



Communities in Bloom and Scouts Canada

— *Growing Together*



by Raymond Carrière

Communities in Bloom is a Canadian organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility, beautification and improving the quality of life through community participation and the challenge of a national program. Launched in 1995, the program encourages municipalities to involve their community to develop initiatives in several categories: Tidiness Effort, Urban Forestry, Landscaped Areas, Floral Arrangements, Turf Areas, Environmental Effort, Heritage Conservation and Community Involvement.

The Program

Municipalities are evaluated by trained and qualified volunteer judges and receive a rating (from one to five “blooms”). The municipalities also network with each other, have promotional opportunities and are invited to attend the provincial and national awards ceremonies. The appeal of the program is more than simply visual. As important as this benefit is, the program’s real strength comes from the social impact participation has in building a sense of pride through community involvement.

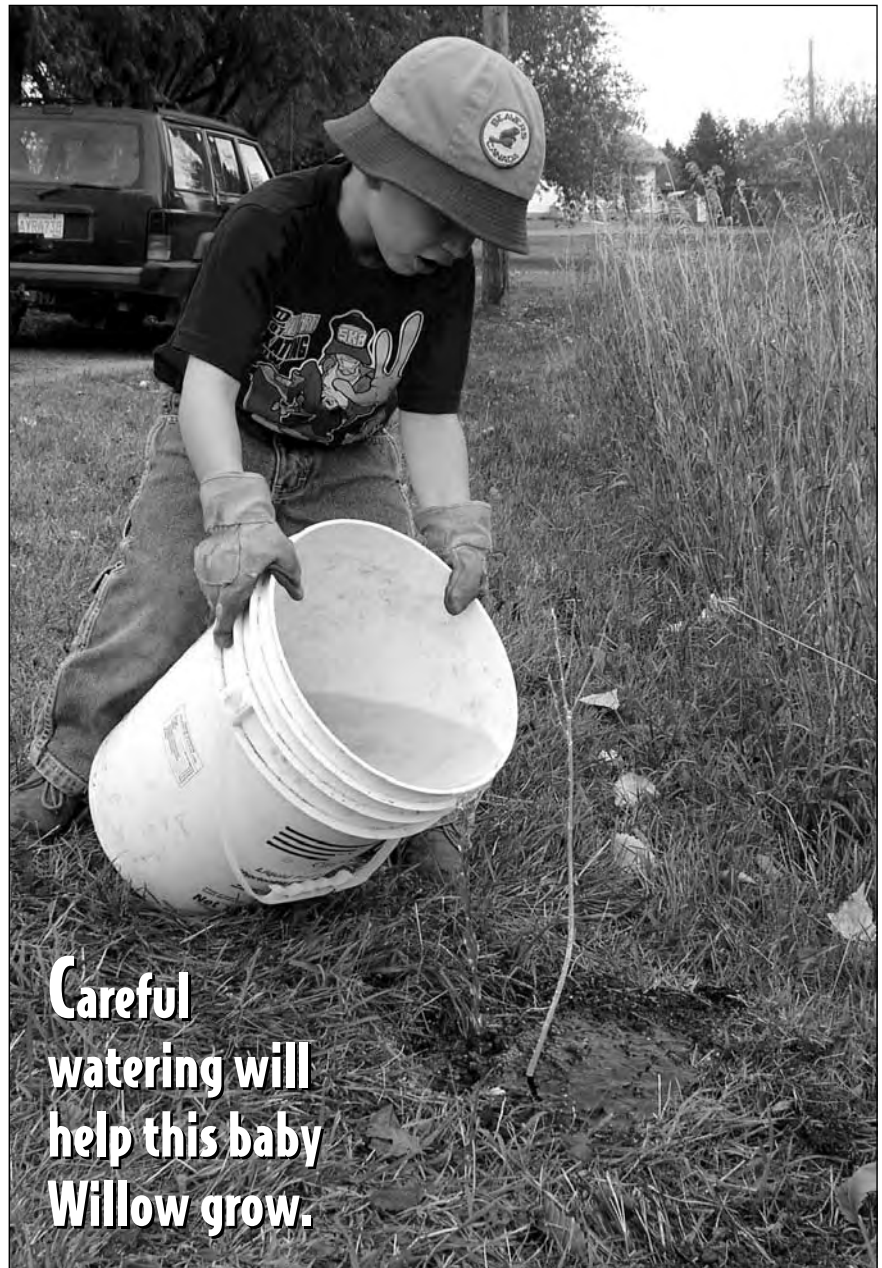
The program is primarily about educating people in a community by demonstrating that when they take pride in their environment and become involved in its appearance, maintenance and development, they will enrich the quality of their own lives and those of their neighbours. Obviously, these same qualities are a cornerstone of Scouting’s philosophies, which is why the two compliment each other so well. Environmental Awareness, Citizenship, Conserva-

tion, and Cultural Awareness are just some of the badge requirements that are met by participating with Communities in Bloom. Communities in Bloom create an excellent opportunity to learn and to feature our green spaces, while discovering the fabric of Canadian communities, each coping with their specific climate, geography and cultural make-up.

Success Stories

Scout troops and Cub packs are already involved in many municipalities throughout Canada.

In Metro Moncton, New Brunswick, Scouts Canada has been involved with the community beautification program since the early 1960’s, planting trees. Over 350,000 hardwood



**Careful
watering will
help this baby
Willow grow.**

Photographer: Bruce Neil

and softwood trees have been planted in watershed areas owned by the City of Moncton. Abandoned farm fields are bush cut two years in a row and then the Scouts arrive, annually planting some 5,000-10,000 trees in one day. Over 45 years, this initiative has restored several hundreds of unproductive acres of farm fields. Now they are thriving, healthy forests, ensuring the long-term objective of managing our forests for the future.

Since the year 2002 the Town of Midland, Ontario, has been working in partnership with the local Scouting movement to develop a "Scouts Arboretum" within the Veteran's Waterfront Park. The goals of this project, developed in conjunction with Midland's participation in Communities in Bloom, help the Scouts achieve objectives such as conservation, nature study and community service, which closely relates to Communities in Bloom objectives. Plans are for the "Scouts Arboretum" to be home to twelve Provincial/Territorial trees and an Inukshuk to represent Nunavut. To date, the partnership has seen six provincial trees planted, a park sign erected to recognize the site, the Inukshuk built along the water's edge, shoreline naturalization and restoration completed, a wheelchair accessible viewing area constructed and the trail completed, part of the Trans Canada trail system. Completion date is scheduled for the spring of 2007 with a ceremonial dedication to be made in the summer of 2007; the same year of Scouting's centennial.

The Town of Indian Head, Saskatchewan, involves the local Cub pack in their Communities in Bloom activities while also, most interestingly, providing them with an opportunity to learn about their natural heritage. The local pack is involved with the restoration of a creek that has decades old willows planted on the shores. Plans are to restore an area based on its natural heritage and to propagate the old willows. This provides multipurpose training that teaches the propagation of plants, the rooting of plants and the planting of trees. The Cubs have the opportunity to witness the difference between the existing old mature trees and the young trees. Thus, while the Cubs earn requirements towards

badges in environment and citizenship involvement, they are also learning about the history of their community.

In the Township of Langley, British Columbia, parks, trails and even



Proud to be part of the Scouts Arboretum in Midland.

streets have been "adopted" by Scout troops. In addition to helping with litter clean-up, the Scouts have the opportunity to take "ownership" of their community, instilling pride in the result of their efforts.

Working Together

If you are looking for more involvement in your community, consider contacting Communities in Bloom. They would be most pleased to welcome more Scouting members in the program, working together making our municipalities better places to live, work in and visit by involving our youth in communities throughout Canada. The improvement of quality of life through beautification, tidiness, environmental awareness and heritage conservation is amongst the many benefits to participating municipalities and Scouting. Visit <http://www.communitiesinbloom.ca/> to find a contact in your area. \

– Raymond Carrière is the Founding Chairman and current President of Communities in Bloom. Raymond was a Cub and Scout in Aylmer (now Gatineau), Québec.

Linking to Strategic Directions #1, 3 & 4.



**We're helping
our community
and environment
by planting
Willows today.**