

# Tsuru 鶴 Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



## NAJGA Leaves Us Humble

Last month we wrote about North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA) holding a Meet-and-Greet at our Garden for members within about 100 miles of Gresham! Twenty-five members attended, coming from as far south as Corvallis and west as Hillsboro, to visit Tsuru Island, listen to an impactful presentation by NAJGA outlining their next 10 years, and networking with other members.

Currently, NAJGA's community consists of 225 individual memberships, 110 organizations, and 31 businesses. Much like a Chamber of Commerce, NAJGA's

key areas of focus are to share information, foster connections, provide training and advocacy. How do they accomplish their goals? One avenue is these intimate meet and greets. Another is organizing yearly Regional Conferences fulfilling a broad range of their mission. This year they chose Anderson Japanese Gardens in Rockford, Illinois.

We were stunned at the end of their presentation when Board President, Jeanette Schelin asked us to host next year's Regional Conference.

Yes, a daunting task but nevertheless an exciting one. We are honored to host a



### PHOTOGRAPHER'S VIEW

.さりとはばか長き日よかきつばた  
*saritote wa baka naga[ki] hi yo kakitsubata*  
*well well, the day is foolishly long...irises*

Regional Conference in 2023. Our small, humble Japanese Garden in Gresham, Oregon will be receiving some heightened awareness!



NORTH AMERICAN  
 JAPANESE GARDEN  
 ASSOCIATION

# The Story of Tanabata (Star Festival)



**T**he Tanabata festival, also known as the Star Festival or *Hoshi Matsuri*, is a traditional summertime celebration in Japan. Tanabata means “evening of the seventh”.

The Tanabata celebration is based on a legend about two lovers represented by the stars Altair and Vega. The story of these stellar beings tells of two “star-crossed lovers” who are only allowed to meet once a year.

In the tale, a weaver princess named Orihime (Vega) and a cow-herder named Hikoboshi (Altair) fall in love. Distracted by their romance, the two start to neglect their duties. Orihime stops weaving and Hikoboshi’s cows are left to wander.

This angers Orihime’s father, the Sky King or Emperor of Heaven, who sepa-

rates the two by widening the “heavenly river,” or Milky Way. It isn’t until Orihime’s father starts to feel remorseful that the two are allowed to meet annually, on the seventh day of the seventh month, as long as Orihime continues her beautiful weaving.

## HISTORY AND ADAPTATION

Tanabata is one of Japan’s five traditional seasonal festivals and has been celebrated for thousands of years and was introduced to Japan by Empress Kōken in 755. It was first celebrated by imperial court aristocrats who would stargaze, write poetry, and hold contests.

One of the most iconic symbols of the Tanabata festival is the long, thin strips of colorful paper streamers known as “tanzaku.” These papers are hung from bamboo branches, along with other ornaments and origami. Bamboo poles are used in more urban settings, to help decorate shops, train stations, and other public spaces.

Just like in the olden days, wishes are written on the tanzaku. Since bamboo grows so tall, the wishes are supposed to be able to reach the heavens, where deities can grant the wishes and/or ward off evil spirits.

Bamboo grows in two places on Tsuru Island, next to the azumaya, and also in the southeast corner. Please feel free to hang your tanzaku on a bamboo branch throughout the month of July.

*Hang your tanzaku on a bamboo branch throughout the month of July.*



Source: <https://www.bokksu.com/blogs/>



## GARDENER'S TIP

- After roses bloom, trim down to stem, leaving five leaves. Keep deadheading other flowers to promote blooming.
- Mulch garden plants to help them thrive in the heat and to reduce watering and weeding.
- Plant second season vegetables such as kale and lettuce. Keep turning your compost pile.
- Make plans to increase garden plants favored by pollinators.

— Jim Buck, Garden Volunteer and Organic Gardener

## Mural Update



Oh my... the mural is almost complete. Madison Hughes ([#achy\\_hands](https://twitter.com/achy_hands)) painted the Japanese farmer harvesting his cauliflower crop on his Farmall tractor—the first “row crop” tractor introduced in 1923.

Another element mounted on the mural is a cartouche, a common architectural feature in Japanese art.

Stop by and check it out!

## Pruning Service



“My garden is over 25 years old with nice shrubs and plants, but some are overgrown or improperly pruned. The pruning classes are very informative, but working alongside Jim and Sue on my own landscape has been even more helpful, and a lot of fun. I learn a lot each time and would recommend it to anyone who loves to garden. It’s a wonderful service for the community.” —Cyndy Roland, Boring

# Island Streambed Gets a Facelift

by Mary Marrs



**T**welve years ago, Jim Card purposely sat on Tsuru Island during a downpour to watch the natural pooling and run-off patterns of the

rain. Back then, the garden was relatively flat, and he knew that any restoration would have to consider its overall drainage. The subsequent streambed that Card designed now runs the length of the garden and has served both the drainage function and aesthetics that he originally envisioned.

While the streambed has some water in it during the wet months, it's usually dry most of the year. That's part of the function, Card says. One purpose is to collect rainwater and the run-off from the drip irrigation, and let it gradually percolate into the subsoil. Its strategic placement also draws water away from areas that are naturally wetter where plant roots might suffocate in saturated soils.

And the sinuous layout of the streambed is also key in creating garden "rooms". Combined with the curving path and position of plants, it helps define and separate unique areas throughout the garden. Even when a visitor walks across the low foot bridge, the perspective and mood of the garden changes. In fact, the location of each wood bench on Tsuru Island was specifically chosen to present the viewer with a unique viewpoint of the streambed and a garden room.

In a Japanese garden, water is a symbol of renewal and reflection. Even the illusion of flowing water can be calming. That's what the streambed on Tsuru Island does as it winds around trees, along boulders, flanked by an array of grasses, rushes, and iris. It almost seems to mimic

the flowing nature of Johnson Creek.

But even a streambed needs some care and attention. And not a little. A lot. After all these years, it had become filled with fine mud, decomposing leaves, and pine needles. Even the landscape fabric under the rocks was losing its permeability to allow water to filter through, and was starting to look bad.

So the streambed got a restoration that started with the removal of almost five cubic yards of rock, mud, and compost. Plants that had encroached were pulled out—tenacious roots and all. Because of the delicacy, all the excavation was done by hand, one bucket and wheelbarrow at a time. No machinery was used in the garden, just good old elbow grease and



strong backs. As the debris was removed, Mike Henke made over 50 trips to the compost area behind the city maintenance shed with this scooter pulling a Gorilla cart.

One particular person did the majority of that work. Volunteer Chuck Page modestly said he put in over forty hours during a two-week period to remove about 90% of the materials by hand. During two Garden Saturday workdays, other volunteers put in back-breaking work hauling old rock out and new rock into the streambeds.

Rebuilding the streambed started with placing new permeable landscape fabric which will continue as a weed barrier and keep rocks separated from the subsoil. Over four cubic yards of clean, rounded pebbles, cobbles, and boulders were brought in and laid down by hand. Some of the reconstruction was done in the rain, so water (and silt) settled in the bed. When it dries out, volunteers will remove any silt and leaves before laying the final layer of rocks.

Since this restoration project was a big undertaking for the Garden, Card and Page want to make sure the maintenance is done properly. They examined the streambeds constructed on the Gresham Japanese Garden properties of Ebetsu

Plaza and Ambleside Annex. The stretches were shorter, but are retaining their drainage and aesthetic values. Keeping these streambeds clean has involved regular removal of leaf debris and hand-pulling weeds as they grow—tasks that can easily be incorporated into Tsuru Island's regular maintenance schedule.

Now that the streambeds are clean again, and proved to function as intended, Card shouldn't need to sit through another rainstorm watching the water flow. And Page and Henke have moved on to other Garden projects.

Northwest Koi & Goldfish Club

# Koi Expo

Saturday, July 9th

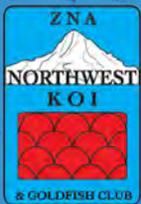
10am - 4pm

Main City Park

Gresham

## Schedule of Events

- 10am-2pm - Exhibits
- Noon-2pm - Children's Area: Origami and Paper Fish Ponds
- 2pm-4pm - Live Auction



NWKG.org

## Seminars

- 10am - Koi Identification and Appreciation
- 11am - Ikebana Arrangement
- Noon - The Art of Bonsai
- 1pm - Water Quality for Koi

## HOSTED BY:



## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

GreshamJapaneseGarden.org/koi  
503-502-7340