



Ten Years of

BEST IDEAS

from America in Bloom Towns and Cities

First Edition

Edited by Evelyn Alemanni



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Printed by Hopkins Printing, Columbus, OH 2011
ISBN 978-0-578-0867-6

America in Bloom promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.

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*Let us be grateful to people who make us happy;
they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom. ~ Marcel Proust*



Charles City, IA.

America in Bloom is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of these volunteers:

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This book is dedicated to our America in Bloom family, working together to make America a better place to live, one community at a time.

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BEST IDEAS

★ Foreword ★



Top: Webster Groves, MO.
Middle: Coshocton, OH.
Bottom: McCall, ID.

As we travel across America, some towns are more striking than others. They appear cleaner, prettier, more welcoming. We may feel comfortable in their ambiance without knowing exactly why. These are the places where we want to spend time, maybe even relocate there. Chances are these towns are some of the many America in Bloom (AIB) participants.

Our country is experiencing a resurgence of citizens who want to be actively involved in their communities, addressing many urgent needs. America in Bloom is providing the framework to get the job done.

This book is the work of many contributors: AIB judges, board members, and the many talented, hard working people who are passionate about making their hometowns better. They live in towns and cities like yours and have generously shared their best practices for you to dream about, adapt, and even improve. Here, nearly 200 towns ranging in size from Shippshewana, Indiana with a population of 536 people, to Chicago, Illinois, with nearly three million, share their best ideas. These ideas have been culled from ten years of evaluations written by America in Bloom judges who have visited each community and from the profiles towns submit as part of their application.

Through America in Bloom, cities collect and share their success stories. Some clean up blighted neighborhoods. Others preserve historic buildings. Some work to retain community character in the face of dramatic growth. Others recognize the power of flowers to attract tourism and make their citizens proud. Many towns are doing similar things; we have attempted to showcase what's unique.

Through partnership, collaboration, cooperation and empowerment, people in America in Bloom cities are making the place where they live as good as it can be. Some of our towns have written poignant articles for this book about what the America in Bloom experience has meant to them; I hope they touch you as deeply as they did me.

This book is organized by the eight criteria on which towns are evaluated: floral displays, landscaped areas, urban forestry, turf and groundcovers, heritage preservation, environmental efforts, community involvement, and tidiness. We hope this format will make it easy for you to see what towns your size are doing. But don't stop there – towns and cities of all sizes are doing things that you might like to try in your hometown.

As with any book, it is more meaningful when the concepts are explained by an expert, first hand, in relationship to your situation. So plan to participate in the America in Bloom program year after year for the boost it can give your town. America in Bloom encourages you to plant pride in your city. We hope you enjoy the book and find many useful ideas and programs. ★

Evelyn Alemanni