

**Laura – please send this release on or before June 1 to the Fayetteville press list.**

For immediate release.

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## **America in Bloom Judges Visit Fayetteville, AR**

Judges from the America in Bloom (AIB) national awards program will visit Fayetteville, AR on June 17 and 18. This is Fayetteville's ninth entry in the America in Bloom national awards program. Fayetteville has earned the distinction of being in AIB's Circle of Excellence, an honor awarded to towns which have won their population category and received numerous AIB awards of excellence. Fayetteville has more years in the program than any other town in the US. The town is one of 28 towns across America working on local revitalization programs with the hopes of receiving a prestigious America in Bloom national award.

Fayetteville is competing against Racine, WI in the over 50,000 population category.

Judges are Diana Weiner and Robert Bowden.



Diana Weiner



Robert Bowden

**Diana Weiner** is a horticulture consultant and lecturer from Pennsylvania. For 16 years she served as the Community Horticulture Educator and Master Gardener Coordinator through Cornell University for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Orange County, NY.

Diana is a Certified Nursery Professional, has judged for the Dutchess County Fair, Sullivan Renaissance, and other national contests. She is a member of the Garden Writers Association of America, The International Plant Propagators Society, the Perennial Plant Association, and the American Horticultural Society. She currently serves on the board of Briar Bush Nature Center and the Meadowbrook Bird Sanctuary. She enjoys writing, cooking, antiques and shade gardening and lectures to groups around the country. She has a degree in Agronomy from the State University of New York at Cobleskill.

Weiner commented, " I am very excited to return to Fayetteville after attending the 2013 AIB Symposium there. Have judged the community in its infancy of the America in Bloom Awards Program it will be great to see all the initiatives they have completed."

**Robert E. Bowden** has been the Executive Director of the City of Orlando's beautiful Harry P. Leu Botanical Gardens for eighteen years and earlier served as the Executive Director of the Atlanta Botanical Garden, the Director of Horticulture of the Missouri Botanical Garden in St Louis, Missouri, and the Director of Horticulture of Old Westbury Gardens, Old Westbury, L.I., New York.

Throughout the United States, Robert's delightful photographs and enjoyable essays can be seen in a

wide variety of gardening magazines and professional journals. He is an adjunct professor of horticulture at Valencia College, writer for the *Southern Living* "Garden Problem Solver" series and the author of several books including the "Guide to Florida Fruit and Vegetable Gardening" and the "Florida Resource Guide" both by Cool Springs Press and the "Florida Top Ten Gardening Guide" by Sunset books.

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.
- Population category winners are invited to participate in international competition via the Communities in Bloom program in Canada.
- Community Champion
- YouTube Video

To date, more than 200 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 21, 2013 at AIB’s National Symposium and Awards, held this year in Orlando, FL.

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America in Bloom is a non-profit 501c3 corporation whose mission is to promote nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees, and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements.