

# 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 regard 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.



Watson, 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).



Langham, 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.



Riverhurst, 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.



Moosomin and District Regional Park, 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.



Eastend, 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.



Nipawin, SK



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](http://www.CanadaHelps.org)

## Congratulations

### Eston, SK

Over 25 Years in the Saskatchewan Communities in Bloom Program  
and Still Growing!



## PROVINCIAL EDITIONS & PARTNERS – CONTACT INFORMATION

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



### BRITISH COLUMBIA

Catherine Kennedy  
c.kennedy@telus.net  
www.bccib.ca  
604-576-6506



### QUÉBEC

Annie Champagne  
annie.champagne@fleuronsduquebec.com  
www.fleuronsduquebec.com  
450-774-5707



### ALBERTA

Sharon Miller  
sharon@cibalberta.ca  
https://www.cibalberta.ca  
403-598-5346



### NEW BRUNSWICK

Program Specialist  
bloom@cib-cef.com  
www.communitiesinbloom.ca  
514-694-8871



### SASKATCHEWAN

Andrew Exelby  
aexelby@spra.sk.ca  
www.spra.sk.ca/cib  
306-780-9262 / 1-800-563-2555



### NOVA SCOTIA

Program Specialist  
bloom@cib-cef.com  
www.communitiesinbloom.ca  
514-694-8871



### MANITOBA

Cathy Shaluk  
coordinator@mbcommunitiesinbloom.ca  
www.mbcommunitiesinbloom.ca  
204-299-3124



### PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Program Specialist  
bloom@cib-cef.com  
www.communitiesinbloom.ca  
514-694-8871



### ONTARIO

Martin Quinn  
info@cibontario.ca  
www.cibontario.ca  
519-441-3499



### NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Program Specialist  
bloom@cib-cef.com  
www.communitiesinbloom.ca  
514-694-8871



YUKON



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES



NUNAVUT

Please contact the Program Specialist at 514-694-8871 – bloom@cib-cef.com

## 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. Based on provincial guidelines, success in a provincial evaluated category leads to the community being invited to the national program. 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.

### National Edition

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

#### Population

- Past National finalists from the previous year's national edition are invited back to the national competition
- Communities from the previous year's provincial editions as recommended by the respective provincial organization. (5 Bloom Competitive Winners from Saskatchewan)

#### Circle of Excellence

A non-competitive category for National Winners without an evaluation.

#### Class of Champions

A category where Canadian communities who have won in the Population category compete amongst themselves.

#### Grand Champions

A category where past winners of the Population, International Challenge and Class of Champions compete amongst themselves.

#### Special Attractions

A category that features green attractions such as parks, living history museums, public gardens, etc.

#### International Challenge

A competitive category between national and international winners.

*\*Nationally, Competitive categories require a minimum of 3 communities.*

*\*\*Communities in Bloom reserves the right to adjust national population categories based on registrations received.*

## 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](http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca). Registration can be done through the provincial organizations or the Communities in Bloom 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 a liaison with the municipal 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 exclusive to the National and International Edition, for evaluated communities only.

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

- A community does not have to be entered in a competitive category but will need to be evaluated.

- With the introduction of this enhanced higher award standards, the marking of scores will be more critical.



**Spello, Italy - International Floral Displays Award, presented by Ball**

**Székesfehérvár, Hungary - International Youth Involvement Award, presented by CiB**



**Mosonmagyaróvár, Hungary - International Community Involvement Award, presented by Communities in Bloom**

## PROGRAM COMMITMENT

*The participating communities have a responsibility to:*

- Involve the entire community to participate (with the support of municipal council)
- 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.
- Attend the Provincial and/or National awards ceremonies.
- 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.



**2025 National Symposium and the National and International Awards Ceremonies**  
**October 16-19, 2025**  
**Stratford, Ontario**

<https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/symposium-awards/>

## Saskatchewan - Communities in Bloom

**Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association**

Andrew Exelby

Consultant – Parks and Open Spaces

Telephone: (306) 780-9262

Fax: (306) 780-9257

Email: [aexelby@spra.sk.ca](mailto:aexelby@spra.sk.ca)

Website: [www.spra.sk.ca/cib](http://www.spra.sk.ca/cib)

**Provincial Partner**



Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association

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**SASK LOTTERIES**

## 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 green spaces.  
<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 Communities in Bloom program.  
<https://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/nfl-school-garden-award/>

## PROMOTIONS

[www.communitiesinbloom.ca](http://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 past magazines.

**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](http://www.facebook.com/communitiesinbloom)  
[www.twitter.com/cibcef](https://twitter.com/cibcef) [www.instagram.com/cibcef/](https://www.instagram.com/cibcef/)

## 2025 THEME



Looking ahead to 2025, we're excited to reveal our new Theme of the Year: Edible Gardens!

As food insecurity continues to impact communities, this theme shines a light on the many benefits of growing your own food. From vegetable and herb gardens to fruit-bearing plants like berries, tomatoes, and peppers, edible gardens are a powerful way to encourage sustainability, support local ecosystems, and foster community connections. By nurturing these spaces, we nurture ourselves and our environment.

Join us in 2025 to plant edible gardens, build community, and promote a greener, healthier future!



7856 Fifth Line South, Milton, ON  
L9T 2X8  
Tel.: 514-694-8871  
bloom@cib-cef.com  
www.communitiesinbloom.ca



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NUTRIENTS FOR LIFE / NUTRIMENTS POUR LA VIE



*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*