

Communities in Bloom

Getting Started Package



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Inspired by Britain in Bloom, Tidy Towns of Ireland and Villes et Villages Fleuris de France, Communities in Bloom (CiB) is a Canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, beautification and improving quality of life through community participation and the challenge of a national program, with a focus on the protection and promotion of green spaces.

The inaugural edition of the Communities in Bloom program took place in 1995 and 29 participating municipalities were honoured at the first awards ceremonies on Parliament Hill. Communities in Bloom now includes hundreds of communities participating across the country in either the national or provincial levels of the program, or in an international challenge involving communities from the United States, Asia and several European countries.

In 2006, the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) undertook responsibility for the administration of Alberta's provincial edition of Communities in Bloom (CiB Alberta). A Provincial Coordinator is contracted on a part-time basis to manage the program and is provided assistance by ARPA administrative and seasonal support staff.

ARPA and Communities in Bloom

Communities in Bloom, with its commitment to “fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, beautification and to improving quality of life through community participation”, fits hand in glove with ARPA's mission of “building healthy citizens, their communities and their environments”. ARPA considers programs such as Communities in Bloom Alberta as key to realizing its vision, namely:

“A province and communities within, that embrace and proactively use recreation and parks as essential means for enhancing individual wellbeing and community vitality, economic sustainability and natural resource protection and conservation.”

It follows that Community Involvement is viewed as the most important underlying principle of the CiB Alberta program. The pride, sense of community and feeling of accomplishment generated through participation are visible in communities throughout the province. These benefits make Communities in Bloom a program where everyone wins. Participants benefit from the program through community initiatives and programs, while a valuable information exchange network allows communities to share accomplishments, best practices and projects.

Alberta's provincial program, Communities in Bloom Alberta (CiB Alberta), has seen as many as 62 communities from across the province participate in a single program year. CiB Alberta and ARPA, through their affiliation with the national Communities in Bloom organization, are an integral part of one of the most recognizable and well respected, community-based recreation and parks programs in Canada.



Communities have recognized numerous benefits from participating in the CiB Alberta program, namely:

- 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, provincial, national and international communities,
- Valuable information and feedback from trained judges,
- Decreased vandalism,
- Economic development and increased property values,
- Marketing and promotional opportunities,
- Positive benefits for the tourism, hospitality and retail industries, and
- Improved quality of life.



1. Gather Information

New communities interested in participating for the first time usually begin by contacting ARPA or the CiB national office or, by visiting either of their respective websites at <http://www.cib.arpaonline.ca> or www.communitiesinbloom.ca.

Interested communities are encouraged to contact the CiB Alberta's Provincial Coordinator, Karen Snethun, at ksnethun@arpaonline.ca or 403-789-6287 to find out more information and/or arrange for a CiB introductory presentation.

2. Complete the Registration Form

- Fill out the 2019 Registration Form by [clicking here](#). Communities are requested to submit their registrations by March 31st.

3. Establish a Local Communities in Bloom Committee

The local committee of CiB is usually comprised of community volunteers and ideally, at least one member of the municipal council, as well as representatives of local associations, businesses and organizations interested in horticulture, heritage and improving community life.

The purpose of the committee is to:

- Involve as many people as possible in the community by means of local contests, which increase awareness about the program, its benefits and opportunities,
- Act as liaison with the municipal authorities, and
- Create and coordinate sub-committees to help with various projects within an evaluation element.

4. Wait for the Get Started Package & To-Do List to Arrive in April

5. Stay Connected

Through its newsletter (Blooms & Bits) and regular emails, CiB Alberta stays connected year round with current and past participating communities. Watch your inbox! Also plan to attend the Provincial Awards in September to network and share ideas.



Choosing a Participation Category

Competitive

When a community registers in the Competitive category, it along with other communities in its population grouping will be visited and evaluated by a team of qualified volunteer judges. Population groupings are reviewed annually and modified if necessary according to the number of registrations received that year.

Typical population groupings are as follows:

- 1 - 500
- 501 - 2,000
- 2,001 - 6,000
- 6,001 - 15,000
- 15,001 - 50,000
- 50,001+

Every community is evaluated and scored by trained, volunteer judges using a standard Evaluation Form and awarded with both a bloom rating and a “mention” for a special achievement or initiative. The winner in each population grouping is determined according to the community receiving the highest score.

To be eligible to participate the following year in the National Edition of CiB, winning communities must also have earned the maximum 5 Blooms. Should a winning community choose not to participate in the National Edition, they can maintain their eligibility for the National program for up to three years after their win through participation in the Provincial Edition in the non-competitive Friends category.

Friends - Evaluted or Non-Evaluted

If a community wants to participate in the CiB program but does not wish to “compete” with other communities, this may be the most appropriate category. Communities are not grouped according to their population size and there are no “winners” declared in the Friends category.

Communities who are new to CiB often view the Friends category as a way for to ease into the program without the “pressure” of competing.



There are also communities registered in Friends who are past participants, who simply want to take a year off to rest and regroup their volunteers, but don't want to lose contact with the program.

Other communities have no interest in "competing" and simply wish to gain from the inherent value of Communities in Bloom as a framework and motivation for residents to enhance the quality of life in their community and receive valuable feedback on their projects.

Within the Friends category, a community can choose to participate with or without an evaluation. However, having the judges come to your community to evaluate your hard work and award a Bloom Rating is always a great way to gain valuable feedback on your projects, and an excellent means of motivating your community.

Novice

New communities or communities that have not been evaluated since 2016 can enter. The community is evaluated in three criteria areas of the community's choice. This non-competitive evaluation includes an evaluation experience and a program workshop with the judges. The intention of the Novice category is for the community to participate competitively or as an Evaluated Friend the following year. Communities are not permitted to remain in the Novice category for more than one consecutive year.

Special Note: Communities that choose to participate without an evaluation are required to be evaluated at least once every three years to continue their association with the program, including the right to use the CiB logo.



Registration

All participating communities pay an annual registration fee that is based on their respective population size:

- 1 - 500 (\$225)
- 501 - 2,000 (\$275)
- 2,001 - 6,000 (\$325)
- 6,001 - 15,000 (\$400)
- 15,001 - 50,000 (\$450)
- 50,001+ (\$500)

Hosting the Judges

Communities being evaluated are requested to provide their assigned judging team with meals and overnight accommodations (two separate and private rooms) for 1 night (B & B's and billeting are acceptable) while they are in the community conducting the evaluation.

Community Profile and Municipal Information Form

The Community Profile and Municipal Information Form are documents that we suggest the Community prepare in advance for presentation to the judges when they arrive. The judges will use them as important reference tools both while in the community and later when completing their evaluation.

Evaluation Day Itinerary

After being initially contacted by their assigned judges, the community prepares a proposed itinerary for them to review, preferably well in advance of the evaluation date. The judges are always pleased to offer suggestions on preparing an itinerary.

Community Involvement

Participating communities should strive to engage as many people as possible from all sectors and age groups in the community as well as their municipal council.



Evaluation of the Judges and CiB Alberta Program

At the end of their visit, the judges provide community representatives with a copy of the “Evaluation of the Judges” form, which gives them the opportunity to evaluate both the CiB Alberta program and the judges. The judges are not provided with copies of their respective evaluations until after the Provincial Awards ceremonies in the fall.



Trained volunteer judges evaluate the achievements of the entire community: municipality, businesses, institutions and residents including volunteer effort, as community involvement is integrated in all aspects of the evaluation, in regards to the following criteria; Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape and Floral Displays.

The following are descriptions of the criteria:

Tidiness (Section of the Evaluation Form)

Tidiness includes an overall tidiness effort made by the municipality, businesses, institutions, and residents of the community. 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 and signage, with regard to weeds, maintenance and repair, litter clean-up (including cigarette butts and gum), graffiti and vandalism.

Environmental Action (Section of the Evaluation Form)

Environmental action includes efforts and achievement by the municipality, businesses, institutions, and residents of the community with respect to: policies, by-laws and best practices, 3-R initiatives (reduce/reuse/recycle), waste reduction, landfill sites, hazardous waste collections, water conservation, naturalization, environmental stewardship activities, and environmentally friendly transportation under the guiding principles of sustainable development.

Heritage Conservation (Section of the Evaluation Form)

Heritage Conservation includes efforts made by the municipality, businesses and institutions, and residents 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.

It also consists of preservation of cultural heritage which includes monuments, memorials, artifacts, museums and history, archives, traditions, customs, heritage foods and the arts and festivals and celebrations. The evaluation includes:

- Natural heritage management plans: sites, parks, cemeteries, heritage gardens and trees, native plants; the relationship of the landscape to the built heritage;
- Overall preservation of traditions and customs through year-round festivals and celebrations, events and parades, heritage foods and the arts.

As well, the participation of groups such as the Historical Society is considered.



Urban Forestry (Section of the Evaluation Form)

Urban Forestry includes the efforts made by the municipality, residents, businesses and institutions with regards to written policies, by-laws, and 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 municipal, commercial and residential 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. The evaluation will consider how the spaces create a sense of place within the community, actively utilized year-round.

Floral Displays (Section of the Evaluation Form)

“Floral Displays” evaluates the efforts made by the municipality, businesses and institutions, and residential sectors of the community 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

Note: Community Involvement is a fundamental principle of the CiB program and is evaluated in each of the above elements.



Evaluation Day and Reports

Two person teams of trained volunteer judges travel to participating communities across Alberta during July and August. Using a standard evaluation form and scoring process, judges assess the efforts and achievements of each community with regards to the major elements: tidiness, environmental action, heritage conservation, urban forestry, landscape, and floral displays.

Based on a tally of the points awarded by the judges under each of the elements, the community is assigned a “Bloom Rating” of 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 5 blooms

The judges submit the completed evaluation reports to the Provincial Coordinator at the end of their judging tour.

Communities are provided with their results and a copy of the Completed Evaluation Report at the Provincial Awards Ceremony in September.



The details and exact deadlines of information requested from communities will be sent to you by email. Please inform the Provincial Coordinator if you change your email address or if you have any questions. It is best if the CiB Contact person in your community disperses the information to the Committee

Happenings	Dates
Community Info Package and “To Do” List	Emailed to community after registering
Judges’ Contact Info & Biographies	End of May – Emailed to each community
Judges Accommodation – Preliminary estimate of where they will be staying.	June 1, 2019 – Send to Provincial Coordinator and your assigned judges
Committee Member List	June 1, 2019 – Send to Provincial Coordinator
Media & MLA/MP Lists	June 1, 2019 – Send to Provincial Coordinator
Evaluation Dates	Early July to mid-August
Itinerary	Submit to Provincial Coordinator and your judges a minimum of 3 weeks prior to your Evaluation Day
Community Profile – Electronic preferred	Submit to Provincial Coordinator and your judges a minimum of 3 weeks prior to your Evaluation Day
Municipal Information Form	Submit to your assigned judges a minimum of 3 weeks prior to your Evaluation Day. Have a hard copy on hand for Evaluation Day
The Judges are Coming – Press Release for each community	CiB sends to your local media contacts when provided, 1-2 days prior your evaluation date
Photos – 6 high-resolution photos of your community (over 800kB if possible)	By August 17, 2019 - send to Provincial Coordinator.



Happenings	Dates
Evaluation Form – For the CiB Alberta Program & Judges	Submit to Provincial Coordinator immediately after your Evaluation Day
Alberta Provincial Awards	September, 2019 - TBD
National Conference & Awards	September 25-28, 2019 - Yarmouth, NS



The Community Profile Book is an important document that Communities in Bloom (CiB) judges will be using as a reference both while in the community, and later when completing their evaluation.

Besides being an informational tool for the judges, the Community Profile is an excellent means of promoting a community to visitors, town administration, local sponsors and potential volunteers.

You can create a hand-made or electronic version (or both) of your Community Profile. There are numerous advantages to creating an electronic version of the Community Profile:

- Put your Community Profile on your community website, the CiB website and other national databases.
- Easily update your Community Profile for next year.
- Provides your Town Council with a summary of the community. It is also easier for Council to use when promoting your community.
- Plan to send an electronic version (PDF) of your CiB Alberta for inclusion on the CiB Alberta website.

It is strongly suggested that hard-copies of the Community Profile be placed in the local and regional libraries and Visitor Information Centers, at the administration building/town hall, and on the community's website.

To successfully meet the needs of the judges and the community, the Community Profile should consider each of the following guidelines:

- Be clearly and concisely written, describing the community efforts and achievements for each of the standard CiB judging elements, i.e., Tidiness, Environmental Action, Heritage Conservation, Urban Forestry, Landscape (including turf and groundcovers) and Floral Displays.
- Community involvement is a fundamental principle of the Communities in Bloom program. Information is needed under each heading about contributions from the community. e.g., municipal, business/industrial, service clubs, churches, schools, not-for-profit groups, and residents.
- Describe how the recommendations from previous evaluations have been addressed.
- Be current and relevant to the present day situation in the community. i.e., updated annually.
- Include lists of Communities in Bloom Committee members, municipal officials, staff, and local sponsors.



- Include the one-page Municipal Information Form early on in the document.
- Use appropriately-sized font for headings and sections consistently throughout the document.
- Be portable and lightweight. Electronic versions make your information easier to share and promote your community.
- It is highly recommended that the Community Profile be proof read and edited by people not directly connected to the local CiB Committee before printing.

The Community Profile generates a feeling of pride in your community and can be successfully complimented with supplementary information in a binder. This binder can include photographs of local CiB events, brochures, flyers and print/photo/newspaper/magazine clippings (complete with source, date and page).

It is helpful to judges to arrange all information in sections corresponding to the judging elements. This supplementary information is useful for judges to examine while in a community, and is returned to the community after the preliminary evaluation.

With careful advance planning, the Community Profile can be prepared so that it is excellent in form and content, and inexpensive to produce.

Examples of Community Profile can be found on the CiB Alberta website



The benefits of Communities in Bloom activities accumulate over time. Many of Alberta's most successful Communities in Bloom participants have been involved for many years.

Local Communities in Bloom initiatives obtain support through various methods:

- Local Sponsorship
- Municipal Support
- Private Donations
- National and Provincial Grants
- Corporate Sponsorships
- Fundraising Events

Financial as well as in-kind support can be obtained. In-kind support is equally as valuable, as it provides services or materials in place of cash support.

Many funding programs exist. A selection of programs includes:

CiB Programs:

- CN EcoConnexions From the Ground Up Program
- Scotts Miracle-Gro GRO1000 Grassroots Gardens
- Scotts Miracle-Gro Best Garden Selection
- CN EcoConnexions - From the Ground UP
- Nutrients for Life - School Garden Award
- Canada's Garden Route
- Gardens of Remembrance program
- Home Hardware Dealer Involvement Contest
- Home Hardware - Canada's Backyard Contest

External Programs:

- Home Depot Canada Foundation
- TD Green Streets
- Farm Credit Canada AgriSpirit Fund
- EcoAction Community Funding Program (Environment Canada)
- Community Initiatives Program (Alberta Culture)
- Evergreen Canada
- Farmers Grow Communities (Monsanto)
- War Memorial Restoration (Veterans Affairs)
- Coop Community Spaces Grant
- Toyota Evergreen Learning Grounds
- Edible Trees (Canada)
- Canadian Garden Grants (Whole Kids Foundation)
- Seed Foundation (Seed Master)



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

Communities in Bloom Foundation

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 \$500/each will be awarded to eligible individuals for the 2018/2019 school year: The bursaries will be awarded by September 30, 2019.

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);

Thank You for Your Involvement!



The 2018 CiB Alberta Provincial Awards Ceremonies took place in Strathcona County, Alberta. At the Provincial Awards, each participating community received a certificate highlighting its bloom rating as well as a “Mention” highlighting a significant local achievement or project.

Special certificates were also presented to the winning community in each of the competitive population categories. Anyone wanting to know more about CiB Alberta and/or network with the Judges and individuals from other participating communities is encouraged to attend these enjoyable and informative events.

The 2019 Provincial Awards for CiB Alberta will be TBD. Check the CiB Alberta webpage for further information. Further details will be passed on to all CiB Alberta communities throughout the coming summer as they become available.

For more information about the 2019 CiB National Awards and Symposium you can visit:
www.communitiesinbloom.ca/symposium-awards/



The CiB program and participants are promoted throughout the year at numerous trade and consumer shows such as the Landscape and Nursery Trades Association's Green Industry Show, Alberta Horticultural Association Conference, AAMDC Trade Show, etc.

Communities are also listed on both the National CiB website, www.communitiesinbloom.ca, and the CiB Alberta website, cib.arpaonline.ca.

Participating communities are featured quarterly in Alberta's provincial Communities in Bloom newsletter, Blooms & Bits, and the national. Communities in Bloom Magazine showcase participating communities and sponsors with photos, results and articles.

Communities can also find their Community Profile Book on our website.



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.

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This icon may be used:

- 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 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

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.



Please download and fill in the [CiB Signs Order Form](#) to order your signs.



There are many resource articles located on the CiB Alberta website:

- [Container Planting](#)
- [Communities in Bloom During the Winter](#)
- [Guidelines for Preparing the Community Profile Book](#) *UPDATED*
- [Basic Pruning Principles](#)
- [Composting Overview and Resource List](#)
- [Trees are Good, Benefits of Trees](#)
- [Trees are Good, Pruning Mature Trees](#)
- [Trees and the Municipal Landscape](#)
- [Ideas and Initiatives](#)
- [CiB and Sustainable Development](#)

View the CiB Alberta website at: cib.arpaonline.ca



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On behalf of ARPA and the CiB Alberta team, we thank you very much for your involvement in the 2017 Provincial edition. All Communities in Bloom participants can be proud of their efforts that real and meaningful environmental solutions, and benefit all of society.

A Special Thank You To...

- Local, provincial and national volunteers for their commitment
- Elected officials and the staff in municipalities for their ongoing support
- CiB Judges for their tireless hours of commitment
- Our sponsors and partners for their valuable contributions

