



# Tsuru Island

James Card: Editor

## Heirloom Azaleas

About five years ago additional azaleas were needed for Tsuru Island. We wanted them to match the existing plants that flank the bridge at the beginning of the island. In order to accomplish this we searched several wholesale nursery locations and requested samples. Six samples were purchased. They were all different in some small way. Bothered by this we decided to take cuttings from existing plants and have them rooted. Van Veen Nursery took the cuttings to reproduce the azalea.

The owner, Kathy Van Veen, now deceased, processed the plants at no charge. She needed new tray blankets for her staging of cuttings process, hers were 25 years old. Boyd's Coffee donated burlap coffee bean bags. A Cub Scout troop that needed volunteer time cut the materials into the liner proportions, A couple of months later we had plants that were ready to containerize. Today if you tour the Garden you will notice these azaleas planted throughout.

A new generation of several hundred plants are growing and almost ready. They will be marketed with the garden's own identity. This plant is named *Tsuru Island Heirloom Azaleas*. The name came to mind when we realized that we had a unique plant that was not produced by any nursery operation today. This fact makes them unique to the Garden. The azaleas is a Hino Crimson. This variety was originally produced by those who assisted with the original garden 50 years ago. The Garden azaleas are very strong and adaptable plants which is what makes them so special. Just imagine how many years these plants lived and thrived with no regular water,



Original Azalea

no nutrition other than the spent blooms and leaf drop.

In about a year, a marketing program for the heirloom azaleas will be set up. The sale will assist to fund the endowment program. In the meantime there are containers, soil, and volunteers in preparation for the plant sale. A label and photo gallery will be designed, showing the plants in use at the Garden. Planting and care instructions will be included on the label.





## Ebetsu Plaza Construction

The plaza will be basically completed by August 9th and ready for a Chamber of Commerce Ribbon Cutting event on August 10th. The Plaza will be used by the Gresham Rotary Club to host the Friday morning membership meeting. The event will start at 9am. This event is open to the public.

Over the past few weeks the volunteers have moved boulders, added soils, installed plants, installed 8 cubic yards of river rock to the drainage/stream bed, installed 20 cubic yards of bark dust, stained 1500 square feet of pavers, prepared for the bench pads, installed drip irrigation to all of the plants, cleaned the surrounding work areas, and built a cart for the engraving machine. The *first* 60 touchstones have been engraved.

The finishing touches will take place in the next few day which include installation of benches and the addition of the Springwater Trail monuments. They have been refurbished from the trail replacement project, keeping with a bit of trail history.

One of the additions to the Plaza area is a "Community Message Board". This will be installed at the end of the lawn on the west side area of Ebetsu Plaza where the three cherry trees are installed. Hopefully this will be installed by the end of August. It will have access to both sides with a hard surface walkway in front. A roof line will keep people and the message area dry. Message postings can be placed from top to ground level with a full 8 foot width. Once completed the area will become an extension of the Plaza, no timeline has been established.

## Volunteer Greeters

The Garden is fortunate to have several evening greeter volunteer to stay at the garden until 8:30 pm. 5 evenings last week were filled by garden enthusiasts, greeting visitors, preventing vandalism, making calls to authorities when necessary. Volunteers have brought books to read, children to play with and one has a pit bull dog who enjoys the cool shade of the garden and is a great deterrent to the guests that have destruction in mind.

If you are interested in spending a quiet evening in the Japanese garden please go to the website:

[greshamjapanesegarden.com](http://greshamjapanesegarden.com)



## Some People Are Just Lucky

If you have ever had a mole come up in your yard you may not be too put out if it takes place in the bed areas or bark dust is present. The damage can be fixed easily and sometime not even noticed. But those who have experienced the same event in the lawn have a different story to tell. It is mixed with anxiety, frustration and a willingness to kill.

Moles are animals that live and nest underground. They make vast systems of tunnels in search of worms, bugs, larva and other food sources. The mound on the surface is the result of the tunnel construction pushed upward to be gotten out of the way. The mole is blind and does not have any way of knowing where he is except by smell and temperature change and warmth of the areas above the soil line. The mole is an excavation machine and requires huge energy to do what they do. A mole can consume 100% of his body weight in just one day. There are two types of runways that the mole produces, a deep runway that is like a main highway to get from one area to another and may be used by several moles. The subsurface runway is where the mounds created are the result of looking for the food source. Moles are meat eaters and will not eat the roots or bulbs of your plants, that is being done by another critter all together. As a matter of fact the mole is actually assisting with insects and grub destruction that are causing problems.

How to get rid of the mole! By trap, gas, repelling with chemicals or eliminating the food source. By eliminating food the mole will find another area. Sometimes the mole will move into another area because of vibration possibly by heavy equipment and/or traffic in the area, temperature and lack of moisture. To eliminate the food source sometimes using chemicals can result in the mole ingesting it though it's food source, which may or may not kill the mole. What does happen

is that grubs and worms will be killed by the chemical leading to birds and other critters them and also being killed.

Over the years many have experienced the best way to controlling the moles is by trapping. This does not mean that another mole will not use the same tunnel. Most of the mole issues can be dealt with the help of an exterminator. Landscapers do not have the licenses and safety knowledge to use the products and devices around the property, pets and children should be considered.

It so happens that Jim has moles in the yard and they periodically make a mole hill or two in the lawn. He packs the soil back into the hole. This year the mole(s) are coming up in the COMPOST bin. Every day the dirt mound appears. The compost bin has lots of worms. Between the worms and the mole mixing the dirt, this is the best compost soil around.

*"Some people are just lucky"*



**The Resource center hosts**

**Bonsai Classes every 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month**

**Details on [greshamjapanesegarden.com](http://greshamjapanesegarden.com)  
website**

## Saving a Part of History

Many residence of Gresham will remember the Ambleside area just off Hogan Rd. and the Springwater trail. This area was originally designed and built around 1906. At that time the Springwater corridor had a railroad running from Portland to the Boring, OR area. There were 10 homes built on Ambleside Street along Johnson Creek that were used mainly as vacation homes for some residence of west Portland. It was a short rail car ride from their homes to the Gresham site. Over the years people continued to live in those homes until about 2017. The Metro council voted to purchase the land. The intent was to turn the area back into a flood plain for Johnson creek area and remove all the hardscapes, dams, and utilities from the area. As this construction project proceeded the City of Gresham was contacted and asked if they could use the plant material. Much of it was overgrown, uncared for and had aggressive vines growing through them. Jim Buck and Jim Card, of the Japanese garden, were informed by Tina Osterink of the Urban Forestry Division, to look at the plants. They proceeded to tag 8 mature plants that included Japanese lace leaf maples. Variegated Andromeda, weeping Norway spruce, Japanese cedar, and rhododendrons.

It was a difficult challenge since the temperatures were well over 80 degrees and they had limited time to remove all the trees before demolition. Both sides of

the plants' foliage were coated with a wax product to assist in retaining moisture. 400 gallons of water was placed on the root systems the days prior to digging the trees. Some plants were so close together a 4 foot deep trench had to be dug between them. On the day of transfer the task was accomplished with a track hoe that carved a circular ditch around the root ball of each plant. The balls were wrapped with burlap and coated twine and were carefully removed by putting them on a City owned trailer and truck. They were moved to the storage yard at Main City Park. The plants again had been coated with wax based material and saw dust placed around the root balls to retain water. Shade cloth was placed over and around each plant. They will stay in this state until late fall of winter, when they will be placed in an appropriate place to be enjoyed by the public.

These plants are so big (4-8 feet tall) that only one could fit in the back of the flatbed truck. Only 3 could fit on the 16ft. trailer. As expected, the maples are suffering some shock and leaf drop but appear to be content with their environment now. Assistance in keeping these plants in good shape is being accomplished by Yoshiko Ture and Jim Card.

Ambleside St. homes

