



# People, Plants & Pride... Growing Together

## How to Participate in Communities in Bloom

www.cibontario.ca



Ontario

## THE PROGRAM

**Communities in Bloom** is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community participation and the challenge of a friendly competition. National beautification programs have flourished in Europe – including England, France and Ireland – for decades, and were the inspiration for Communities in Bloom.

It began in 1995 with 29 Canadian communities and has grown to include hundreds of participating communities in the provincial and national programs.

**All communities are invited to participate in the provincial or national editions, within their population category.**

Trained volunteer judges travel across Canada during July and August to evaluate communities and the overall contributions of municipal council and departments, industry, businesses and the private sector, including volunteer efforts, in regards to the following **EIGHT CRITERIA**:

**1 Tidiness** of green spaces, medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets, ditches, road shoulders, signage, vacant lots and buildings with regards to garbage, weeds, maintenance and repair, dog droppings, notices/posters, graffiti and vandalism, etc.

### Tips:

- Organized clean-up days are a great way to have fun & feel proud of a good day's work. It can be a wonderful family experience while instilling values and caring for where you live.
- Signage is often overlooked. Your downtown business association and municipal office can sometimes help with bylaws and guidelines for signage in your downtown core and business district.

**2 Environmental Awareness.**

Sustainable development, policies and bylaws, waste reduction, landfill sites, hazardous waste collection, sewage disposal, transfer/recycle stations, recycling initiatives, Plant Health Care, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), water source, treatment and conservation, naturalization, environmental clean up activities, environmentally friendly transportation are all part of this criteria.



Township of Strathroy Caradoc

**3 Community Involvement.**

It doesn't happen without you! Citizens' involvement in projects for the betterment and enjoyment of the whole community include horticulture & garden clubs, service groups, recreation and sports clubs, school children, teens, seniors, municipal workers and local businesses.

### Tips:

- Participating communities hold several local contests that successfully involve many community members. One street will challenge another for the best lawns or gardens; apartments will challenge each other for the best balcony arrangements; businesses for creative landscaping, floral displays and signage
- Community involvement is really what it's all about. Getting involved is the easiest way to get outside, be creative, meet your neighbours and have some fun.

### Tips:

- Learning to conserve, protect and enjoy our natural environment with respect to wildlife, parks, hiking trails, waterfront development is a large part of your community's sustainability. Having clean-up days in these areas, fundraisers by hiking or biking through nature trails are events that help citizens and visitors alike appreciate the benefits of a protected environment.
- Promote recycling, encourage car pooling and alternative modes of transportation.



Municipality of Southwest Middlesex



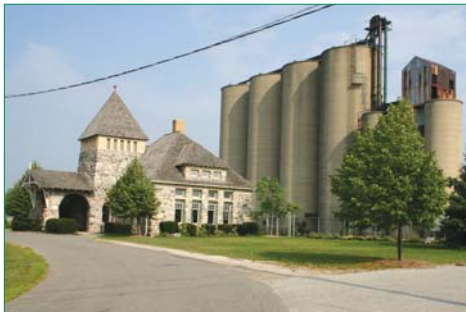
Town of Minto

#### 4 Natural and Cultural

**Heritage Conservation** involves heritage policies, bylaws and natural heritage management plans; preservation and restoration of buildings, homes, churches, monuments, artifacts, sites, parks, heritage gardens, trees; preservation of traditions and customs; festivals/celebrations; heritage foods and the arts.

##### Tips:

- Celebrating “Heritage Week” with local heritage and cultural festivals.
- Revitalizing heritage, arts & cultural districts.
- Planting a heritage garden is a wonderful way to promote community involvement
- Organizing heritage walks – they’re fun and informative.
- Preserving heritage and culture in your community is a wonderful way to involve youth, celebrate and appreciate your past, present, and future and attract tourists.



County of Essex

**6 Landscaped Areas** supports all efforts to create an environment where plants form an essential element of the overall surroundings: design and suitability for location and use; native and introduced materials, balance of plants, materials and constructed elements; harmony, (colour, texture, shape); tasteful integration of hard surfaces and art elements; high standards of maintenance.

##### Tips:

- Create landscapes incorporating ponds: water gardens including waterfalls, fountains and other water features. These have become popular as a community project for all to enjoy.
- Creative landscaping is becoming very evident on roadway medians, within parks and at entrances to your community – some provinces run a gateway competition. What better way to say “Welcome”.
- Consulting a local professional landscaper is always helpful and just one more way to get your entire community involved.



Town of Ingersoll

**7 Floral Displays** includes arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses, etc.), originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, harmony, quality and maintenance of flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets, planters and window boxes.

##### Tips:

- Work with your local garden centre on “what’s new” in plant material, low-maintenance plants, ideal plants for specific areas. Many are knowledgeable and ready to help.
- Getting school children involved is always fun and rewarding. Plant seeds as a classroom project, transplant the young plants in a median, a public flowerbed, a school garden or a planter designed and painted by children.



City of Pembroke

**8 Turf & Groundcovers** includes quality, naturalization, use of groundcovers & wildflowers; turf management (manicured to rough), maintenance (mowing height and frequency), IPM (Integrated Pest Management); fertilization programs, irrigation and water restrictions. Areas include private homes, public buildings, municipal and private grounds, sports fields and athletic parks.

##### Tips:

- Promote Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs to all community members.
- Some communities run local “best lawn” contests for homeowners and businesses.
- Remember, parks and lawns are where people play, relax and enjoy themselves. Maintenance & development of such areas are an integral part of a community’s outdoor recreation.



Town of Marathon

#### 5 Tree/Urban Forest

**Management** includes written policies, bylaws and regulation plans both long and short term. The distribution of trees, inventory, variety, suitability, new plantings, main street programs, new survey developments, preservation of heritage trees, commemorative trees, woodlots and succession planting procedures are all important to this criteria. Having qualified personnel available (volunteer or on staff) for professional help with maintenance, pruning, Plant Health Care, Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and trouble-shooting is valuable.



Township of Strathroy Caradoc

##### Tips:

- Hold an Arbor Day promoted by contests, children’s posters, tree planting ceremonies, tree identification contests. With the help of arborists and the local heritage society, you can identify and commemorate heritage trees within your community
- Trees can be a wonderful commemorative symbol, whether in memory of a loved one or to celebrate birth. Such programs provide a meaningful opportunity to help with re-foresting an area while supporting community spirit.

## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

***Because Communities in Bloom is designed to be a continuous community improvement program, it is divided into three phases: Provincial, National and International.***

### Provincial Edition

Communities participate with other communities in their population category within their province. Provincial judges evaluate the communities on the eight criteria previously listed and award a certificate with a rating of 1 to 5 blooms (5 being the highest ranking) at a provincial awards ceremony in the fall. In addition to the regular CiB Ontario Bloom Rating Program, Community Showcase and Community Corner Programs are ideal non-competitive programs that any group, organization or municipality may enter to learn more about the CiB Program, showcase your community or special project and recognize your dedicated volunteers.

### National Edition

***Who is invited to participate in the national edition?***

- The top two communities, excluding the winners, from each province in each population category from the previous year's **national edition**.
- A maximum of two participating communities per province and per population category who have shown a dedication to the Communities in Bloom program and who have achieved a high level of accomplishment may be invited to participate at the national level.

**Criteria Awards** are also part of the national edition and recognize outstanding achievements in each of the selected criteria.

Five-bloom national winners from the two previous years are also invited to participate in the **Canadian Classic**, a category where they will be paired with a community that has never participated, in order to mentor and guide them through the program. Communities are judged individually and obtain a separate bloom rating; the highest accumulated score determines the winning pair.

Other national categories include **Networking**, a non-competitive category open to all past national finalists who will be evaluated in order to maintain their bloom rating. Municipalities in this category are encouraged to provide and share networking information.

In the **Friends** category, the municipalities are registered but not evaluated. They are expected to continue local "Communities in Bloom" initiatives to maintain their bloom rating.

The **Parks & Grounds** category is open to institutions, historical sites and special attractions.

### International

**The International Challenge** invites past winners from different national programs (Communities in Bloom, Britain in Bloom, America in Bloom, Tidy Towns of Ireland, Japan in Bloom, *Villes et Villages Fleuris de France*, etc.) to compete with each other. The population categories and results are determined according to registrations.

## PROGRAM BENEFITS

Communities have recognized numerous benefits from participating in the program:

- Increased civic pride and community involvement
- Participation from all ages and walks of life
- Citizens, groups, organizations, business and municipal government all mobilized and working together
- Year-round projects and continuous improvement for the entire community
- Information and cultural exchange within the community and with neighbouring, national and international communities
- Valuable information and feedback from the judges
- Decreased vandalism
- Economic development and increased property values
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Positive benefits for the tourism, hospitality and retail industries
- Improved quality of life



## PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION

### Registration

Helpful Information on the program, how to get started, examples and the evaluation form are available by contacting Communities in Bloom or by visiting [www.communitiesinbloom.ca](http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca). Registration can be done on-line or through the Communities in Bloom provincial organizations or national office.

### Your Local Committee

The committee is usually composed of local citizens, including one member of council and members of associations, businesses and organizations interested in horticulture, heritage and improving community life.

The committee's objectives are:

- To involve the community by means of local contests, which increase awareness about the program, its benefits and opportunities.
- To act as liaison with the municipal authorities.
- To create sub-committees to help with various projects within an evaluation criteria.

### Budget

While participation in the program does not require considerable financial resources, obtaining funds to promote the program, involve the community, honour participants and volunteers, attend the award ceremonies, etc. is recommended.

It is suggested for the community to prepare an estimated budget and to find sources of funding, such as fundraising programs, community events (dances, BBQ's, etc.)

Communities in Bloom will provide fundraising ideas and examples from other communities.

### Bloom Ratings

Communities are rated from 1 to 5 blooms

Up to 55 points:	1 bloom
55-63 points:	2 blooms
64-72 points:	3 blooms
73-81 points:	4 blooms
82 points and more:	5 blooms

### Fundraising with Merchandise

For information and order forms, please visit [www.communitiesinbloom.ca](http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca) or contact:

Merchandise Coordinator  
Communities in Bloom  
Tel (514) 694-8871 • Fax (514) 694-3725  
[merchandise@cib-cef.com](mailto:merchandise@cib-cef.com)



## Program Commitment

**The participating communities have a responsibility to:**

- Involve the entire community, with the support of municipal council
- Prepare for the judging in July or August
- Provide lodging for 2 nights for 2 judges (billeting is acceptable)
- Provide transportation for the judges to and from the nearest airport/train station
- Attend the provincial and/or national awards ceremonies
- Pay a registration fee, based on population categories and level of competition

## The Judges' Visit – Useful Information

- Prepare materials and community profile book that address all criteria in the evaluation form.
- Make good use of the time that the judges are in your community.
- The judges' itinerary should include all of the criteria and be discussed with the judges upon arrival.
- Provide the judges with the opportunity to interact with key individuals and enjoy their time spent in your community.
- Give them time to start working on their evaluation form.
- Let them see that you are proud of your achievements.



Municipality of Red Lake

## Awards Ceremonies

The Provincial Awards Ceremonies are held from late August to mid October and include presentations and awards to all participants along with the judges' feedback.

The National Awards Ceremony, hosted in a different city each year, is held in late September or early October, in conjunction with the National Symposium on Parks and Grounds. All the National Finalists and Provincial Participants are invited to attend. The communities are showcased by means of community exhibits and promotional material. The winners are presented with a historic granite trophy from the National Capital Commission and all participants receive a certificate and special mention.

## Promotion

The Communities in Bloom program and participants are promoted throughout the year at trade shows and with press releases issued before, during and after the evaluation. Other means of promotion include:

[www.communitiesinbloom.ca](http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca), including the **Explore our Communities** section, which gives additional exposure through a dedicated page for each participant and a link to the community's website.

The **Communities in Bloom Magazine**, published twice a year, also showcases all participants with photos, results and articles.

**CN Tower Communities in Bloom Gardens:** a unique promotional opportunity for participating communities, at *Canada's National Tower*.



## WinterLights Celebrations

**WinterLights Celebrations** is the winter program of Communities in Bloom. The program includes *Visual Presentation, Winter Pleasures, Festive Season Celebrations, Goodwill Programs* and *Tourism & Promotion*.

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



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