



**America in Bloom**  
PO Box 44005  
Columbus, OH 43204  
614-453-0744  
aib@americainbloom.org  
www.americainbloom.org

## PRESS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Laura A. Kunkle

America in Bloom Executive Director

### **America in Bloom Judges to Visit North Beach, MD**

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit North Beach, Maryland on July 24. This is North Beach's first year as an America in Bloom participant, and it is one of the many proud and passionate communities across America working on local revitalization programs with an eye to receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

North Beach joins Elfin Forest, CA; Castle Rock, WA; Edmonston, MD; and Washtucna, WA in the under 3,500 population category.

In addition to a receiving detailed written evaluation from the judges citing strengths and opportunities for improvement, participants receive a bloom rating and special mention for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program. Additional awards that can be earned are as follows:

- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the “best of the best” over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria
- Special awards
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video

Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.

Judges will be evaluating the community's efforts in the areas of overall impression, environmental efforts, heritage preservation, landscaped areas, urban forestry, floral displays, and community involvement in the municipal, commercial, and residential sectors.

**The judging team members are Kristin Pategas and Marjorie Egee.**



Kristin Pategas



Marjorie Egee

Kristin Pategas is a certified Landscape Designer, horticulturist, and co-owner of Hortus Oasis, a boutique landscape design firm in Winter Park, FL. Kristin and her husband, Stephen, co-authored the book *Southern Coastal Home Landscaping*, and together they write two local gardening columns.

Kristin's career began in 1982 when she joined the Walt Disney World Company as a plant pathologist at The Land, EPCOT. During her 18 years with Disney she also managed the Walt Disney World Nursery, developed educational programming for the Epcot International Flower & Garden Festival, and was a Program Manager for The Disney Institute. In 2001 she joined her husband and they started their business, Hortus Oasis. In her free time, Kristin practices sustainable gardening at their home, hunts for new plants, and donates her time and talents to her community and America in Bloom.

"Grow what you know, paint what you love" has been Marjorie Egee's motto for her 30 years as a professional artist. A lifetime of avid home gardening and study of horticulture fuels her signature watercolor garden landscapes and floral paintings. Inspired by regional large public gardens and her half-acre certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat, she has produced a dozen solo gallery and museum shows from gardens great and small. As garden guide at Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library for two years and as a docent at Mount Cuba Center for 10 years, Marjorie connected people to the beauty and advantages of plants in all our lives. Marjorie's passions for art and horticulture have fostered events connecting artists to public gardens and institutions for mutual benefit. Involving the arts is a natural connection to the beautification of our environment, furthering the mission and vision of America in Bloom.

To date, nearly 250 communities from 45 states have participated in the program and more than 22 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on October 5-7, 2017 at AIB's National Symposium & Awards, held this year in Holliston, MA.

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America in Bloom is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to promoting nationwide beautification programs and personal and community involvement through the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements. America in Bloom provides educational programs, resources, and the challenge of a friendly competition between participating communities across the country.