

Communities in Bloom 2017 Participation Guide

A Reference Guide for Participating Communities in the Ontario Edition

Enhancing green spaces in community settings



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Welcome to the Communities in Bloom Program!

Who we are

Communities in Bloom is a non-profit Canadian organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement and the challenge of a national program, with focus enhancing green spaces in communities.

Established with the guidance of Britain in Bloom, Tidy Towns of Ireland and Villes et Villages Fleuris de France, Communities in Bloom held its first edition in 1995 and 29 participating municipalities were honoured at the first awards ceremonies on Parliament Hill. The program now includes hundreds of communities across the country and an international challenge involving communities from the United States, Europe and Asia allows participants to compete internationally.

The program consists of communities receiving information and being evaluated either provincially, nationally or internationally by a volunteer jury of trained professionals on the accomplishments of their entire community (municipal, residential, corporate and institutional sectors, citizens) on eight key criteria: Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape, Turf & Groundcovers, Floral Displays and Community Involvement.

The pride, sense of community and feeling of accomplishment generated through participation are visible in communities all over Canada. These benefits make Communities in Bloom a program where everyone wins. Participants can benefit from the program through community initiatives and programs,

Program Benefits

while a valuable information exchange network allows communities to share accomplishments, best practices and projects.

Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society.

Communities will be able to recognize numerous benefits from participation in the Communities in Bloom program, including:

**Communities
in Bloom
Foundation**



**Fondation
Collectivités
en fleurs**

Communities in Bloom Foundation

- **Green & Sustainable Initiatives**, including increased awareness of the importance of horticulture and green spaces
- **Best Practices & Information Exchange** : through the website, comments from the judges and exchanges between communities
- **Valuable feedback from the judges**: judges provide expertise and provide information gathered through their evaluation tours
- **CiB Foundation**: Possibility of obtaining a bursary for a student in your community (more details on page 4)
- **Environmental Leadership**: environmental actions such as recycling, composting and water conservation are an integral part of the program evaluation
- **Tourism Development**: the participation in the program has proven to make communities better places to live in, to work in ...and to visit
- **Special Projects and promotional opportunities** such as the CiB magazine published twice a year (More details on page 8), the website and articles in other magazines.
- **Funding Initiatives** provided by sponsors such as the Scotts Gro1000 Community Garden Grant program and the CN EcoConnexions - From the Ground Up program
- **Community Involvement & Civic Pride**
- **Citizens, groups, organizations**, business and municipal government all mobilized and working together
- **Year-round projects** and continuous improvement for the entire community

The Communities in Bloom Foundation is requesting applications for bursaries.

The mission of the Communities in Bloom Foundation, a registered charity with registered charitable status, is to fund, develop and disseminate educational material on the value, importance, improvement and sustainable development of green spaces and the natural environment in our society.

Bursaries:

- Two (2) bursaries of \$1,000/each will be awarded to eligible successful individuals for the 2014 / 2015 school year;
- The bursaries will be awarded by November 30, 2014

Eligibility:

- Applicants must be registered in, and successfully complete, a full-time post-secondary level pertaining to ornamental and/or environmental horticulture programs in an accredited institution;
- Applicants must be involved in a community participating in the Communities in Bloom program (national or provincial editions);
- Successful recipients must agree to have their name and education information publicized throughout the Communities in Bloom network and public (website, magazine, etc.).

Selection:

- Applicants must submit, by September 30, 2014:
 - Personal information (names, address, phone and e-mail)
 - Education information (school, program)
 - Letter (minimum of 300 words / maximum of 500 words) indicating the reason and interest in studies pertaining to ornamental and/or environmental horticulture. The letter will also include details of any volunteer work done in the community.
- Successful recipients will be determined by the Communities in Bloom Foundation based on the applications received.

The Foundation wishes to establish a legacy for generations to come.

Program Criteria & Evaluation

The Communities in Bloom program is based on **8 key criteria**: Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape, Turf & Groundcovers, Floral Displays and Community Involvement

The following are descriptions of the 8 criteria, now divided into 6 sections for evaluation:

TIDINESS (*Section of the Evaluation Form*)

Tidiness includes an overall tidiness effort. Elements for evaluation are green spaces (parks, etc.), medians, boulevards, sidewalks, streets; municipal, commercial, institutional and residential properties; ditches, road shoulders, vacant lots and buildings; weed control, litter clean-up (including cigarette butts and gum), graffiti and vandalism programs.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION (*Section of the Evaluation Form*)

Environmental action includes efforts and achievement with respect to: policies, by-laws, programs and best practices, 3-R initiatives (reduce/reuse/recycle), waste reduction, composting sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, naturalization, and environmental stewardship activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.

HERITAGE CONSERVATION (*Section of the Evaluation Form*)

Heritage Conservation includes efforts to preserve heritage within their community. Priority in evaluation is given to natural heritage, as well as the integration of landscape and streetscapes as it pertains to the built heritage of a community. Also consists of preservation of cultural heritage which includes monuments, memorials, artefacts, museums and history, archives, traditions, customs, festivals and celebrations.

URBAN FORESTRY (*Section of the Evaluation Form*)

Urban Forestry includes the efforts with regards to written policies, by-laws, standards for tree management (selection, planting, and maintenance), long and short-term management plans, tree replacement policies, tree inventory, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), heritage, memorial and commemorative trees.

LANDSCAPE (*Section of the Evaluation Form*)

This section of the evaluation supports all efforts to create an environment showcasing the overall surroundings. The overall plan and design must be suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis. Elements for evaluation include: native and introduced materials; balance of plants, 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. Standards of execution and maintenance should demonstrate best practices, including quality of naturalization, use of groundcovers and wildflowers, turf management and maintenance.

TURF & GROUNDCOVERS

Now included in the Landscape section of the evaluation form, this criterion relates to turf management programs, maintenance, policies, standards, and best practices, as well as quality and use of groundcovers

FLORAL DISPLAYS (*Section of the Evaluation Form*)

"Floral Displays" evaluates efforts to design, plan, execute, and maintain floral displays of high quality standards. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, ornamental grasses) in the context of originality, distribution, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony. This pertains to flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets and window boxes.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Community Involvement includes public involvement in various community programs and projects, recognition of volunteers, and support toward community initiatives by the municipal, business and private sector. Recognized as such as a major component of the overall program, it has become a **key**

Process for Participation

Communities in Bloom - Responsibilities

sector to be included in each of the sections, and still retains a specific outstanding achievement award.

ORGANIZATION & PLANNING

- Produce an **evaluation form** & provide information on the evaluation process
- Create the **schedule** and coordinate the **judges' travel** to communities (in the months of July and August)
- Compile results of the evaluations & provide a completed evaluation report to each community following the annual Awards Ceremonies
- Prepare informative documents and provide support to communities
- Prepare for the Symposium & Awards Ceremonies

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITIES

- Communities can send in their profiles, projects, initiatives or news along with community events to be posted on the Communities in Bloom website at www.communitiesinbloom.ca
- Communities in Bloom encourages media coverage through press releases sent to the media contacts provided by the communities
- Participants are featured in the Communities in Bloom Magazine, published 2 to 3 times a year by the national office. The magazine provides information on the program, promotes participating communities and features articles of interest for the CiB expanded network
- Communities in Bloom coordinates and provides information to communities on networking and promotional opportunities
- Participants have access to the Information Exchange Network, consisting of valuable information & documents, available on the Leisure Information Network website (www.lin.ca/communities-in-bloom)
- Use of the Communities in Bloom logo, according to the logo guidelines provided by the national office
- Communities have the opportunity to exhibit a community display at the annual Symposium & Awards Ceremonies
- Communities have the opportunity to act as a Host city for either the Provincial or National Awards
- Yearly promotional opportunities are available to all participants and are detailed further in this guide

Participating Communities - Responsibilities

Participating Communities are responsible for the following:

Organization & Planning

- Paying a registration fee determined by population and category
- Involve the entire community, with the support of municipal council, in projects; create a CiB committee with wide community representation
- Prepare for the evaluation to take place in July or August
- Provide accommodation as required.
- Submit the accommodation details of the judges to the national office program coordinator
- Make note of the due dates for requested information (such as photos, media contacts, accommodation of the judges), so planning and promotion for your community can be coordinated by the national office. Due date guidelines can be found on the final page of this guide
- Communicate with the judges prior to their visit.
- Submit an itinerary to the coordinating judge ahead of the judges' visit
- Give recognition, when appropriate, to the sponsors

Communications

- Submit the community's committee members and media contacts to the national office
- Communities will be asked to submit a minimum of 6 quality photos to showcase their community on the Communities in Bloom website, magazine and presentations at the awards ceremonies
 - All communities are encouraged to take the best quality photos possible. Think of the 8 criteria and try to capture a unique shot depicting each one. Think of photos that show the benefits of the Communities in Bloom program, i.e. community, beautification, tourism shots etc.
 - Photographs need to be submitted in the following format: digital, minimum of 300 dpi at print size (min. 4" x 6"). As an indication, the photo should weigh approximately 800 KB to 1.5 MB (or more, depending on the size of the photo)
 - Please ensure you have the appropriate releases, rights and permission to use the photos and clearly indicate photo credits when applicable

Process for Participation continued

Special Projects

Each year Communities in Bloom and its partners offer new promotional opportunities to its participants. The national office sends out detailed information to communities as initiatives unfold throughout the program. Here are some of the exciting opportunities to look out for:

Home Hardware Dealer Involvement Contest: The goal of this contest is to learn more about the initiatives of Home Hardware and their local committees. (www.homehardware.ca)

2014 Home Hardware Charity Calendar: The Home Hardware Charity Calendar is a fundraiser for the SickKids Foundation (www.sickkidsfoundation.com). The 2014 Home Hardware calendar will be distributed in 450,000 copies throughout over 1,000 of its stores. All calendars are purchased by Home Hardware dealers and distributed in their stores. In addition, money is also raised by soliciting Vendor sponsorship.

Scotts Miracle-Gro Garden Contest: The contest celebrates outstanding residential gardens (flower garden, edible garden and child-run edible garden). (www.scotts.ca)

GRO1000 Grassroots Grants: The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company has established **GRO1000**, a commitment to install 1,000 gardens and green spaces in the United States, Canada and Europe by 2018. To help foster the development of gardens and green spaces in Canada as part of **GRO1000**, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company is awarding Grassroots Grants to local communities in the amount of up to \$1,500. (www.grogood.com/GiveBackToGro/GRO1000/Canada)

GRO1000 Showcase Garden Grant: In addition to the **GRO1000** Grassroots Grants, Scotts Canada Limited will invite some outstanding communities to apply for the 2013 Showcase Garden grant. The recipient for the 2013 Showcase Garden grant was awarded to the *Sarnia Goodwill One Tomato Community Garden project*, Sarnia Ontario. (www.scotts.ca)

CN EcoConnexions - From the Ground Up: A program that aims to promote the greening of municipal properties across Canada. (www.cnfromthegroundup.ca)

VIA Rail's Canada's Garden Route: Canada's Garden Route is not a 'route' per se, instead, it is the most comprehensive compendium of Canadian gardens and garden experiences. (www.canadagardenroute.ca)

Garden of Remembrance: New in 2013, the program will aim to encourage communities to develop gardens to honor veterans and recognize the sacrifices made by their families.

Promotional initiatives

Information Exchange Network: Consists of valuable information and documents gathered by the judges and made available to all communities. (www.lin.ca/communities-in-bloom)

NewsComm: This section of the CiB website contains news, initiatives, and successful stories that are sent to us from CiB participants. (<http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/newscomm>)

Explore Our Communities encourages community tourism development, information exchange, networking opportunities, training sessions and workshops in participating communities. (<http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/explore-our-communitie>)

CiB Magazine: Opportunity of providing an article that showcases an initiative, a special project or an achievement within your community.

Exhibits and presentations during the Symposium and Awards Ceremonies.

Social Media: Community exposure on the CiB Facebook and Twitter page. (www.facebook.com/communitiesinbloom; www.twitter.com/cibcef)

Articles and features in magazines such as the Municipal World magazine.

Outstanding Achievement Awards

In addition to overall awards for population categories, individual awards are given for each criteria, evaluated in the program and for special initiatives. Outstanding Achievement awards are open to all communities participating in the **2014 Ontario Edition** of Communities in Bloom, whether or not the community is being evaluated.

Provincial Judges will submit nominations for the Outstanding Achievement Awards.

Outstanding Achievement Awards are presented for the following areas:

-  **Tidiness**
-  **Environmental Action**
-  **Heritage Conservation**
-  **Urban Forestry**
-  **Landscape**
-  **Floral Displays**
-  **Community Involvement**
-  **Youth Involvement**
-  **Community of Gardeners**

Process for Participation continued

How communities are evaluated

The evaluation form is based on **8 criteria**, now divided into **6 sections** that focus on **4 sectors** of the community. The 6 sections are *Tidiness*, *Environmental Action*, *Heritage Conservation*, *Urban Forestry*, *Landscape & Floral Displays*. *Turf & Groundcovers* has been incorporated into the *Landscape* section, while *Community Involvement*, recognized as such as a major component of the overall program, is now one of the 4 sectors of evaluation (along with *Municipal*, *Business & Institutional* and *Residential*).

The Communities in Bloom Judges

Evaluation Form

- Communities are evaluated using an evaluation form based on the 8 program criteria, divided in 6 sections
- The evaluation form is sent to the communities early in the program
- The judges complete the evaluation form after visiting the community and will provide general comments and suggestions that will benefit the community as it moves forward in the Communities in Bloom program
- Communities will be evaluated using a “bloom” rating determined by the total score of the evaluation:
 - 0 to 55 % = 1 Bloom
 - 56 to 63 % = 2 Blooms
 - 64 to 72 % = 3 Blooms
 - 73 to 81 % = 4 Blooms
 - 82 % and over = 5 Blooms
- For competitive categories, the judges will come to a consensus on the winning community based on highest total score

- The final evaluation form will be forwarded to the community following the National Awards Ceremonies
- Evaluation forms are confidential - we do not make the scores or the forms public

Evaluation Process

- After the judging dates are established the community is notified and given the names of the judges, their biographies and contact information
- We make every attempt to accommodate requested dates, though it is not always possible due to flight schedules and distance between communities
- The Coordinating judge will contact you with the arrival and departure times of the judges
- Judges will normally arrive in the morning, stay overnights and depart the next morning

- Judges should have the opportunity to visit a good cross section of the community and meet with those involved in the community
- The Communities in Bloom / local committee is responsible for completing a “To-Do” Package supplied by the national office, as well as providing additional information, such as the community profile book

Evaluated Categories

- Competitive Categories are determined by population. The population categories may change slightly every year, depending on registrations
- Non-competitive evaluated communities receive an evaluation form and bloom rating. The evaluation form may be tailored to address the particularities of the category

The Communities in Bloom volunteer judges are professionals (active or retired) in the fields of horticulture, the environment, sustainability, community development, education, parks management, urban management and other related fields. Judges are aware of the various challenges communities face and are knowledgeable of the solutions. They are also aware of both the municipal and grassroots involvement required for community participation.

The judges are volunteers who dedicate their time to the Communities in Bloom program, visiting communities across Canada and abroad to evaluate and advise communities, providing support and feedback in order to help communities succeed.

Judges are paired in order to complement each other’s skill sets so the community may get the most out of the evaluation experience.

The national office will ask communities to provide feedback on the judges and program following the evaluation date so that we can continually improve our program.

Evaluation:

Know the evaluation form and understand the criteria. Preparation of materials that address all the criteria in the evaluation form will be most helpful.

Budget:

While participation in the program does not require considerable financial resources, obtaining funds and services to promote the program, involving the community, honouring the participants and volunteers, attending the awards ceremonies etc. are recommended. Contact the national office if you would like to network with other communities that established sponsorship and/or fundraising

Tips for success!

Community Profile Book (for communities that are being evaluated)

The CPB is a document that showcases communities' achievements in the Communities in Bloom program as well as provides information on all its related initiatives.

The design and comprehensiveness is at the full discretion of the community.

And...It is important to note that the CPB is not itself evaluated but is a tool for the judges as it provides information on the community's achievements. The document can also be a promotional tool for the community.

Ideally, the CPB should be submitted to the judges and National Office prior to your community's evaluation date.

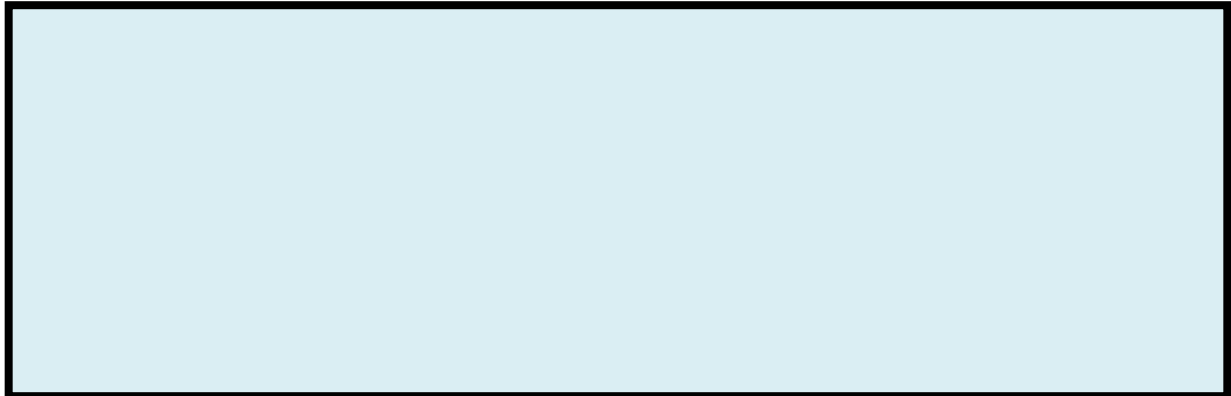
1) Please mail or e-mail your CPB to the Provincial Office. (**Note: Digital format is preferred*)

Mail:

Ontario Communities in Bloom
217 Elizabeth St.

Goderich, ON N7A 3T9 or EMAIL to cibon2017@gmail.com

2) Please **contact your judges** for preferred submission timing and method.



If sending the CPB in advance, help the judges prepare their visit by including additional information, such as:

- an itinerary and a list of committee members, sponsors, partners and involved organizations
- the names of the people who will be part of the evaluation tour
- the municipal information form

The CPB can be complemented with separate documentation that includes prints, photos and newspaper clippings, brochures, fliers and other information pertaining to the CIB program. This "scrapbook" can be given to the judges upon their arrival and returned if required. Finally, if a community has the resources it can undertake a more detailed and comprehensive CPB that it can use as information for citizens and a promotional "tool" for its Community.

The design and comprehensiveness is at the full discretion of the community.

Communities in Bloom logo

The CIB National Logo is comprised of three stylized flowers, the Communities in Bloom name and slogan in both English and French, Canada and the registration trademark.

This icon may be used:

- to support the CIB National Program
- to support the CIB Provincial Programs
- corporate CIB stationery
- newspaper articles
- ads that support the CIB programs
- accredited CIB promotional material
- websites
- merchandise
- flags & banners

Who may use the CiB Logo?

- A municipality participating in an annual CiB edition
- A municipality that has been named "(year) Communities in Bloom winning community" by the CiB judging committee
- By accredited media reporting on CiB events
- Credited companies for use of CiB promotional materials
- Accredited sponsors, supporters and friends of the CiB program
- Anyone who has received permission from the CiB organization for the purposes of promoting the CiB program

Why should the CiB Logo be used?

- Use is encouraged to help a community identify, promote and celebrate its designation as "(year) Communities in Bloom winning community".
- By any participating CIB municipality encouraging its citizens to participate in community improvement goals
- Use is encouraged by sponsors / supporters of the CIB program demonstrating support for the participating communities
- Use is encouraged by individuals of a participating community in support of a CIB event

CiB logo specifications

All Applications of the CIB National Logos are available for:

- Four colour process (CMYK) print
- Two special colours
- PMS 032 Red and PMS 348 Green
- Black and White continuous tone for one colour use
- With or without the slogan

CiB Logo File Formats

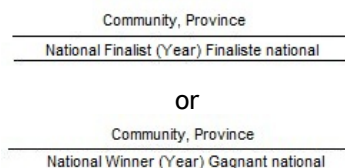
- jpeg: screen resolution suitable for websites and PowerPoint style presentations
- jpeg: high resolution suitable for desk top printers
- eps: vector art for graphic professionals

Graphic Standards for the CIB Logos / CIB "Bloom Rating" Logos:

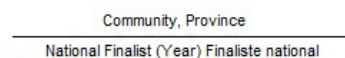
- The CIB Logo / CIB "Bloom Rating" Logo art may not be altered in any way, shape or form
- The proportion of the type and the icon must remain consistent to the logos provided
- The overall size may vary, but not the proportions.
- The Logo should not be reduced to the size that it becomes illegible.

CiB National "Bloom Rating" logo

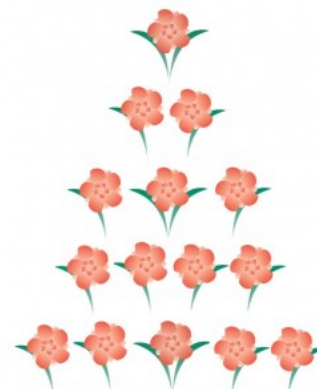
There are 2 versions of the Bloom Rating Logo designed to be used by participants in The National Program. One denotes the community's bloom rating & year of participation. The other also indicates winner.



IMPORTANT: If the community indicates that it is a National Winner, the Year must be included



Any community that has received a "Bloom Rating" can get the logo appropriate to the number of "Blooms" they received.



National Symposium on Parks & Grounds and Awards Ceremonies

Each Year, Provincial and National Awards Ceremonies, as well as the National Symposium on Parks & Grounds, offer a unique opportunity for participants to network with colleagues, share valuable information, learn from experts and celebrate achievements.

The mission of the National Symposium on Parks and Grounds is to educate, inform, and share Best Practices, addressing new and specialized topics within the purview of the Communities in Bloom program. Through both presentations and technical visits in the local community, delegates learn from the engaging and multifaceted symposium sessions while networking with peers.

The National Awards Ceremonies, hosted in a different location every year, is held in the fall in conjunction with the National Symposium on Parks and Grounds. The Awards Ceremonies are exciting events that highlight the achievements of participants in the Communities in Bloom program. The winners of each population category, national and international finalists, are announced along with their bloom-ratings and special mentions. Outstanding Achievement and Special Awards are also presented to communities excelling in particular areas.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVOLVEMENT

“Within the context of climate change and environmental concerns, communities involved in the Communities in Bloom program can be proud of their efforts, which provide real and meaningful environmental solutions and benefit all of society.”

COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM IS MADE POSSIBLE BY

The commitment of local, provincial and national volunteers

The support of elected officials and of staff in municipalities

The dedication of our judges, staff and organizations

The contribution of our sponsors and partners