



How to Build an Unwelcome Mat

Many residential areas in Florida are close to forests where bears live. Therefore bears may pass through neighborhoods while moving from one wooded area to the next. In some cases, bears may approach homes in search of food. You can build an Unwelcome Mat to keep a bear away from specific areas around your home, such as doorways, under windows, in front of outdoor refrigerators or freezers, or at fence openings. Finishing nails or brads will be used to create an area painful for a bear to step on due to the narrow heads of the nails without causing the bear serious injury.

IMPORTANT: Unwelcome mats can cause harm to a person who accidentally steps or falls on them. Check local regulations to ensure devices like an Unwelcome Mat are permitted in your area.

Materials: plywood, hammer, pencil, ruler, finishing nails/brads, standard nails or stakes, paint



- 1) Paint a warning message on the Unwelcome Mat itself and post a sign nearby to inform people an Unwelcome Mat has been installed to prevent accidental injury.
- 2) Select a sheet of plywood large enough to completely cover the area to be protected. The bear should not be able to reach the opening without stepping on the Unwelcome Mat. A single doorway would likely require a 4 ft x 4 ft sheet of plywood.
- 3) Anchor the plywood to prevent the bear from pushing it out of the way or flipping it over. If used in the yard, drill holes through the Mat to allow rebar or tent stakes to hold the Mat in place. When the Mat is on a wooden surface, use screws or nails to keep it in place.
- 4) Pick a one corner of the plywood and draw a line 1" in from the both edges. Make a mark every 2 inches along that line, and then use those marks to draw a grid along the board.



- 5) Hammer finishing nails or brads into the plywood (points down) so no more than $\frac{3}{4}$ " of the nail is sticking up. Nails should be spaced 2 inches apart.



If you are experiencing bear problems please contact the nearest Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission regional office. For more information, visit MyFWC.com/bear.

Bear Paw print outlines that can be used as stencils.



A warning sign that can be printed alerting people of sharp objects on the ground, in this case the Unwelcome Mat.

