

Tsuru 鶴 Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



Community Ties

Since February 2021, Riverview Community Bank, Gresham branch, has showcased the Garden's Japanese traveling display in their lobby.

Each month we rotate display items. We've had an assortment of bonsai

plants, ikebana arrangements, a geisha doll, and kabuki doll, complemented by a custom-made shoji screen, a looped video of garden photos, and katori music playing in the background by Takohachi, Inc.

"The display offers bank members the opportunity to learn a little bit more about Japanese culture."

- Brenda Felix, Riverview Community Bank Manager



PHOTOGRAPHER'S VIEW

うらやまし美しうなりて散る紅葉
urayamashi utsukushu natte chiru momiji

*How enviable,
Turning beautiful then falling, maple leaves*

— Shiko Kagami

Brenda Felix, Bank Manager says, "the display offers bank members the opportunity to learn a little bit more about Japanese culture." She continues, "we have many compliments about bringing the outdoors inside for all to see."

A Quick Lesson in the Japanese Language

by Bill Peterson

My first trip to Japan was in December of 1953 and my last in June of 2005. Within that time frame I spent about ten years living in Japan and developed a modest fluency in the language.

Through my volunteering at the Garden, I've listened to visitors (and volunteers) struggle with Japanese pronunciations. Here is a quick lesson that may help in understanding the language.

Most Japanese language teachers will start with the phonetic alphabet called "Hiragana" and the corresponding sounds written in English characters. The Japanese call this English version "Romaji". The following are the first five letters (vowels) written in Hiragana and Romaji: (the vowel sounds are similar to Latin vowels) あ(a), い(i), う(u), え(e), お(o).

The other letters with a few exceptions can be written in Romaji by just adding a consonant to the vowels. Here are the next five letters in the alphabet made by adding "k" to the English vowels: か(ka), き(ki), く(ku), け(ke), こ(ko).

English speakers can view the Japanese letters in Romaji as syllables. Then, if you pronounce each syllable the same

length with little accent you will be understood. As an example, yo-ko-hama. Our island name Tsuru is an irregular case. A Romaji of "tu" does not work so it is written "tsu" and pronounced "sue" and the "r" sound is like a soft "d" so Tsuru comes out "sue-due."

There are scads of YouTube's on the Hiragana alphabet. It took me a bit of review, but I found this simple one that provides a good overview: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc7f_jSzVvA.

The Japanese do have another phonetic alphabet called "Katakana", which is used mostly for words from foreign languages or *loanwords*. Katakana has the same basic 46 letters as Hiragana. Remembering the first five letters written in hiragana あいうえお, in Katakana they are ア(a), イ(i), ウ(u), エ(e), オ(o).

Notice there is not much similarity. The Katakana letters seem stiff, like we might think of the usage of capital letters in an English ad. In Japan this may be the first Katakana word you learn コーヒー (koohee).

The Japanese also use symbols called "Kanji" representing words or ideas. As an example, the pronoun "I" in Hiragana is わたし (watashi) and in kanji 私. All

Japanese can be written in Hiragana. For example, here is the word "kanji" written in Kanji with the Hiragana in parentheses 漢字(かんじ). The Japanese sprinkle Kanji in their writing, I suspect to speed up reading and to clarify meaning. The Japanese have discussed the idea of modifying or eliminating Kanji, but without much effect.

The Japanese use symbols called "Kanji" representing words or ideas.

If you visit Japan with only this knowledge, the Japanese will be appreciative, and you will already have more knowledge of the language than about 9 out of 10 visitors.

Also, take some relief from the knowledge that most public signs in train stations, on highways, etc. are written in both Romaji and Japanese. In addition there is one word that can be most helpful to a visitor. That word is "sumimasen" which means "excuse me", "I'm sorry", and many other meanings as shown in this YouTube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EyYyieWzVK0&t=94s>



GARDENER'S TIP

November is the time to dig your dahlia, canna, and begonia bulbs that need protection over the winter from too much moisture and cold. Place them in wood shavings or coconut fiber in a cool dry place for storage.

Also, collect and compost leaves to create rich soil for next spring. You can add grass clippings or manure to the leaves to help with the composting process. Leaves can also be put on garden beds as mulch over the winter while they break down.

— Jim Buck, Garden Volunteer and Organic Gardener

The City Looses a Tree



This bigleaf maple located on the south bank of Johnson Creek was just showing its fall color, and then in the space of one night, destroyed by our island beaver.

Look how meticulously the beaver chewed the tree, landing it in the water, making it easier and safer for him to get to the wood. Read the beaver article in [September's Tsuru Soars](#) for more beavers.

Workshops and Classes



Don't miss our last free, educational class for the year, [Winter Lawn Maintenance, Nov. 13th from 1-3pm](#). We also have these great workshops for the holidays:

- [Ikebana Arrangement: Nov. 9, 1-3pm](#)
- [Origami Ornament Making: Nov. 17, 6-7:15pm](#)
- [Art of Bonsai: Nov. 20, 1-3pm](#)
- [Wreath Making: Dec. 8, 2-4pm](#)

November is a Prime Month for Planting

The best time to plant a tree or shrub is in the fall, so roots have 6-8 weeks to establish before the ground may freeze. Also, fall brings the combination of warm soil and cool air stimulating root growth and further helping the plant get established. It's also when our soil is the most workable.

STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR LOCATION

When accessing the space, take note of the size, shape, and color of existing plants, surrounding hardscapes, irrigation options, and the direction of the sun. All are extremely important.

Healthy trees and shrubs will last for decades, so consider your long-term landscaping goals and how this plant is going to mature *into* the location you've chosen. We see all too often, poor location choices—like too close to the house.

STEP 2: SELECT YOUR PLANT

Consider trees and shrubs that will provide different features year-round, such as fruit in summer and changing leaf colors in the fall. For blossoms, consider a rhododendron or azalea. They both do well in our climate and offer a wide range of varieties.

In considering the type of the plant to pick, think about your yard's color palette. Do you need a splash of red, or yellow. What about texture? Maybe a simple wispy *Leatherleaf Sedge* grass would be the perfect addition. **Make sure your plant selection will not out-grow your location.**

STEP 3: PURCHASING YOUR PLANT

When purchasing, examine the plant's overall structure. Shrubs should have several stems coming from the base of the plant. Most trees, on the other hand, should have only one upright trunk and branches should be evenly spaced along the trunk. A few species such as birch are sometimes grown as clumps and so



Figure 1 - Root-bound tree from a plastic container



Figure 2- B&B container



Figure 3- Fabric container

may have multiple trunks. In general, you should avoid purchasing trees with double trunks, dead branches, trunk cracks or wounds, or leaves that show signs of insect damage, or disease.

There are three types of planting stock; plastic containers, B&B (balled and burlapped), and fabric containers. In all of these situations, it's important to choose a plant with a healthy root system. Healthy root tips are light in color; older or diseased roots are dark in color.

If the plant is container grown, gently pull it out from the pot and take a look at the roots. A good root ball will stay intact. Try to avoid pot-bound plants, or plants with a thick root mat at the bottom. *See figure 1.*

It's harder to check for a good root system with B&B plants, but you can. The trunk should taper outward where it enters the soil and you should see major roots connecting to the base of the trunk at the soil surface. *See figure 2.* If not, probe into the soil ball about three inches away from the trunk with a blunt nail or wire to locate a few large roots. If you don't find any, avoid that plant because it is buried too deep.

The third type of planting stock is trees grown in fabric containers, sometimes called grow-bags. *See figure 3.* Roots in these fabric containers are generally dense, but fibrous, and the large roots form swollen nodules at the container's edge, rather than circling like in a plastic container. *See figure 3.* The nodules store carbohydrates that are used for

rapid root growth—once transplanted. Trees grown in fabric containers are lighter weight and easier to handle than B&B plants, so they require staking and frequent watering after transplanting. Research shows that these root systems have structural advantages and enhance growth and longevity.

STEP 4: DIGGING YOUR HOLE

Measure the height and diameter of the root ball. The most common mistake people make when planting is making the planting hole too deep and narrow. Dig a hole only as deep as the height of

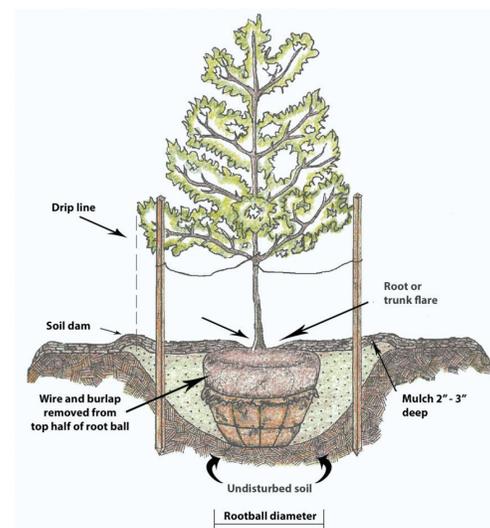


Figure 4 - Guidelines for digging a hole.

the root ball. Make the hole two to three times as wide as the diameter of the root ball. *See figure 4.* Digging a wide hole loosens the soil and provides a good environment for new roots to begin growth.

Continued on back, "November Planting"

November Planting cont'd

STEP 5: PLANTING

If you end up with a root-bound tree or shrub, you can remedy the problem. Score with a sharp knife around the outside of the root ball, an inch or two deep, cutting through all the outer, horizontal growing roots. Cut any visible circling roots over 1/4" diameter with hand pruners. Loosen the roots and untangle as you're slicing. If there is a root mat at the bottom, cut it off.

Place in the planting hole positioning the trunk just above the dirt forming a sloping mound. Position the roots in a radial pattern to encourage them to grow in an outward direction. Firmly pack the soil in between.

While root pruning may seem harsh and is stressful to the plant, research has shown that leaving circling and/or matted roots may prevent plants from establishing a normal, outward growing root

system, which is essential to the long-term survival and health of the plant.

In preparing a B&B plant, remove as much of the burlap and rope, as possible, but avoid breaking up the soil ball. At a minimum, you should expose at least the entire top half of the soil ball. It's okay to leave some burlap on the bottom half, because almost all the new roots will grow outwards from the top half of the original soil ball, not downwards from the bottom half. Make sure the material left on the ball is natural and therefore biodegradable.

Fabric containers must be completely removed before planting. Cut from top to bottom and peel the container away from the sides and bottom. If small roots have grown through the sides, just cut them off before removing from the container. Once the container is removed, check for circling roots and cut them too.

Be sure to leave the nodules intact.

Place the plant in the center of the hole and check again that it is at the proper depth. The top of the stem should just sit above the dirt. Fill in around the root ball with the soil you saved from digging the hole. Tamp soil firmly down. You can add water when the hole is half full to help settle the soil, then again when you've finished planting.

Don't do any major pruning at planting. Only remove dead or injured branches. Identify what will become the dominant leader, or central trunk, on a deciduous tree and prune off competing leaders.

This month's [Ask Jim! Facebook video series](#) discusses location, plant selection and planting of a tree.

Ask Jim!

The Garden Receives a Wedding Kimono

in memory of Shizue Peterson

In Japan, traditional wedding ceremonies are performed in a rather formal wedding hall. Ceremonies take place simultaneously, with only a few family members and friends in attendance.

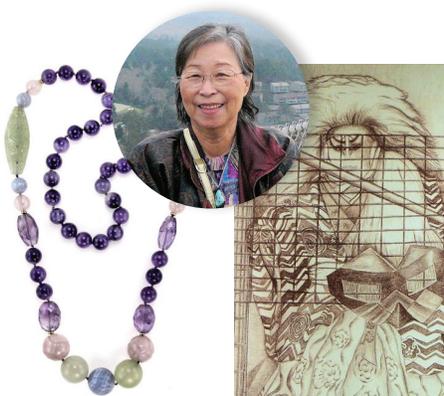
The bridal couple wears special silk wedding kimonos. For the bride, the elegant shiromuku (white kimono) or the luxurious iro-uchikake (colored kimono). For the groom, formal black montsuki (family-crested kimono) with hakama (wide-legged pants). You'll be surprised to learn, a bride typically *rents* her wedding kimono.

The Gresham Japanese Garden is fortunate to be gifted a iro-uchikake wedding kimono by Bill Peterson in memory of his late wife Shizue.

As Bill tells it, Shizue purchased this

kimono in the 80s. She had an eye and love for good art, and was an accomplished artist herself. She studied fine art at the University of Delaware.

Over the years Shizue recognized that necklaces were objects of great art and culture, and subsequently owned gift shops, one in Troutdale, selling beads and teaching workshops in necklace making.



Shizue's art

Shizue's love for art lives on in this beautiful kimono now displayed in the Garden's Resource Center. It will make its way to join the traveling display at Riverview Community Bank. *See cover article.*



Iro-uchikake wedding kimono