

# TOLEDO

## THE BEAUTIFUL

### Beacons of pride, hope shine across the city

By JANET ROMAHER  
BLADE STAFF WRITER

Although some sections of Toledo seem frazzled by blight, other areas dazzle with sights that delight.

Lawns, gardens, murals. Oh so many murals, painted with passion and with compassion for community.

Thousands of properties throughout Toledo show pride of ownership. Places where daylilies dance, vines trumpet, fountains splash.

Planters on porches cascade with color pleasing to the senses. Purple petunias. Pink phlox. Scarlet geraniums.

Elsewhere: Red roses. Big, sky blue hydrangea. And delicate blossoms, glorious enough to prompt a song: *White choral bells, upon their slender stalks, lilies of the valley deck the garden walks.*

And across the city, hosts of hostas. Toledo is a hot-house of hostas. The shade-loving plants circle trunks of shade trees, hug house foundations.

Behind the beauty: lots of work. And tools. Hoes and hose. Spades, trowels, shovels. Pruning shears. Mulch, manure. Rakes and brooms. Paint buckets, paint brushes. Watching paint dry? A good way to relax after a day of tending to what needs done around the house.

The Blade's award-winning photographers, who recently spent several days taking pictures of the worst-looking properties in Toledo, have captured shots of some of the best-looking properties in the city as well as swell scenes of wonderful buildings and a spirit-lifting salute to Toledo's skyline, its front door, and its welcome mat.

Indeed, the city dawns spectacular along the Maumee River, particularly pleasing when area students, who do crew, take to the water in boats that seem to skim the water like aquatic bugs, perhaps some backswimmers.

At night, Toledo dresses up in a blaze of bright lights. On buildings, on bridges, at ball fields, including Fifth Third Field, a home run of a beauty. Go Hens!

Pretty as a picture: the Toledo Museum of Art. Lions, and tigers and bears, oh my: Of course, the Toledo Zoo roars like a splendid postcard to home. Animals, animals, animals. Bonus: amazing architecture, breath-taking horticultural displays. Truly, the zoo's beauty is more than snake-skin deep.

Other architectural wonders beautify the city. Check out the University of Toledo; the Lucas County Courthouse, the Main Library. Or Scott High School, houses along Scottwood Avenue, or Walbridge Park.

Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder.

Behold these Toledo beauty marks: flutterbys flitting on a patch of flowers at the Manos Community Garden near downtown Toledo where local residents check out plots brimming with tomatoes, green beans, basil, and lettuce.

Summer sunshine sweeps across the Ottawa River. Fish gotta swim; birds gotta fly.

Arches of maple trees, flocks of mallard ducks. Flashes of nets. Fishermen, with poles and bait buckets nearby, perch along the shores of the Maumee near downtown, a slice-of-summer-time Americana. Nice, very nice.

Take a photographic stroll across the city. Wishing wells, bird baths, and banners accent yards in West Toledo.

Window boxes, hanging plants, ferns galore are featured at many homes in the North End.

Highlighting East Toledo: flowers, flowers, and more flowers at homes that could be poster places for a Tidy Town.

Turn South. Clusters of well-kept houses capture attention, such as several in the 500 block of South Avenue where on a recent day Jose Ibarra put a fresh coat of paint on his porch "to keep it up."

This isn't just seasonal beauty. Flowers will fade. Winter, spring, summer, fall, these well-kept, well-tended houses — homes, for certain — are really rows of no: no graffiti-sprayed plywood on doors and windows; no dangling gutters; no holes in roofs; no burned-out attics; no towering weeds; no peeling paint; no soiled, discarded mattresses in the front yard; no unsightly trash tumbling from rat-tattered black plastic bags.

Keeping up your property at times can be tough, but it can be done. Look around at the proof-positive, and the positive proof, of Toledo, a city struggling with the beast of blight, but showcasing beacons of beauty.

Contact Janet Romaker at:  
jromaker@theblade.com  
or 419-724-6006.



THE BLADE/ANDY MORRISON



THE BLADE/JEREMY WADSWORTH

ABOVE: The Col. James M. Schoonmaker is moored next to the National Museum of the Great Lakes.

LEFT: The sun sets on the downtown Toledo skyline.



THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT

Part of a mural on the side wall of Black Kite Coffee and Pies at 2499 Collingwood Blvd. in the Old West End.



THE BLADE/KATIE RAUSCH

The University of Toledo stands tall on West Bancroft Street in the Old Orchard neighborhood of West Toledo.



THE BLADE/LORI KING



THE BLADE/LORI KING

ABOVE: Chris Kreais sits on his grandparents' porch at 1137 Michigan Ave. in North Toledo.

LEFT: Trees arch over Drummond Road in West Toledo's Old Orchard neighborhood.

RIGHT: The Lucas County Courthouse in downtown Toledo.



THE BLADE/AMY E. VOIGT

