

Tsuru 鶴 Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



Taiko Drums Return August 27th

Get ready for an energizing performance by Takohachi, Inc. when they return for a second year in a row, Saturday, August 27th in Main City Park.

For this free, family-oriented show, performers will be beating taiko drums, playing a bamboo flute, choreographed with high-energetic dancing.

Yumi Torimaru, founder of the Portland based [TAKOHACHI, Inc.](#) has conducted hundreds of shows. In 2019, Yumi received a 'natori' certificate from one of the biggest Tsugaru Shamisen Organizations, 'Oyama Kai' in Japan.



PHOTOGRAPHER'S VIEW

.橋見へて暮かかる也秋の空
hashi miete kure kakaru nari aki no sora

watching the bridge, as evening falls...autumn sky

*Saturday, August 27th
in Main City Park.
30-minute performances at
11:30am and 1pm*

Feeding the Monarchs

by Mary Dickson



Do you remember the magic of watching monarch butterflies flit across blossoms in a garden when you were a child? Your children or grandchildren may not have that opportunity, since the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, a leading authority on the status of biological diversity, recently put monarch butterflies on the endangered species list. There's hope in our local area, though, thanks to

Deb Peters, who is creating a pollinator garden at the Ambleside Annex, south of Tsuru Island.

WHY ARE POLLINATORS SO IMPORTANT?

According to the Pollinator Partnership, *"Birds, bats, bees, butterflies, beetles, and other small mammals that pollinate plants are responsible for bringing us one out of every three bites of food."*

"Pollinating animals travel from plant to plant carrying pollen on their bodies in a vital interaction that allows the transfer of genetic material critical to the reproductive system of most flowering plants – the very plants that bring us countless fruits, vegetables, and nuts; half of the world's oils, fibers and raw materials; prevent soil erosion; and increase carbon sequestration."

Deb says the reason for the decline in the monarch population is that supportive plants, like milkweed, have been eradicated. Milkweed was considered a "weed," and removed from gardens, along parkways, and in wild areas. Additional factors, according to the Pollinator Partnership, are "pollution, the misuse of chemicals like pesticides, disease, and

changes in climatic patterns."

Deb has planted milkweed (host plant for monarchs), along with checker mallow (host plant for painted lady butterfly). In addition, we must supply all pollinators with nectar by providing plants like zinnias and asters to attract all butterfly species from May to October. Deb has planted pollinator plants at the Troutdale Sunrise park Monarch Way Station because there is enough ground for multiple plants.

The Gresham Japanese Garden, through Deb Peters, is doing its part to encourage pollinators. You can, too, in your yard and garden, by planting host plants and by having all season blooming flowers so the cycle of the butterfly can be fulfilled.

For more information, Deb suggests the Facebook group: [Portland Monarchs](#). Ida Galash, head of Monarch Corridor, provides excellent information.

With patience and by planting appropriate plants, you and those who follow will once again marvel at the magic of the monarch. Stop by the GJG's pollinator garden to see if you can spot one.



GARDENER'S TIP

- As vegetables and flowers die back, be sure to compost into the soil or compost pile.
- You still have time to plant fall crops of broccoli, lettuce, kale, etc.
- Cut raspberry canes that have died back, and tidy the strawberry bed and fertilize them for next year's crop.
- Be sure to deep water trees, like cedars, if weather remains dry and hot.

— Jim Buck, Garden Volunteer and Organic Gardener

The Mural is Finished



[North Central Painting LLC](#) brings a sigh of relief to the Garden. Within a week of the mural's completion, North Central Painting LLC sprayed an anti-graffiti coating to protect the mural.

Yet again, the goodwill of our Gresham businesses energizes and ignites us to serve.

Thank you!

Hanging Baskets in MCP



We're pretty proud of our hanging flower baskets. It began with our Exploratory Program students planting the containers and babying them in our greenhouse for weeks, to now our volunteers feeding them one-by-one monthly with fertilizer. Ask our newest volunteer Bryan how high he has to climb up ladder!

Burning Questions About Johnson Creek

by Mary Marrs

Why doesn't Johnson Creek flow all the way around Tsuru Island? What's happening to the blackberries just upstream from the garden? What's that orange gunk in the water under the Moon Bridge?

I took a walk with City of Gresham's Mike Wallace, and he answered those questions and many more. Wallace, Gresham's Natural Resources Ecologist, has been focusing on the stretch of Johnson Creek that flows through Gresham and past Tsuru Island.

He said that Johnson Creek used to flow completely around Tsuru Island, but things happened. Years ago willows were removed from the banks on the north side of the island. When the stream lost shade from the willows, reed canary grass took over. A highly invasive plant, canary grass outcompetes other plants for sun, water, nutrients, and space. As it grows and dies back, it builds up thick layers of thatch which raise the ground level. On the north side of the island, canary grass actually raised the elevation of the streambed and restructured the creek's path.

Thompson Creek also used to contribute to the flow around the island. It drains into Johnson Creek from the northeast corner of the island. It's now paved, diverted into culverts, but has a low, seasonal output. Canary grass also blocks its flow around the island.

Eradicating canary grass and other invasive plants such as Himalayan blackberries is part of the city's long-range riparian restoration program. The city used herbicides on the canary grass around Tsuru Island, then planted local species of rushes, sedges, and willow. Taking cuttings from healthy native plants along Johnson Creek and replanting them is cost efficient and contributes to the plants' acclimation.

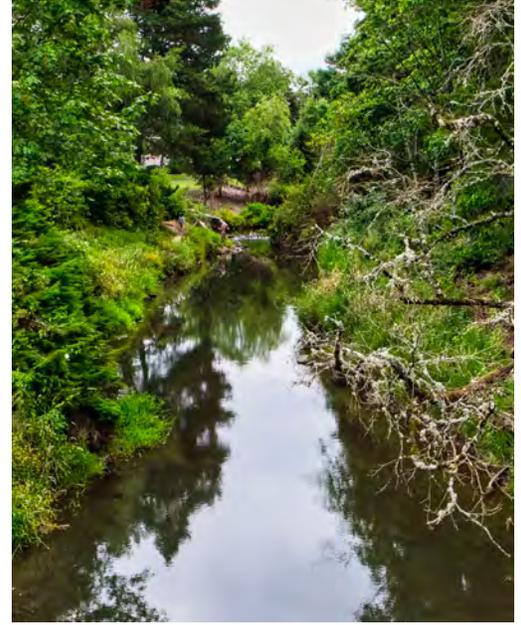
Wallace emphasizes that biodiversity is important in restoration and a range of plants can help make the watershed healthier. Willows can branch out over streams and create shade. Beavers like willow, so it provides food while keeping them away from more fragile and susceptible plants. Red twig dogwood, which beavers don't care for, is also planted, adding to the mixture of plants along streambanks. The city also plants a species of rushes and sedges that can compete with the canary grass. Native species of ninebark, Oregon grape, snowberry and elderberry add to the natural aesthetic beauty of the creek.

And what about those Himalayan blackberries? The city has been cutting them down, treating with herbicides, and leaving canes on the ground to decompose naturally. Later, localized native plants will be established along the banks. As one can imagine, it's a multi-year process that takes funding, time, and a lot of hard work.

...the island is located in a critical habitat for federally-protected anadromous fish.

So why don't we just bulldoze the canary grass and excavate the streambed around Tsuru Island? Because the island is located in a critical habitat for federally-protected anadromous fish. Anadromous fish, which includes the endangered species of chinook, coho, and steelhead, are born in freshwater streams and rivers, then migrate to the ocean as juveniles where they grow into adults and migrate back into freshwater to spawn.

Anadromous fish had been in Johnson Creek as far back as the old Ambleside neighborhood. Their journey was down Johnson Creek, to the Willamette then Columbia River, and all the way to the Pacific Ocean. Even though anadromous fish have only been seen as far east as



the Crystal Springs area around Reed College, their historic habitat in Johnson Creek is still under federal protection.

Also, Main City Park and Tsuru Island are within the 100-year floodplain of Johnson Creek. That means state and federal governments regulate material that is removed or brought in, activities that affect local wildlife and other aquatic species, and anything that might change water quality, including siltation. The city is responsible for those activities that could affect structures such as bridges and roads, and impact utilities such as water and sewer lines. The 100-year floodplain restricts the Garden's options, such as, building a viewing platform over the creek, shoring up the creek banks, and creating a welcoming and safe walking path around the island.

Okay, so what's with the orange slime? Blame it on the iron-rich volcanic soils. Rain and ground water percolate through the soil and leach out iron. When the dissolved iron reacts with oxygen in the air, it forms rust-colored iron oxides. These deposits often occur in slow-moving water on hot, dry days when the water is sluggish. You may notice an unpleasant odor too. Sorry!

Obon Festival: Paying Respect to Ancestors

Obon is one of Japan's most important festivals celebrated over three days, typically August 13-15. During this time, Japanese people pay respect to their ancestors and loved ones who have passed away. It is believed that all spirits return back to earth, and most families will leave offerings for their ancestor's spirits, hang chochin lanterns, or float lanterns to lead them home.

During Obon, people also clean and decorate the graves of their ancestors. While cleaning the graves, some may talk to their ancestors and update them on events that have occurred over the previous year.

This festival is often compared to Mexico's Day of the Dead and China's Hungry Ghost Festival. The relationship to death in all of these holidays is quite similar.

ORIGINS OF THE OBON FESTIVAL

The Obon Festival originates from the Buddhist story of Maha Maudgalyayana (Mokuren), a disciple of the Buddha. He used his supernatural powers to look upon his deceased mother only to discover she had fallen into the Realm of Hungry Ghosts and was suffering. He tried using his powers to feed food into his mother's mouth, only to see the food just fed into her mouth turn

into charcoal. Saddened, he went to the Buddha and asked how he could relieve his mother's suffering. Buddha instructed him to make offerings to the many Buddhist monks who had just completed their summer retreat on the fifteenth day of the seventh month.

Mokuren did this and, thus, saw his mother's relief. He was happy and danced with joy. From this dance of joy comes "Bon Odori" or the "Bon Dance".

HOW OBON IS CELEBRATED

Obon is a time to be with family and celebrate loved ones. Many Japanese people return to their ancestral homes during this festival, and because it is not a public holiday, most will take time off work. The most important part of the celebrations is honoring ancestors by leaving a variety of food offerings for them at Buddhist altars.

Before Obon begins, it is common to clean the homes and set out offerings to be prepared for when the spirits arrive.

August 13: Guiding the Spirits Home

On this day, people will light paper lanterns and hang them in their homes and on doorways. It's also common to see red and white lanterns decorating the streets of most towns and cities. Families may also carry a lantern with them to the graves of family members in order to

help guide them home.

August 14: Celebrations and Bon Dances

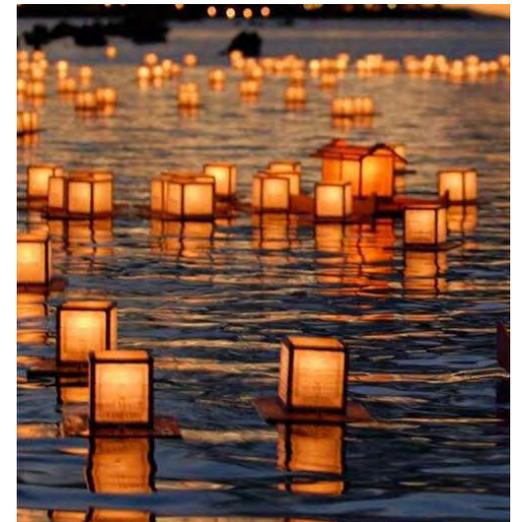
This day is when the traditional "Bon Dance" or "Bon Odori" dancing is performed in parks, gardens, and shrines across the country.

August 15: Seeing off the Spirits

The last day of Obon is for guiding the spirits back to their resting places or back to the water, which is where spirits are traditionally believed to reside.

During this day, many regions light another bonfire and hang more lanterns painted with the family crest to guide spirits back to their graves.

Source: <https://www.asiahighlights.com/japan/obon>



Guiding the spirits back to their graves

Gardens for Peace

Gardens for Peace (G4P) is a project of the North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA) that brings communities together in Japanese gardens to promote peace.

This year 25 gardens, including GJG, will "pull the rake" for peace utilizing a special peace pattern designed by Mrs. Toshiko Tanaka, a Hiroshima-based enamel artist and A-bomb survivor and

advocate for world peace. The pattern creatively utilizes the Japanese peace characters for *heiwa* to inspire discussion and involvement in peace efforts at the individual level and communities.

On August 5th through the city's Summer Kids in the Park program (SKIP), Chris Young and Jim Buck, Garden volunteers, will be teaching kids how to rake the peace symbol in our dry garden (*karesan-*

sui), along with an interactive discussion around our new-to-be-planted Hiroshima Peace Tree in our new Hiroshima Peace Tree garden.



GARDENS FOR PEACE