



**Chatham-Kent
awarded
FIVE BLOOMS
and
BEST COMMUNITY OF GARDENERS
in NATIONAL
Communities In Bloom Competition**



Congratulations!

Not only has Chatham-Kent earned the highest honour, 5 BLOOMS, at the National level of this year's Communities In Bloom competition, but the Municipality was the recipient of the Scotts Best Community of Gardeners Award. Results were revealed at the National Awards Ceremony held in Brandon, Manitoba on Saturday, September 23rd.

The 2006 Communities In Bloom judges tour was an exceptionally rewarding experience. National judges Ed Lawrence and Ken O'Brien demonstrated an obvious appreciation for our community and its citizens throughout their intense 4 day tour at the end of July. Their compliments and encouragement have been reinforced in the detailed evaluation received this past weekend. Special mention of our Garden of the Week Program was made and we were selected to receive one of only 12 internationally distributed Criteria Awards. The overwhelming distinction of being the Best Community of Gardeners gives credit to precisely those who deserve it most. The National judges describe the Municipality as follows: "Chatham-Kent...spread over a large area of farmland, boasts an active, community-minded horticultural society in almost every one of its constituent communities. Among its gardening resources are: the excellent research and teaching facilities of Ridgetown College"... "; the Bothwell Town Square, transformed from a ho-hum space into a pleasant public garden; the rebirth of Mickle Park with plantings; the rehabilitation of McGregor Creek and the new sculpture "Spirit of the Woods"; and the gorgeous harbour at Mitchell's Bay Wharf, maintained completely by volunteers. Several private gardens present a colourful presence at curbside and enliven their neighbourhoods as do local businesses, such as Open Window that has landscaped an adjoining corner lot to make a treat for the eyes."

With the implementation of some tough annual revisions, each year's evaluation grid has become considerably more challenging. Yet, since our initial non-competitive entry in 2002, we have consistently improved our overall scores from 73% to 77% at the provincial level, then 81% to 82% nationally. A community must acquire at least 82% to maintain the prestigious status of a 5 Bloom community. In 2006 Chatham-Kent proudly accepted an overwhelmingly awesome score of 86.85%!

Competing in the 'over 100,000' population category this year, we were up against the large urban centres of Brampton ON (the 2006 champion), Kingston ON, Markham ON, Mississauga ON, and Metro Moncton NB. The Communities In Bloom assessment takes into consideration 8 different components that constitute a flourishing or 'blooming' community. Participating communities are judged based upon the combined efforts of the municipal, commercial, and private sectors in these 8 categories.

Our 2006 results are as follows:	Marks	
Tidiness	108.0/125	86.4%
Environmental Awareness	101.0/121	83.5%
Community Involvement	110.5/125	88.4%
Natural & Cultural Heritage Conservation	110.5/125	88.4%
Tree/Urban Forest Management	108.5/125	86.8%
Landscaped Areas	107.5/125	86.0%
Floral Displays	112.0/125	89.6%
Turf and Groundcovers	107.0/125	85.6%
Total	865 /996	86.85%

Congratulations and a huge thank you to all of Chatham-Kent's conscientious citizens, volunteers, Municipal staff and elected officials. It is your ongoing contributions that have made possible such remarkable improvements in our Communities In Bloom scores and are a reflection of the quality of life Chatham-Kent has to offer, not only today, but for generations to come.

People, Plants and Pride... truly are...growing together in Chatham-Kent!