



TOWN OF DIDSBURY

2024 COMMUNITIES IN BLOOM

COMMUNITY PROFILE

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- ✓ Didsbee Honey
- ✓ Ross Ford Garden Boxes
- ✓ Seasonal Displays
- ✓ Community Projects





2023 Evaluation Team (L-R) – Judge Bob Cote, CIB Member Wayne Green, Councillor Ethan Williams, Didsbee, Judge Sharon Miller, CIB Member Bev Stemp, Town of Didsbury Representative Nicole Aasen



Introduction

The Didsbury Communities in Bloom Committee was established in early 2022 as way to engage local residents with a passion for horticulture, gardening, environmental stewardship and our community.

Our membership includes six active residents with a passion for getting our hands dirty and accomplishing small improvement projects around Didsbury, that help to beautify our community for residents and visitors alike.

The committee meets monthly between spring and fall each year to plan projects, learn about other community programs and discuss our annual Communities in Bloom evaluation.

For the past two years, 2022 and 2023, Didsbury has competed in the provincial Communities in Bloom (CIB) evaluation through the Friends – Evaluated category.

- In 2022, our inaugural year participating in the CIB program, Didsbury received a rating of Four Blooms and percentage score of 80.05%
- In 2023, Didsbury also received a rating of Four Blooms and a percentage score of 80.1%



Town of Didsbury

Didsbury is a town of 5,268 located 80 kilometres north of Calgary, approximately half-way between Calgary and Red Deer, and an hour's drive to the Rockies. Didsbury offers small community living with big city amenities just a short drive away.

Didsbury is a family-focused community with four schools, a hospital, public library, and robust recreational facilities, including a newly renovated two-surface arena, five-lane swimming pool, four-sheet curling rink, ball diamonds, skate park, a golf course and numerous playgrounds and pathways as well as a vibrant arts and culture scene.

Downtown offers a unique walk through history as the Town continues to preserve the historical buildings and focus on maintaining its heritage through effective design for new buildings.

Mission

Creating the Place to Grow

Vision

A vibrant and inclusive character community with small-town connection. We support innovation and we celebrate the beautiful and unique in our community while thoughtfully embracing growth and change. **The Place To Grow.**



Communities in Bloom in Didsbury

Didsbury is proud to have participated in the Communities in Bloom program for the past two years. The judges' feedback is much appreciated, and we have learned and grown from it.

Category—Community Appearance

2023 Score – 122.5/150 or 81.6%

This category reflects an overall effort by the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents throughout the community to create great first impressions and a sense there is continuous attention and upkeep to critical elements of a community that benefit quality of life and economic vitality.

Key Notes:

- Impressed with annual Community Clean-Up Week program
- Judges enjoyed visiting residential areas of community – noted that yards are well-maintained and visually appealing
- Entrance to Didsbury and Welcome Sign are inviting and welcoming

Recommendations:

- Recycling container installation throughout community for cans and bottles
- Consider a Yard Angels program to assist with unsightly properties
- Installation of interpretive signage and/or storyboards at key locations within community to describe their history and purpose (i.e. Memorial Park)



Communities in Bloom in Didsbury

Category—Heritage Conservation

2023 Score – 121.5/150 or 81%

This category includes efforts to preserve and protect both natural and cultural heritage within the community.

Key Notes:

- Described wetlands as a “treasure” within Didsbury and as a “beautiful example of a natural heritage asset”
- Highlighted heritage homes within Didsbury and their beauty. Were interested in history of homes
- The Museum was a favourite spot on the tour and applaud the number of volunteers they have

Recommendations:

- Reinstate a Cemetery Society to assist with cemetery maintenance and improvements





Communities in Bloom in Didsbury

Category—Tree Management

2023 Score – 136/175 or 77.7%

This category pertains to efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents with regards to written policies, bylaws, standards for tree management protection, selection and maintenance.

Key Notes:

- Municipal tree inventory database is excellent!
- Tree canopy is extensive and welcoming



Recommendations:

- Provide pruning and maintenance learning opportunities for staff members
- Eliminate use of landscape fabric in municipal plantings
- Offer a Tree Maintenance for Beginners course for residents



Communities in Bloom in Didsbury

Category—Landscape

2023 Score – 160.5/200 or 80%

This category includes planning, design, construction and maintenance of parks, green spaces and cemeteries suitable for the intended use and location on a year-round basis.

Key Notes:

- Didsbury's municipal parks and turf are very well kept
- The community banner program is fabulous – loved the grad and veteran banners

Recommendations:

- Engage businesses in beautification program – either a judging contest or a beautification for a donation program that the CIB Committee could consider
- Provide weed education to residents through a “Weed of the Week” program





Communities in Bloom in Didsbury

Category—Plant and Floral Displays

2023 Score – 145/175 or 82.8%

This category evaluates the efforts of the municipality, businesses, institutions and residents to design, plan, execute and maintain plant and floral displays of high-quality standards.

Key Notes:

- Hanging baskets were a delight to see in Didsbury
- Practice of edible landscaping into municipal properties is applauded



Recommendations:

- Work towards more perennial displays to encourage long-term growth
- Consider a Garden Tour of key residential properties in Didsbury
- Consider a Yard Contest as part of annual CIB Evaluation Day

In 2022 and 2023, cucamelons , cantaloupe, squash, and rhubarb all grew in Town planters throughout the community.



Communities in Bloom in Didsbury

Overall Feedback

The judges enjoyed their warm welcome to Didsbury and mentioned that we are a very inviting community to attend.

Special Mention:

Didsbee's Honey – produced through our two Town of Didsbury hives. The judges described it as a ***terrific community symbol*** and the judges were honoured to have received a jar.

Recommendations:

- Continue to build CIB Committee membership - small projects allow volunteers to participate and the support of the Town of Didsbury is excellent to coordinated efforts, funding and manpower for improvements to our community
- Begin to develop a Community Profile specific to the Communities in Bloom program





Communities in Bloom in Didsbury 2024

What's New?

As Didsbury continues to develop its programs and based on some recommendations from the Communities in Bloom judges, some new initiatives are on the go for 2024, including:

- The Communities in Bloom team has become stewards of the garden boxes at the Ross Ford Elementary School. These garden boxes were formerly the responsibility of the Parent Association, and they needed assistance; Communities in Bloom Didsbury gladly stepped up and, with the assistance of the Town, repaired the boxes, weeded and is replacing the plant material for the community to enjoy once again.

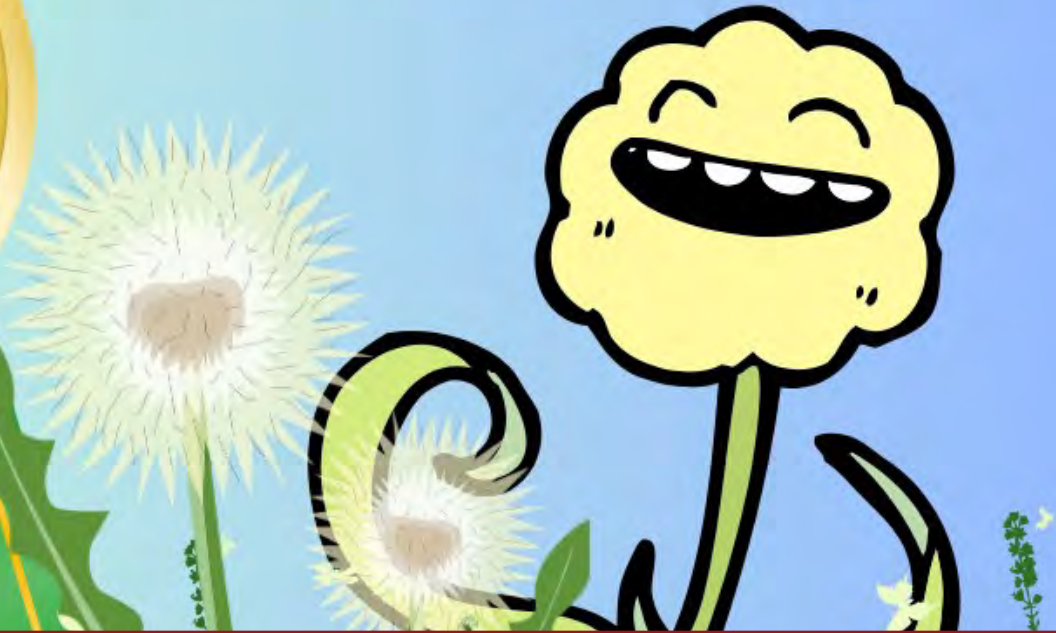


Town of
Didsbury's

Weed Of the Week

Keep your eye
out for him!

Have you
seen this
guy?



What's New?

As Didsbury continues to develop its programs and based on some recommendations from the Communities in Bloom judges, some new initiatives are on the go for 2024, including:

- The Town of Didsbury and the Communities in Bloom Didsbury team have introduced the **Weed of the Week** program which introduces a new weed each week via social media and on the Town's website.

Canada Thistle



Creeping Bellflower





What's New?

- With anticipated drought conditions, the Town of Didsbury has developed an education program to help residents be better aware of water conservation practices.
- A plan for water restrictions is in place if required for 2024, including a comprehensive communications program aimed to assist Didsburians in understanding the need to conserve water for safety (i.e. fire fighting capability) and to maintain the environmental health of the community.

Town of Didsbury Water Restrictions 2024

Level 1

Restrictions Apply to:

- Lawn watering
- Filling of pools and spas
- Filling of fountains/water features

Even House#/Even Days
Odd House #/Odd Days

Didsbury

A full campaign to promote water conservation throughout the year is planned to be ongoing, and will include education regarding the use of rain barrels, drought tolerant plants, mulch, and best practices.

CALLING ALL ARTISTS

What's New?

Continuing with the street banner programs already in place in Didsbury, Council held a banner design contest to select 14 new banners created by local artists. These banners will join the veterans banners and yearly grad banners to help beautify Didsbury's 20 Avenue and 20 Street light stands.



More than 40 submissions were received, going to show how popular the street banner program is with visitors. It also received attention from Calgary media, helping to promote Didsbury as a beautiful place to live and visit.



Communities in Bloom in Didsbury 2024

- The Town of Didsbury continues to invest in playgrounds and park areas, and Town Council has approved funding for a needed playground replacement for the summer of 2024.
- Council approved additional funding for Communities in Bloom for 2024, allowing the team to add more projects to their list, including spring/summer planters and there are plans for fall and winter planters as well.
- The Communities in Bloom group is seeing more interest and gaining volunteers.



Communities in Bloom volunteers provide planters throughout town, including this one at the front door of the Didsbury Memorial Complex and, above, at the Jets Park and Skatepark.



Around Town

- The Town of Didsbury received a \$50,000 grant from the Municipal Client Change Action Centre in 2023, through the Electric Vehicles for Municipalities Program, to purchase a new electric Zamboni.
- Utilizing a Heritage Preservation Grant from the Alberta Government, the Town was able to have the exterior of the Didsbury Train Station repaired and painted.
- Crews installed pathways and completed landscaping for the newly named (via a naming contest) Jets Park. Communities in Bloom volunteers helped out at the skate park.
- Council approved funding for enhanced Christmas lighting for the downtown core as well as along 20 Avenue. The seasonal lighting was lit during the Country Christmas celebration.
- The Town installed and replaced 80 m of new storm system under the road in front of the Didsbury Memorial Complex. Crews ensured the work did not interfere with grad or the use of the playground or skate park.
- The Town enhanced the pedestrian crossing at 16 Street and Hwy 582, installing accessibility ramps, extending the sidewalk to the flashing lights, and improving the drainage system.
- The Town resurfaced 350 m of asphalt in the downtown corridor and replaced 30 m of concrete sidewalk.
- In partnership with the provincial government, the Town widened a very busy intersection at Highway 582 and 23 Street, making it safer for drivers and pedestrians.
- Council approved a Pedestrian Connectivity Master Plan to help ensure pathways are considered in all future budgets, and that walkability remains a priority for the Town of Didsbury
didsbury.ca/p/pedestrian-connectivity-plan
- The Annual Summer Sunday Funday was held in August 2023, drawing record crowds.



Utilizing a grant from the Town of Didsbury, the Mountain View Art Society is helping to further beautify the community via a commissioned mural .

Around Town

- Council amended the Land Use Bylaw to include the following uses: Market (Indoor) and Market (Outdoor). This change was in response to a unique application from a new local business, and it allows businesses more flexibility.
- The adoption of the Creekside Area Structure Plan (ASP) will allow for the future development of new industrial lots along the west side of the property and residential lots along the east side. The property is located on the northwest side of Didsbury.
- Administration worked with the Businesses in the Downtown Core to create a Policy (PLAN 002 Seasonal Pop-Up Patios) to allow businesses to apply for a one-time Development Permit for their pop-up patios. This removed the requirement to apply for a permit every year for the same location.
- 2023 saw 443 business registered in Didsbury, including storefront, at-home, and contractors licensed to do business within the Town.
- The Asset Management Strategy was approved in October, and is a key tool for managing the Town's many assets.





Town of Didsbury

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