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## **America in Bloom Judges to Visit Saratoga, CA**

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Saratoga on May 4 and 5. This is Saratoga's first entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. The town is one of 42 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Saratoga is competing against Santa Paula, CA; Hopkinsville, KY; and St. Charles, IL in the 30,000 to 40,000 population category.

All participants are evaluated in the following areas: overall impression, heritage preservation, environmental efforts, urban forestry, landscapes, floral displays, and community involvement. The judges evaluate these criteria in the residential, commercial, and municipal sectors.

Judges are Evelyn Alemanni and Jack Clasen.



Evelyn Alemanni



Jack Clasen

**Evelyn Alemanni** is a self-employed writer and award winning gardener from Elfin Forest, California. She has judged for the America in Bloom program since 2003 and also serves as an international judge for the Canadian Communities in Bloom program and for the international LivCom Awards; experiences which Evelyn says has given her the opportunity to share wonderful ideas and inspirations with communities in many countries, and to build networks of people committed to improving their hometowns. She has judged more than 130 towns in nine countries.

Evelyn serves on the AIB board of directors and chairs its external relations committee. She is the creator/author/designer of the *Ten Years of Best Ideas* book and donated the rights to the book to AIB. In 2014, she has released her four-volume book series, *Fleurs du Jour* which features bouquets made every day with flowers from her garden and three special volumes, *Caladiums*, *Roses*, and *Bouquets from the Bulb Garden*.

In 2001, *Good Morning America* named Evelyn's garden one of the five best in the U.S. *San Diego Home/Garden Lifestyles* has twice named it one of its gardens of the year. *Garden Ideas and Outdoor Living* featured it on its cover. It has also been in *Garden Shed; Better Homes and Gardens; Gardens, Decks and Landscapes* and many other garden-related magazines.

**Jack Clasen**, from Raleigh North Carolina, chairs the Contest Committee, the Judges Selection and Training Committee, and serves on America in Bloom's Board of Directors. He has been with America in Bloom (AIB) since its inception and has judged cities, universities, and business districts throughout the United States and international communities in Canada, Ireland, and Scotland.

As a Master Gardener Jack is an avid volunteer. He co-founded Mason in Bloom, which participated in AIB in 2004 and 2005. Jack was a member of the Mason Tree Committee, vice president of the Mason Library Board of Trustees, supervised the period landscape restoration at the Mason Historic Society, and chaired the annual "Art in the Garden" Tour.

Jack's own garden has been on numerous garden tours, was selected by the Cincinnati Horticultural Society as one of the ten best amateur gardens in Cincinnati, filmed for Home and Garden TV's Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Network, scouted by editors of Better Homes and Gardens Magazine, and featured in the October 2007, issue of Cincinnati Magazine.

Participants have opportunities to receive recognition in the following areas:

- Bloom rating
- Population category winner
- Outstanding achievement award – the "best of the best" over all participants in each of the six evaluated criteria
- Special mention – for what the judges deem to be an extraordinary project or program.
- Special awards
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video Award

To date, more than 240 towns and cities from 41 states have participated in the program and more than 20 million people have been touched by it. Awards will be announced on September 26 at AIB's National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Holland, MI.

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America in Bloom is an independent non-profit 501c3 corporation. America in Bloom envisions communities across the country as welcoming and vibrant places to live, work, and play – benefiting from colorful plants and trees; enjoying clean environments; celebrating heritage; and planting pride through volunteerism.

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