

How to Participate in Communities in Bloom

Growing Great Places Together



THE PROGRAM

Communities in Bloom is a volunteer and partnership-driven charitable organization that uses a multi-tiered competitive evaluation process to foster community strength, involvement and continuous improvement. This is accomplished by nurturing environmental sustainability, enhancements of green spaces, and heritage conservation, in cultural and natural environments encompassing municipal, residential, commercial, and institutional spaces. National beautification programs have flourished in Europe – including Great Britain, France and Ireland – for decades, and were the inspiration for Communities in Bloom.

The program began in 1995 with 29 Canadian communities and has grown to improve the quality of life in hundreds of participating communities in the provincial, national and international editions.

All communities are invited to participate in the provincial or national editions, within their population category. Trained volunteer judges travel across Canada during the summer to evaluate communities and the overall contributions of municipality, businesses & institutions and residents, including volunteer efforts in regards to the following criteria:

Community Appearance reflects an overall effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and the residents throughout the community to create great first impressions and a sense that there is continuous attention and upkeep to critical elements of a community that benefit quality of life and economic vitality. Elements for evaluation are: parks and green spaces, medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets; municipal, commercial, institutional and residential properties; ditches, road shoulders, vacant lots, signs and buildings; weed control, litter clean-up, graffiti prevention/removal and vandalism deterrent programs.



Colonsay, SK

Tree Management Woodlands, Canopy Management, Urban and Rural Forestry includes the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents with regards to written policies, by-laws, standards for tree management protection (selection, planting, and maintenance), long and short-term management plans, tree replacement policies, pollinator-friendly tree selection, tree inventory including heritage, memorial, and commemorative trees, and Integrated Pest Management (IPM).



Assiniboia, SK

Environmental Action pertains to the impact of human activities on the environment and the subsequent efforts and achievements of the community with respect to environmental stewardship, policies, by-laws, programs and best practices for waste reduction and landfill diversion, composting sites, landfill sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, energy conservation, and activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.



Sturgeon Lake First Nation, SK

Landscape includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks, green spaces and cemeteries suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis. Elements for evaluation include native and introduced materials; biodiversity, materials and constructed elements; appropriate integration of hard surfaces and art elements, use of turf and groundcovers. Landscape design should harmonize the interests of all sectors of the community and provide safe and secure public spaces. Standards of execution and maintenance should demonstrate best practices, including quality of naturalization, use of groundcovers and wildflowers along with turf management.



Wolseley, SK

Heritage Conservation includes efforts to preserve and protect both natural and cultural heritage within the community. Preservation of natural heritage pertains to policies, plans and actions concerning all elements of biodiversity including flora and fauna ecosystems and associated geological structures and formations. Cultural conservation represents the “persona” of a community and refers to the heritage that helps define the community including the legacy of tangible elements such as heritage buildings, monuments, memorials, cemeteries, artifacts, museums and intangible elements such as traditions, customs, festivals and celebrations.



Canora, SK

Plant and Floral Displays evaluates the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute, and maintain high quality plant and floral displays. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses, edible plants, water efficient and pollinator friendly plants) in the context of originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony. It also includes flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets and window boxes.



Watson, SK

Communities
in Bloom
Foundation



Fondation
Collectivités
en fleurs

The Communities in Bloom Foundation is dedicated to funding, developing and disseminating education and awareness to a wide audience on the value, improvement, importance and sustainable development of green spaces and natural environment in Canadian society.

For more information or to make a donation, please contact:

Communities in Bloom Foundation

(514) 694-8871
bloom@cib-cef.com

Or visit: www.CanadaHelps.org



Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, all communities involved in the program can be proud of their efforts, which benefit all of society

PROVINCIAL EDITIONS & PARTNERS – CONTACT INFORMATION

To get involved or learn more about the program in your province or territories, please contact:



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PROGRAM STRUCTURE

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

Provincial Editions

Communities participate in their population category within their province and are awarded a bloom rating of 1 to 5 blooms. In Saskatchewan, Provincial Winners are declared from this competition.

Any community may also participate in a non-competitive provincial category either to learn about the program or, if they are past participants, to maintain their initiatives, program, and committees. Both evaluated and non-evaluated options are available in Saskatchewan.

Each provincial organization also offers special programs and categories specific to provincial context and objectives.

Participant Types:

Communities in Bloom is a program suitable for any type of community-based participant:

1. Urban Municipality – Includes Cities, Towns, Villages, Northern Villages, Resort Villages, and Northern Hamlets.
2. Community – Includes Organized Hamlets, Northern Settlements, Resort Hamlets, Unorganized Hamlets, Resort Communities, First Nations, Métis Communities, Special Service Areas, and other community areas.
3. Rural Municipalities (R.M.) – Intended for R.M.s that wish to participate with their entire municipal area, including R.M. governed communities but excluding Urban Municipalities within R.M. borders.
4. Communities in Bloom Places and Spaces – Intended for non-municipal participants that are interested in CiB's values and support. Participants may include Senior/LongTerm Care Facilities, Park Authorities, Museum Facilities, Residential Complexes, Private Subdivisions, and other non-municipal groups.

Urban Municipality, Community and Rural Municipality Participants Categories:

1. Competitive
2. Novice
3. Evaluated Friends
4. Friends (non-evaluated)
5. Tourist's Takeaway

Places and Spaces Participants can be evaluated or non-evaluated.

National Edition

Who is invited to participate in the national edition?

Communities that achieve 5 Blooms in the provincial competition are invited to the national edition.

PROGRAM BENEFITS

Communities have recognized numerous benefits from participating in the program:

- Increased civic pride and community involvement
- Environmental stewardship through the enhancement of green spaces
- Mobilization of citizens, groups, organizations, businesses and the municipality
- Best practices and Information exchange
- Valuable information and feedback from the judges
- Economic development and increased property values
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Positive benefits for the tourism, hospitality, and retail industries
- Improved quality of life
- Participation from all ages and walks of life of the community

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

Awards are also part of the provincial and national editions and recognize exemplary achievement in each criteria, plus other special initiatives.

PROCESS FOR PARTICIPATION

Registrations

Helpful Information on the program and the evaluation form are available by contacting the National Office or the Provincial Organizations by visiting: www.communitiesinbloom.ca.

Registration can be done through the provincial organizations or the Communities in Bloom National Office.

Information for Saskatchewan can be found at www.spra.sk.ca/cib

Your Local Committee

The committee is usually composed of local citizens, including community leaders 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 a liaison with the local authorities and Communities in Bloom.

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, etc.

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

Bloom Ratings

Communities are rated from 1 to 5 Blooms

Up to 55 points:	1 Bloom
56-63 points:	2 Blooms
64-72 points:	3 Blooms
73-81 points:	4 Blooms
82 points and more:	5 Blooms

There are four (4) levels of 5 Blooms in the National and International Edition

5 Blooms:	82 to 83.9%
5 Blooms (Bronze):	84 to 86.9%
5 Blooms (Silver):	87 to 89.9%
5 Blooms (Gold):	90% and over

Saskatchewan CiB "Take a Shot!" Photo Contest Winners of 2025

1st Place



Colleen Sampson – Davidson CiB

2nd Place



Audrey Kingfisher – Sturgeon Lake First Nation

3rd Place



Savannah Kuschak – Ituna CiB

PROGRAM COMMITMENT

The participating communities have a responsibility to:

- Involve the entire community to participate (with the support of local leadership)
- Prepare for the judging during the summer
- Provide lodging for 1 or 2 nights for 2 judges.
- Provide transportation for the judges to and from the nearest airport/train station. (national)
- Pay a registration fee, based on population categories and level of competition.

THE JUDGES' VISIT – USEFUL TIPS

- Prepare information that addresses all criteria in the evaluation form.
- Make good use of the time spent by the judges in your community, to benefit from their expertise.
- The judges' itinerary should include all of the criteria.
- Provide the judges with the opportunity to interact with key individuals and network in your community.
- Let them see that you are proud of your achievements.

AWARDS CEREMONIES

Provincial Awards occur each fall as promoted by the provincial edition organizations and partners.

The National Awards Ceremonies, hosted in a different city each year, is held in the fall, in conjunction with the National Symposium on Parks and Grounds. All National Finalists are encouraged to attend. The communities are showcased by means of community exhibits and promotional material. Visit www.communitiesinbloom.ca/symposium-awards/ for more information.



GRANTS and CONTESTS

Scotts Best Garden Selection Program: A program that recognizes the hard work and dedication of citizens to create and maintain their gardens.

<https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/best-garden-selection/>

Scotts Gro for Good Garden Grants: for deserving communities, schools and non-profit civic organizations seeking to develop sustainable community gardens and greenspaces

<https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/groforgood/>

Nutrients for Life – School Garden Award: A grant to support a local school garden to all Canadian communities registered (all editions) in the CiB program.

<https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/nfl-school-garden-award/>

PROMOTIONS

www.communitiesinbloom.ca: CiB's website gives visibility to our participants in the NewsComm and Explore our Communities section of our website. The website also includes a resource centre featuring information from sponsors and communities along with electronic copies of our e-newsletters.

Social Networks: CiB participants are welcomed to send us updates, news and photos to post on our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages:

www.facebook.com/communitiesinbloom

www.twitter.com/cibcef www.instagram.com/cibcef

2026 THEME



We are pleased to announce that the 2026 CiB theme will be Therapeutic Gardening. More than ever, we recognize the restorative power of green spaces—gardens that nurture the mind, body, and spirit. Whether through community gardens, sensory landscapes, or the simple joy of tending plants, therapeutic gardening fosters connection, resilience, and well-being.



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