



Elk River Garden Gem Awards Program Guidelines

Program Overview

Established in 2025, the Elk River Garden Gem Awards highlights exceptional gardens and landscaping in Elk River. Each year the Elk River Economic Development Authority (EDA) and Housing and Redevelopment Authority (HRA), with recommendations from the Beautification and Public Art Committee, recognizes residents, neighborhoods, and businesses who have maintained beautiful gardens or landscapes, therefore adding to the overall beauty and attractiveness of the city.

Nominations may be submitted by anyone including neighbors, contractors, friends, or the gardeners themselves.

Eligible Categories

- Single Family built before 2000
- Single Family built in 2000 or later
- Townhome
- Neighborhood – Resident/volunteer managed monument sign landscape, cul-de-sac landscape, or community garden
- Commercial – Professionally managed business, or retail/business park monument sign landscape

Requirements

- Garden/landscape must be located in Elk River
- Garden/landscape must primarily feature flowering plants, trees, shrubs, ground cover, perennials, retaining walls, arbors, or water features to create a visually significant summer long display
- Garden/landscape must be well maintained through the growing season
- Garden/landscape must have a positive visual impact on the neighborhood by being substantially visible from the right-of-way
- Previous winners are ineligible to win in the subsequent two years

Program Timeline

- Nomination period: May 1 to July 31
- Judges tour and evaluate gardens: August
- EDA and HRA formally recognizes winning gardens: September

Awards

Winners in each category receive:

- A personalized garden keepsake
- An additional award as determined by the EDA and HRA
- Formal recognition at an Authority meeting
- Award yard sign in garden/property for six weeks

Judging Criteria

Each garden/landscape nominated is visited and judged based on the following criteria:

- Overall attractiveness
- Design
- Plant variety
- Environmental impact
- Creativity
- Appropriate maintenance

Judging Rubric

Elk River Garden Gem Awards										
Judging Rubric										
Criteria										Score
Overall Attractiveness										
There is curb appeal with color, contour, and texture.										
The landscape/garden is pleasing and inviting that enhances the neighborhood's beauty.										
Design										
The garden/landsacpe has a thoughtful arrangement of plants and features within the landscape.										
Plant Variety										
There is a diversity of plants used in the garden/landscape.										
Environmental Impact										
The garden/landscape features sustainable elements such as water conservation, native plants, pollinator support, composting, and solar lights.										
Creativity										
There is a variety of plant materials and/or ornamental elements such as a water feature, trellis, bird house, bird bath, arbor, or statue.										
Appropriate Maintenance										
The garden/landscape is well-cared and watered.										
Weeds are kept to a minimum.										
Poor			Fair			Good			Excellent	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	