



## 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, awards residents, neighborhoods, and businesses who have maintained beautiful gardens or landscapes, therefore adding to the overall beauty and attractiveness of the city.

### Eligibility

Requirements:

- Garden/landscape must be located in the City of Elk River.
- Garden/landscape must primarily feature flowering plants, trees, shrubs, ground cover, perennials, retaining walls, arbors, or water features.
- Garden/landscape must be well maintained throughout the growing season.
- Garden/landscape must have a positive visual impact on the neighborhood by being substantially visible from the right-of-way.

Categories:

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

### Application Requirements

- Complete entry form online [bit.ly/gardengemawards](https://bit.ly/gardengemawards) or in-person at Elk River City Hall.
- Nominations may be submitted by anyone including neighbors, contractors, friends, or the gardeners themselves.

### Program Timeline

- Nomination period: May 1 to June 30.
- Judges tour and evaluate gardens: July.
- EDA and HRA formally recognize winning gardens: August.

### Awards

Nominees receive:

- Nominee yard sign in garden/property throughout the nomination period.

Winners in each category receive:

- A personalized garden keepsake.
- Formal recognition and certificate presentation 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

<b>Elk River Garden Gem Awards</b>										
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Criteria									Score	
<b>Overall Attractiveness</b>										
There is curb appeal with color, contour, and texture. The garden/landscape is inviting and enhances the neighborhood's beauty.										
<b>Design</b>										
The garden/landscape has a thoughtful arrangement of plants and features. The design complements the property and surrounding environment.										
<b>Plant Variety</b>										
There is a diversity of plants used in the garden/landscape.										
<b>Environmental Impact</b>										
The garden/landscape features sustainable elements such as water conservation, native plants, pollinator support, composting, and solar lights.										
<b>Creativity</b>										
There is a variety of plant materials and/or ornamental elements such as a water feature, trellis, bird house, bird bath, arbor, or statue.										
<b>Appropriate Maintenance</b>										
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	