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## Bear- resistant garbage bins subject of Coquitlam tests

**In a bid to reduce bear and human interaction, city tests three different products**

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Both paws flat, the grizzly jumps up and down, pounding the life out of the food- filled garbage bin. Thwack, thwack, thwack. Despite a 90- minute assault, the bin stays firmly shut.

The bear- resistant bin is one of three types being tested under a City of Coquitlam pilot project aimed at finding which is the best at keeping bears out of trash and away from people's homes.

The company that produced the Bear Necessities type of bin put a grizzly named Shadow up against its product and filmed the results. It can be viewed at The Vancouver Sun's website, [www.vancouver.sun.com](http://www.vancouver.sun.com).

" We're trying to find a bin that would be effective," said city spokeswoman Therese Mickelson of the year- long project that began last week.

" If you can control how accessible the garbage is, you can reduce the interaction between bears and people."

While the City of Coquitlam requires homeowners in " high activity" bear areas to store their trash in wildlife- resistant trash bins — no one knew what brand to recommend to home owners.

The bear- resistant containers trial will take the guesswork out of the equation, said Mickelson.

Residents of 372 homes in Coquitlam's Westwood Plateau neighbourhood, an area surrounded by green spaces frequented by bears, have volunteered to monitor their garbage for the year.

The residents will be assigned one of three different types of bins: BearSaver, Rollins Schaefer or Bear Necessities' Bin 120.

Participants — as well as the garbage contractors who collect the trash each week — will be asked to fill out surveys and provide feedback throughout the year about how the bins hold up. At the end of the year, the best bin wins.



**A bear can knock this bin over and jump on it, but still can't get inside it, during testing of three types of garbage bins.**



**The bear unsuccessfully tried chewing its way through one of the garbage bins that will be part of the Coquitlam project.**

Drake Stephens, coordinator for Coquitlam's Bear Aware program, said people call him all the time asking, "What do you recommend?"

" Until they're true- tested, we don't know," Stephens said.

It is very important for people to think about the way they store their trash, said Jacques Drisdelle, Bear Aware's provincial director. Many of B. C.' s bear complaints this year — about 11,800 for black bears and 400 for grizzlies — are likely due to garbage, he said.

With an ordinary garbage can a bear pops the lid off in seconds, he said, making trash into fast food for bears and other wild animals.

" In some communities people put their trash on the curb the night before," Drisdelle said. " Bears find a smorgasbord and they have a feeding fiesta."

In order to be considered bear- resistant, bins must withstand 90 minutes under attack by a grizzly bear that could weigh more than 500 kilograms, said Drisdelle.

" They put strong odorous foods inside. They let a grizzly go at it," he said.

But even the toughest trash cans have limitations, said Lori Hogarth, the Alberta- based creator of the Bear Necessities bin.

She doesn't like the term " bear- proof," she said: " You get a polar bear — he can break into a transport truck, let alone a garbage can."

At the end of the day, Coquitlam Mayor Maxine Wilson said the bear- resistant containers trial is ultimately about safety.

" It's trying to make it work for human beings as well as for the bears," said Wilson. " We don't want a human injured. We don't want a bear destroyed."

For more information, visit [www.coquitlam.ca](http://www.coquitlam.ca).