Unwelcome Mats

Commonly used for vacation or second homes - or other areas where people aren’t always home - unwelcome mats cause instant pain if a bear attempts to walk over them to reach a door or window. They can also be used as a temporary, short-term measure to deter specific bears.

Despite their menacing appearance, properly constructed unwelcome mats do no permanent damage to the pads of bears. The objective is to cause enough pain for a bear to abandon its approach - not to injure the bear. Black bears can be seriously injured by nails that are too long or spaced too far apart. Avoid designs meant for grizzly bears.

Before using, be sure to check with local HOA or community regulations to make sure they are permitted where you live.

It is also recommended to put up safety cones, signage or something of that nature to let people know that an unwelcome mat is in use.

Making an Unwelcome Mat

Unwelcome mats must be large enough to cover the entire area in front of doors and windows to keep a bear from gaining entry, ideally extending a minimum of two feet.

If using plywood, use the thickest plywood available. A 4’ x 4’ sheet should protect a single doorway, while a 4’ x 8’ sheet should protect most patio, double doors and windows.

Drywall screws or nails should stick out of the board no more than 1/2” and be spaced 2 inches apart. Drawing a grid on the back helps. Carpet tack strips can also be used.

If the unwelcome mat is to be placed on a deck, it should be secured so a bear can’t shove it out of the way. If placed on the ground, two sections of rebar, tent stakes or long spikes should be used to secure the mat.