



Tsuru Island

Editor: James Card

Tai Chi

Have you ever mentioned something to a person and they light up like it's Christmas morning? That's what happens when some people hear about Tai Chi. It also inspires one to get excited about the program.

A Tia Chi program will be started at Main City Park and Tsuru Island on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11:30 am to 12:30 pm. The program may be expanded to evening classes as well. Several options are available for payment (single session, weekly sessions and monthly sessions). The classes will take place on the lawn area in front of the Resource Center and inside due to weather.

Tai Chi originated in China and is a trained art in all parts of the world. There are several versions of the art and several different names depending on what part of the country or world you are in. Some Tai Chi may include types of martial art. Tia Chi is a martial art with special clothing and sometimes using swords.

The Tai Chi at the garden will be exploring exercise, movement and focused energy to improve the body and concentration. Sessions are an hour long and can be done in any type of clothing.

Classes will be taught by Liz Kitsoulis of Sandy Oregon.

The first 2 classes attended will be free of charge. Fees will be collected after the second class.



Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.
(Ralph Waldo Emerson)



Send Questions and/or Comments to:
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*Things turn out best for the
people who make the best
of the way things turn out*

(John R Wooden)

Change of Tides

If you have been on a Garden tour you have been told about the "ocean" at the southwest corner of the Garden. Originally it was designed to represent the ocean. The river rock came from the original garden paths. The rocks were intended to represent the water and Black Pine as part of the island. Wendy stated that she had enough of the moles boring underneath and creating piles of dirt between the rock. With that, all the round rock was removed and piled around the perimeter, opening the middle section so that it could be smoothed and covered with weed barrier. Eventually the stone would be placed back the way that it had been.

Mary Ann Lewis (Aesthetic Pruners Association), Justine Blackwell (Portland Japanese Garden) and Jim Card were at the park recently and started talking about a redesign plan for the ocean area.

There will be a rustic stone sections that has tiers representing cliffs at the edge of the ocean. Above the cliffs will be the island that contains the black pine, Hino crimson azalea and a newly planted black locust. Below the cliffs will be a black and white (salt and pepper) crushed stone (sand) that can be raked and easily cleaned of the leaves and cedar needles. With the proper raking, we will be able to create tides in the sand going into the cliffs. Beyond the island the juniper will be trimmed so that it creates a back drop of green beyond the shoreline. Additional azaleas will be included for the west perimeter to screen the slope that begins under the juniper. The river rock that was in the area before will be spread in the stream bed and some around the scene itself.

The completed project was a showcase for Father's Day and the Chamber Event noted in last month's newsletter.



SKOSH *a little* **JAPANESE**
CULTURAL FESTIVAL

AUGUST 12, 2017
SATURDAY 10-3
GRESHAM MAIN CITY PARK
(219 S MAIN AVE, GRESHAM, OR 97080)

- * TRY A TEA CEREMONY
- * MAKE ORIGAMI CRANES TO HANG FOR GOOD LUCK
- * WRITE MESSAGES AND HANG THE CALLIGRAPHY
- * CHECK OUT LOCAL ARTISTS, CRAFTS, AND AUTHORS
- * LEARN ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, RECYCLING, AND CONSERVATION
- * FOOD CARTS

.....AND LOTS MORE!



The Rhododendron

By James Card

Two of my favorite plants are conifers and rhododendrons. I have utilized them together in many landscape designs over the years.

We are very lucky here in the northwest to have the right climate and soil conditions for these diverse and hardy plants. History has been made in our area with the propagation of many varieties of Rhododendrons due to the American Rhododendron Society located in Portland. Pioneering rhododendron family owned nurseries are decreasing due to the lack of interest by the next generation and/or land being sold to developers for housing.

Because these diverse plants became one of my favorite plants to install, I became acquainted with several growers in the area. I had the opportunity to ride around the acres of land seeing firsthand the dozens of color combinations blooming from late February until August. Some of these growers have received test plants by hobbyist growers from all over the world. The local grower put the plant into production and provide feedback to the sender about the performance of the plant including the leaves, blooms and general ability of the plant as compared to other proven varieties.

The varieties include dozens of leaf shapes, shrub size, blooms of every shade and size that one can imagine. Most of these varieties like some shade during the day, while others may do just fine even in a south side sun.

Since Rhododendrons have so many leaf shapes and textures available, different varieties can be planted in the same setting. Bloom times can vary



as well. I have made my own personal chart of bloom times for some of my favorite Rhododendrons that normally bloom for 2-4 weeks. These groups provide color over several months. Rhododendrons also come in several size categories, plants that can sit in the palm of your hand to those that can grow beyond the gutter line of your house. These plants will always do what you want if you take the time to prune them.

If a plant gets too big and it needs to be reduced, it is recommended that you do so over a two to three-year period to minimize stress. I have taken plants all the way to the ground and had them come back and become a very good plant that can be maintained to the space that it was originally intended. There are dormant nodes located under the bark that are ready to produce new growth. It is important to think about where the energy is directed in the plant. Notice the two rhododendrons in the photos attached, have been taken back to about 12-inches from the ground. It was done in the wintertime and sheltered amongst other taller plants. These have come back very well. The first is a "Unique" and the other is a "Chionoides" and both had been in the ground over 12 years. All rhododendron should be pruned with hand held tools.

Some Rhododendrons that need little attention are, Anah Kruschke a purple bloom with medium leaf that will withstand just about anything after it is established, Unique (cream), Dora Amateis (white), Hotie (yellow), Ramapo (light purple), Elizabeth Hobbie (red), Chionoides (white), Lem's Storm cloud (deep red) and Daffinoidies (purple). Each of these have a different bloom, leaf style and growth habit, something for every garden.



Rhododendrons should be pruned just after blooming and after the new growth emerges from the bud point. By removing the spent bloom from the plant, energy is provided to the leaf system. Some growers leave the spent blooms on the plant to reduce the amount of growth the shrub will produce thus reducing the maintenance of the

plant. If you time the removal of the spent blooms just right that section will be stiff enough to snap off easily. Be careful not to eliminate next year's bud that is at the base of the spent bloom.

There are some basic guidelines for planting and fertilizing rhododendrons. Try to plant with some shade. Mulch is key in retaining moisture and insulates the root zone during the winter months. Too wet or too dry will create stress on any plant and with the rhododendron too wet will create root rot. The plant will let you know if fertilizer is needed, by signs such as poor leaf color and minimal growth. A fertilizer for acidic loving plants is necessary and I suggest only apply about 1/2 the manufacturer's directions. A small amount frequently is better than a large amount all at once. The photo on previous page where the leaves are a bit yellow is an example of a need for fertilizer, specifically containing iron (Fe).



Behind the Scenes: volunteers

The lawn maintenance... by

James Card

Maintenance has much more to do with the big picture than just mowing and cleaning up along the edges. It can start with the understanding about the grass plant and how it will react to certain situations and the stresses.

Never take away more than what you are leaving when mowing. Take a look at the height of the grass plants and raise the mower so that too much is not taken off. In two or three days go back and adjust the mower and mow again. If the lawn is taken down too short, the grass looks pale and yellow. This is an indication that the sun did not get to the base of the grass plants because it got too long. Fertilizing a little bit more often is better than a whole bunch at once. Do not wait too long between applications or you will lose your overlap time. I am not referring to the wheel tracks of the spreader if you use that type, but rather the frequency that you apply the fertilizer. Fertilizer like other pesticides should be used as the label recommends. More is NOT better. When buying fertilizer remember that just like the seed, you get what you pay for. Each of the elements will provide an outcome different from the others. Look at the contents and how much (filler) is in the bag, along with the percentage of the main three chemicals (N, P, K,) check with the distributor to see which element applies to your needs. I suggest NEVER using a "weed and feed" product. Not only are the contents bad for the stream systems but also will stress the grass plants. It will not only kill the intended weeds but will push the grass to grow quickly, which puts a stress on the plant, unlike the slow release approach. An application of fertilizer in spring will increase the growth of the lawn plants along with the rains. The lawn grows quickly and is wonderfully green and causes the homeowner to mow more frequently. However, this application is not necessary. The fast response of the grass plants tends to be a stressor. The lawn will grow and green up naturally, just not as fast. Granular (slow release) fertilizer is the best value and will last much longer with slower effects on the grass than liquid products.

Lawn maintenance cont.

Always remove your shoes after fertilizing or walking in the grass when entering the house, YOU WILL TRACK THE FERTILIZER INDOORS. Purchase a product that has about 3% of iron in the content of the mix. Be aware that some iron products can leave a rust stain on concrete and cement when mixed with water. Be sure to ask which product causes this damage. When cleaning fertilizer off sidewalks or driveway use a broom or blower, no water.

Most people tend to overwater the lawn. Too much water is a bad thing, not only for the grass but for the water bill. The lawn under a tree will sometimes look different. The grass plants are going to need food, water and consistency to do well. The tree and the lawn are competing. If the tree blocks the sun from the grass below it, the grass will become thin, infiltrated with moss and in general stressed. Rain does not reach the ground and/or the roots are taking up the moisture leaving the lawn dry. Tree debris cannot be left to sit for very long, especially on a new lawn. Killing the moss in a shaded area is a constant. The combination of less sun, more shade, acidity and location, all play a part to the condition. Sometimes an application of Lime may help.

The tools used to cut and trim the lawn are very important. Most blades are made of steel and over



time will get dull from constant cutting and must be re-sharpened. In a day or so after mowing the lawn may have this little tan cast due to the ends of the grass blades turning brown. You may think the lawn is in need of more fertilizer but check the blade first to save on time and expense. To check if the blade is sharp, look at a blade of grass. If it has a clean cut, the blade is good. If it looks like the grass blades are shredded it is time to sharpen the mower blades. Sticks and stones will dull and damage the blade. One of the most dangerous things is a cracked mower blade. It can come apart at any time and cause serious damage and/or injury. It is standard practice in the lawn care industry to clean/sharpen and replace blades every day. As a home owner, one needs to remember that the sharper the blade the better the cut. If you hit something, check it out. Keep a file handy to remove dings. The balance of the blade is also critical. If the blade is out of balance it will cause wear and tear on the engine shaft.

Cleanliness of the mower is a big thing. If the mower is being used by several people, clover seeds, moss spores, weed seeds, fungus and other items can be transferred to the homeowner's lawn. There is a fungus to be aware of called "red thread". This fungus is caused by the clippings sitting in a pile in the yard. Once the fungus grows in

the old grass clippings it can be tracked back into any area of the lawn, yard, or house. It is characterized by a pink to red appearance on the ends of the blade which looks shredded. To remove "red thread" from the lawn add a small amount of nitrogen fertilizer to the areas affected. In about two weeks the lawn should be back to normal. Washing the mower is especially important if red thread is noticed. It will spread from the mower blades to other areas of the yard.

It is important to check the amount of water on lawns and shrubs. Use a screw driver or bulb planting tool to dig down and see what the moisture is below the surface. Mow lower in the spring and fall but raise the mower in the summer to help shade the stems and roots of the grass. A half inch will make all of the difference. Animal urine spots can be fixed with seed mixes or sod. Ice damage will recover in the spring. Visit the City of Gresham website at greshamoregon.gov/lawncare to get more information.



Photos this page, by J. Card