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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 1, 2017

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America in Bloom Executive Director

America in Bloom Judges to Visit Tavares, FL

Professional volunteer judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Tavares, Florida on May 8-9. This is Tavares' 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.

Tavares joins King City, CA; Ottawa, IL; and Dyer, IN in the 13,000 to 18,000 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 Sue Amatangelo and Laurie Potier-Brown.



Sue Amatangelo



Laurie Potier-Brown

Sue Amatangelo brings a well-rounded background to America in Bloom. Sue became a Master Gardener for the University of Illinois where she won the Illinois Outstanding Master Gardener Award. Sue is currently the Midwest, Northeast, and Eastern Canada Sales Manager for EuroAmerican Propagators, founder of the #1 plant brand, Proven Winners. In her role, Sue works closely with brokers, growers, independent retailers and large retailers to provide quality and unique young plants and retail-ready programs and products. Sue is a member of the American Planning Association (APA), the Garden Writers Association (GWA) and the American Horticulture Society (AHS), and Society of Children's Book Writers & Illustrators (SCBWI). Sue is the author of *Absolutely Beautiful Containers* and has written a children's book on gardening. She is an active speaker with a particular passion to get consumers engaged and excited about gardening. She has been a guest on radio shows, a writer for both industry and consumer magazines and a guest speaker for the Epcot International Flower and Garden Festival.

Laurie Potier-Brown, PLA, was raised on a dairy farm and there began a lifelong passion for wandering around in nature. She started her professional career with degrees in Psychology and Art. She wound up in the corporate world where she received extensive training in business and marketing. Twelve years of that was enough to convince her that, all in all, she would rather work with plants than people. She returned to school and graduated with a Masters in Landscape Architecture from the University of Florida. She then completed an apprenticeship in Brazil with Roberto Burle-Marx, the renowned botanist and landscape architect. Her career has included private, corporate, and government settings. She earned AICP certification while with the Hillsborough County Planning Commission. Her last formal position was with the City of Tampa. She has designed, contracted, and installed projects from tiny Zen Gardens at Hospice to 5 miles of Bayfront boulevard where 22,000 annuals were changed out 3 times a year. She now has her own landscape architecture firm in Tampa.

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.