

Elk Grove RAIN GARDEN PLAZA

Fact Sheet

The City of Elk Grove's Rain Garden Plaza, located on Laguna Springs Drive across from Colton Park, is the most comprehensive rain garden in the Sacramento region.

It's a beautiful garden that is a magnet for wildlife—as well as one that is low maintenance and habitat-friendly.

The Elk Grove Rain Garden Plaza is designed to educate the public about eco-friendly landscaping and encourages water conservation with native and drought-resistant plants. The Rain Garden Plaza features a creatively-designed and aesthetically-pleasing outdoor area that includes rain gardens, biofiltration swales and pervious paving systems. The Rain Garden Plaza features Low-Impact Development (LID) practices that work with nature to manage stormwater as close to its source as possible by incorporating natural, river-friendly landscaping techniques.

The Rain Garden Plaza also features a canopied picnic area, fitness equipment, educational components, and local artwork.

WHAT IS A RAIN GARDEN?

Rain gardens are shallow depressions in the landscape designed to catch and filter rainwater from roofs and pavements, allowing storm water runoff to be used for plant growth and soil enrichment rather than allowing it to run directly into the storm drainage system.

Rain gardens provide an inexpensive and effective way of maintaining a lawn within an urban area. They require little maintenance with little or no fertilizers or pesticides. Rain gardens also improve the appearance of developed sites, absorb noise, provide beneficial wildlife habitat, and reduce heat.

FEATURES OF THE ELK GROVE RAIN GARDEN PLAZA

The Elk Grove Rain Garden Plaza incorporates multiple design features to illustrate what can be easily implemented in a home or business.

Landscaping

The Elk Grove Rain Garden Plaza was designed with best practices for water efficiency in mind. From the California Buckeye Tree to the Showy Milkweed Bush, each plant species was carefully chosen and arranged in areas based on watering needs. Not only is water-efficient landscaping wise, it's also essential for a healthy ecosystem.

The Rain Garden Plaza is stocked with a wide variety of hardy, drought-tolerant native plants. Not only do these plants save water, many produce unique and intriguing flowers across the color spectrum. Most have developed their own biological defenses against pests and diseases. Pesticide applications can be reduced down to zero.

The Rain Garden Plaza also features synthetic lawns— an eco-friendly alternative to grass. Synthetic lawns do not require the water, fertilizer, pesticides or maintenance requirements as normal landscaping.

Stormwater and Water Harvesting

Rain Chains

Rain chains are a unique alternative to the traditional downspout. They can transform a plain gutter downspout to an interesting and practical water feature. Placed in the appropriate location, rain chains allow water from a roof gutter to trickle down openly. The Elk Grove Rain Garden Plaza features two distinct copper rain chains. One is a double oval loop in unfinished copper and the second exhibits a Koi Fish design.

Dry Well

Average precipitation for the Elk Grove area totals about 18 to 19 inches per year. To capture the water generated by large storms, the Rain Garden Plaza has incorporated a dry well. The dry well provides a path of travel for excess rainwater to allow groundwater to recharge. During a heavy storm, water will enter the dry well, trickle through the small void spaces in between the rocks and penetrate into the underlying ground helping to recharge the groundwater.

Artistic Elements

The Rain Garden Plaza also features a public art sculpture designed to engage both adults and children about Low Impact Development. The sculpture is an interactive artistic water fountain that showcases the difference between permeable and impermeable surfaces. The retaining wall on the Rain Garden Plaza went from drab to dramatic with the help of our local young artists. More than 1,000 tiles decorated by Elk Grove students, from kindergarten to the 12th grade are on display on top of the retaining wall that separates the plaza area and the rain garden.

Surface Material and Water Absorption

Permeable Pavers

Specially designed pavers in the Rain Garden Plaza allow rain water to infiltrate into a ten inch gravel layer below the plaza floor. During storms, rainwater fills up the empty space and excess water spills into pipes buried at the deepest parts of the layer. The pipes then convey the rainwater back into the rain garden.

Pervious Concrete

Another feature of the Rain Garden Plaza is the pervious concrete pavement area. It allows water from precipitation to pass directly through the concrete, thereby reducing the runoff and increasing groundwater recharge.

Decomposed Granite

The pathway on the east side of the Rain Garden Plaza consists of decomposed granite, which requires little maintenance and complements drought tolerant garden spaces. When compared to grassy paths, decomposed granite paths do not require water, fertilizer or intense herbicide treatments. Decomposed granite paths are also less expensive and easier to install than concrete walkways. These features make decomposed granite an economical and environmentally sound choice for landscape access routes.



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Building a rain garden in your yard or business is one of the easiest things you can do to protect and conserve the earth's resources. For more information about the Elk Grove Rain Garden Plaza, visit www.elkgrovecity.org.

