a "good" human-bear encounter.** All encounters are potentially dangerous. The only way to make Alberta safer for people and bears is to prevent

and reduce these encounters. Relocation or shooting problem bears is not the answer. If a bear is attracted to your property, it will continue to return until the attractant is removed.

By taking actions as simple as storing your grain securely, disposing of livestock carcasses properly and installing electric fences, you can be part of the Alberta BearSmart solution. As a farmer, rancher or beekeeper in bear country, you have an important role in preventing and reducing human-bear encounters.

DID YOU KNOW?
Simple changes in agricultural practices can reduce property damage by bears and potentially dangerous human-bear encounters.

When to be BearSmart

Seasons: The prime time for bear activity is from May until October. Livestock can be particularly at risk in early spring, when bears are hard-pressed to find food. Bears are attracted to calves and other small domestic animals, and to cereal crops such as wheat, oats and barley especially during the milk stage. Electric fences should be installed at bee yards early in spring and maintained throughout summer.

Time of Day: Although bears feed at any time, they are most active from dusk until the early morning.

Checklist

Livestock

- Keep livestock confined for at least 10 days following castration, dehorning and branding. Conduct regular herd inspections. Bears may target injured or sick animals.
- Disposal of animal carcasses should follow the *Livestock Diseases* and *Public Health Acts* and be done in a way to reduce attraction to bears. The carcass should be burned completely, or buried and covered with lime under at least 1.2 m (4 ft.) of soil, or promptly moved to a rendering plant (best option).
- Burning or burying carcasses, food or waste that might attract bears should occur on your property, well away from residences, granaries, outbuildings and feedlots.
- Immediately report any incident where you suspect a bear has killed your livestock.

Crops and Grain Storage

- Be cautious when working or walking around cereal crops such as wheat, oats and barley, especially at dusk and dawn.
- Ensure that granaries are constructed well and that doors are sturdy and well-maintained.
- Clean up all spilled and waste grain as soon as possible. If spillage is unavoidable, locate storage facilities away from areas of human use and bear habitat.
- Consider seasonal electric fencing or install alarm systems in areas with valuable products or those at high risk of human-bear encounters.

Beekeeping

- Erect electric fencing to protect your bee colonies. Be sure to maintain the fencing, chargers and batteries.

Yards

- Bring pet food and feeders inside at night.
- Consider electric fencing if your garden or stored produce attracts bears.

Children

- Keep a close eye on children at dusk and dawn, when bears are most active.

