



Communities in Bloom International Challenge

Enhancing green spaces in communities

THE PROGRAM

The International Challenge is an invitation from Communities in Bloom to municipalities from around the world.

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 national program, with focus on enhancing green spaces in communities. 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.

Trained volunteer judges evaluate communities and the overall contributions of municipality, businesses & institutions and residents, including volunteer efforts in regards to the environment, green spaces and natural heritage.

Since 1995, communities have recognized numerous benefits from participating in the program:

Economic benefits

- Best practices and information exchange
- Valuable information and feedback from the judges
- Marketing and promotional opportunities
- Positive benefits for the tourism, hospitality and retail industries

Social benefits

- Increased civic pride, community involvement and improved quality of life
- Mobilization of citizens, groups, businesses and municipality working together
- Participation from all ages and walks of life learning more about their community
- Information exchanges with provincial, national and international communities

Environmental stewardship through the enhancement of green spaces

- Improving air quality through tree planting
- Preservation of green spaces
- Improvements in energy and water conservation
- Awareness of environmental sustainability

www.communitiesinbloom.ca

People, plants and pridegrowing together

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

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Tidiness includes an overall tidiness effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and the residents throughout the community. 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.

Environmental Action pertains to the impact of human activities on the environment and the subsequent efforts and achievements of the community with respect to: 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 environmental stewardship activities under the guiding principles of sustainable development pertaining to green spaces.

Heritage Conservation includes efforts to preserve 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 refers to the heritage that helps define the community including the legacy of tangible elements such as heritage buildings, monuments, museums and intangible elements such as traditions, festivals and celebrations.

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

Landscape includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks and green spaces 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.

Floral Displays evaluates efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute, and maintain floral displays of high quality standards. Evaluation includes the design and arrangements of flowers and plants, ornamental grasses, edible plants, water efficient and pollinator friendly plants in the context of originality, location, diversity and balance, colour, and harmony. This pertains to flowerbeds, carpet bedding, containers, baskets and window boxes.

BLOOM RATINGS AND LEVELS

Bloom ratings are awarded based on the scoring of the evaluation form:

- Up to 55%: 1 bloom
- 56% to 63%: 2 blooms
- 64% to 72%: 3 blooms
- 73% to 81%: 4 blooms
- 82% and up: 5 blooms

At the 5 blooms rating, there are four (4) levels:

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

EVALUATION SECTORS:

Municipal:

- Municipal properties, parks and green spaces, streets, streetscapes
- Properties owned and run by municipality such as museums, historical sites

Business and Institutions: Properties owned and managed by

- Business : commercial sector, shopping centres, streets, industrial parks, manufacturing plants
- Institutions: schools, universities, churches, hospitals, service and government buildings, museums
- Farms : in rural communities, farms can be considered in this section

Residential:

- Citizens and citizen groups acting within their own properties

Community Involvement:

The principle of community involvement is so fundamental to the program that it is considered in each segment of the evaluation.

- Individuals, community organizations and citizen groups – all contributing to various aspects of community improvement
- Organized clubs such as horticultural societies, garden clubs, and community associations.



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