



# Bear-Resistant Canister Fact Sheet

Many black bears, particularly those in the Adirondack High Peaks Wilderness, have become adept at obtaining food that is hung by backcountry campers. Bear-resistant canisters are a highly effective means for preventing bears from obtaining food, toiletries and garbage. When bears are unable to obtain food from backcountry campers, campers will have a more enjoyable backcountry experience, and the bears will return to looking for natural foods in the forest. Canisters are required in many National Parks and resist even grizzly bears.

**DEC REGULATION REQUIRES THE USE OF BEAR-RESISTANT CANISTERS BY OVERNIGHT USERS IN THE EASTERN HIGH PEAKS WILDERNESS BETWEEN APRIL 1 AND NOVEMBER 30.**

## **Bear-Resistant Canisters**

- Canisters are solid and non-pliable.
- Canisters are usually made of a hard plastic, but metal or another material may also be used.
- Non-rigid containers or sacks are not considered bear-resistant canisters under the regulation.
- Canisters weigh 3 to 5 pounds.
- Canisters typically are 8 inches by 12 inches in size.
- Canisters can hold up to 5 person-days of food when properly packed.

## **Packing a Bear-Resistant Canister**

- Pack all scented items (food, toiletries, and trash) in the canister.
- Pack materials in sealed plastic bags or containers to reduce odors that will attract bears.
- Choose foods that are compact, compressible and high in calories.
- Don't take more than you will need.

## **Using a Bear-Resistant Canister**

- Ensure that the canister lid is secured.
- Carry the canister in the backpack or strap it to the outside.
- Nylon carrying cases are available for some canisters.
- Place reflective tape on the canister to assist in locating the canister in the dark.
- Label the canister with your name and contact information, in case it is lost.

## **Storing a Bear-Resistant Canister**

- Canisters should be stored at least 100 feet away from your campsite.
- Wedge the canister between rocks, under logs or just place it in a shallow depression.
- Do NOT hang canisters; bears can still carry off your food.
- Do NOT store canisters in carrying case; bears will be able to carry it away.
- Do NOT store canisters near water; canisters are not watertight and do not float.

## **Benefits of Bear-Resistant Canisters** (when properly used)

- Prevent the loss of food to a bear, thus preventing hungry campers and shortened camping trips.
- Reduce or eliminate the occurrence of night time visits by bears to your campsite.
- Reduce or eliminate occurrences of damage to expensive camping equipment like backpacks and tents.
- Eliminates the need to locate the proper tree for a tree hang.

More information may be found on the DEC web site [www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6960.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/animals/6960.html) or call the DEC Wildlife Office at 518/402-8883