

Tsuru Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



Roses Galore in Main City Park



Curttright (right), and her friend Leslie Numo (left) planting their donated rose bushes.

The City of Gresham Main City Park workers transformed an overgrown daylily patch into a beautiful rose garden.

Through their enthusiasm, the Gresham Japanese Garden was able to connect the Park's workers with Annie Curttright, an award-winning rose grower, and wife to our Bonsai Master.

"When I heard a rose garden was going in the city park", Curttright says, "I just couldn't help getting involved. We are so lucky to live not only in a climate that allows roses to flourish, but is also a mecca for some of the most experienced rose growers in the world."

Sahid Sierra, Park's gardener, says,

*autumn leaves
a black tile roof
a place to meet*

— Bill Peterson

"The collaboration with Annie is a really big deal for us, not only because she will help with maintaining the rose garden, but she provides us with a lot of knowledge and experience.

"Our goal is to build a staple attraction that will outlive us, and show others how much we care about our City parks and the Gresham community."

"...show others how much we care about our City parks and the Gresham community"

- Sahid Sierra, COG Park's gardener

Inspiration from the Japanese Garden Conference

By Sue Protz

With much enthusiasm I had the privilege to attend the North American Japanese Garden Association (NAJGA) International Conference held at the beautiful Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, Missouri.

This year's theme, *The Intersection of Art, Science, and Culture*, encouraged its North American Japanese Garden Association members to explore technical, creative, and skilled aspects of building Japanese gardens while considering their place and function in our communities.

A standout presentation for me at the conference was a panel discussion called **Niwashi no tsutaetai koto // Sharing Fundamentals with Future Generations**. The panel consisted of legends in the industry, John Powell, Japanese garden designer and consultant; Bill Castellon, CAP #5 of the Aesthetics Pruner Association and craftsman, Avram Dalton, builder of gardens in California. Rounding out the panel was Hiroaki Eto-san, a craftsman from northern Kyushu, with many decades of experience building traditional landscapes in both Japan and US.

Through Dalton, Eto-san's assistant and interpreter, the audience learned just how dedicated Japanese people are to their craft. Here's a few slides demonstrating this message. Note the humbleness in the messages too.

A second standout presentation was a tree

Shu-Ha-Ri (守破離)

Shu means to follow. You learn by faithfully copying your teacher and mastering the basics.
Ha means to break. Once you understand the basics, you begin to adapt and make them your own.

Ri means to separate. After many years your skill becomes natural, and you create freely without being bound by rules.

Humility in Mastery

"The Ripened Rice Bowing Low" (実るほど頭を垂れる稲穂かな)

Just as ripened rice bends low with the weight of its grains, so too must a true craftsman bow with humility as knowledge and skill deepen. The higher one's mastery, the lower one's posture should be. Only through humility can respect, trust and tradition continue unbroken.



Left to right: Powell, Castellon, Eto-san, Dalton

tour walk, **The Science and Biology of Pruning**, with Chris Roddick. Roddick is an arborist specializing in land and tree conservation, and specific pruning. Standing under humongous oak tree, Roddick talked about what happens internally to the tree when we prune a branch,

when a branch is diseased, and what are the different hormones controlling the responses. When a tree is pruned, its hormonal balance is immediately altered, triggering a complex cascade of responses. Several hormones are either suppressed or activated to heal wounds and reallocate resources. The science and biology of trees is so intriguing.

His Tree Talk was so thought provoking, I've asked Roddick to give a Tree Talk via Zoom. Watch the newsletter for this pruning webinar.



Chris Roddick giving a Tree Talk with NAJGA members looking on.

And last, I was asked to participate as a panelist in the session, **Building and Growing Successful Volunteer Programs**, with three women who manage much larger volunteer programs than ours. I learned that no matter the size of the public garden, everyone says that volunteers are valuable. I heard this quote that really resonated, "Gardens are only as good as their volunteers."

Haiku Corner

November 2025

俳句

Autumn wind
louder and louder—
the rattle of leaves

- Virgil Hutton

.くらがりやこそり立っても寒い秋
kuragari ya kosori tatte mo samui aki
just like darkness
it sneaks in...
autumn cold

- Issa

Renovation Fundraiser



Support the renovation of Tsuru Island by purchasing a \$20 raffle ticket for a chance to win a Yamadori Mt. Hemlock, valued at \$1000.

The tree has been in training for almost 15 years and is currently sitting without any wire.

The refined oval pot was made by the retired and only apprentice to Yukizou Nakano, his son, Yuuji. These handmade pots are known of the highest quality clay from the Japanese potting village of Tokoname.

Purchase on website: <https://www.gresham-japanesegarden.org/calendar/raffle/>

Maple Trees Color Change



Maple trees display all their glory this time of year. A prime example is this Acer palmatum 'Shishigashira' in Ebetsu Plaza. The color in early spring is a deep green and it holds this color throughout the entire summer.

In the autumn 'Shishigashira' puts on an amazing show of deep yellows and golden shades with hints of red and orange.

Spotlight on Tsuru Island's Lead Garden Designer

By Mary Marrs

Garden designer Francheska Snyder (FS) chatted with volunteer Mary Marrs (MM). As the design committee lead, she talked about her background, the challenges and opportunities, and what's important in this renovation.

MM: Where does your talent and passion for Japanese garden design originate?

FS: My passion is more in the building aspect than design. Ever since I was a little kid, I loved taking things apart, putting them back together, seeing how things worked and moved. I grew up on a farm in Pennsylvania where I learned how to use my body to move materials (lots of hay bales) efficiently and safely. When I discovered and fell in love with building gardens, I realized I was able to apply my upbringing to the construction process.

My technical skills come from my experience with many teachers along the way. I've had the privilege of working on some large-scale Japanese garden projects which has given me a lot of experience with logistics. With the Tsuru Island renovation, I see it as an opportunity to put my training to use. It's such an honor, and I'm stoked!

MM: What draws you to collaborating with Gresham Japanese Garden's renovation of Tsuru Island.

FS: My first time visiting Gresham Japanese Garden I was met with an undeniable warmth. It felt like a truly community-minded organization. Public gardens are some people's only touchpoint with Japanese gardens. I think this is an important place to show what a Japanese garden is so everyday people get a true and accessible experience.

What started as a desire to volunteer pruning has turned into, what I hope, is a long and rewarding relationship.

MM: What are some of the challenges in this renovation?

FS: One of the biggest mental challenges is that I don't know the full

history of the site or original plans. For me that's where a renovation starts. There are some historical references to study which have been helpful, but what puts me most at ease is that the families of the original builders are happy that the site is being cared for. Logistically, there is a lot to work around: access to move materials on and off the island, maneuvering pathway changes through mature plant material, and logistical challenges with the utilities, power lines and irrigation boxes on the island. The sun is also really strong in the summer, so a hope is to eventually create a middle tree canopy.

MM: Sounds like you've got some problem-solving ahead.

FS: For me, problem-solving is fun. Growing up on the farm, problem-solving was part of life, so I have that background of working hard and figuring things out.

Being the point person and working out solutions for the Tsuru Island renovation isn't scary. I've had great teachers, and in my craft, you apply and repeat what you've learned over time. The decisions I'm ultimately making are not personal creative endeavors—which honestly takes some of the pressure off. I'd like for us to execute classic garden elements well.

MM: What are some of the opportunities?

FS: We now have funding and resources to make improvements that weren't available in the renovation in 2012. That is what's driving this whole project. The biggest opportunity for me personally is to be able to collaborate with a variety of craftsmen to share in this community space.

Also, the original builders named the garden Tsuru (crane) island. We will try to add some nods to the garden's



Francheska Snyder collaborating with Adam Hart from the design committee.

name through boulder selections and placements.

MM: What stands out to you about this renovation?

FS: Tsuru Island was originally designed and built by the local Japanese American community, and we don't want to erase their design. Our goal is to "elevate" the space already there, such as, adjusting the pathway. The renovation design isn't about me or my vision, it's about honoring the people, the history, the culture, and the space.

And while I have my opinions, in the end we want this garden to be about nature and the natural environment, to consider the way the gorge winds blow through it, how much sun the garden gets, the use of local stones, and have plants that can live long healthy lives there.



After a weekend of installing fence posts, Francheska and Mark Meenan, American Bamboo Co., (dog Dancer) stop for a photo.

Pruning Courses

[REGISTER FOR PRUNING COURSES HERE](#)



Pruning Conifers for Health and Aesthetics Course: Saturday, November 15, 2025, 1-3pm – \$45 at the Gardens of the Gresham Japanese Garden

MARYANN LEWIS, INSTRUCTOR: The course offers valuable insights into the art and science of conifer pruning. *Certified by the Oregon Landscape Contractors Board. Licensed landscape construction professionals receive two Continuing Education Hours (CEH).*



Structural Pine Pruning in the Niwaki Style: Sunday, November 16, 2025, 1-3pm – \$45 at the Gardens of the Gresham Japanese Garden

LAURA DUFALA, INSTRUCTOR: This course piggybacks on Maryann Lewis' pruning conifers, but with an emphasis on a variety of pines. Laura will focus on pruning in the niwaki style (cloud pruning), and walk students through her decisions for pruning each variety of pine.

Wreath Making Workshops

[REGISTER ON WEBSITE](#)



Holiday Wreath Making at the Garden: Monday, December 1, 2025, 6-8pm or Sunday, December 7, 2025, 2-4pm - \$60

Two workshop times to choose from. These fun, creative workshops sell out quickly. You will have a wide variety of plant material and homemade bows to choose from to create a large wreath to take home. Wine and appetizers are included too!

Plant Sale



Friday, March 20 - Saturday, March 21, 2026 and Friday, May 9 - Saturday, May 10, 2026

Mark your calendar for TWO plant sales! The first, **Specimen Tree & Shrub Sale**, March 19-20. Many of the trees and shrubs were taken off Tsuru island, offering an early spring impact to your landscape.

We will again team up with the Gresham Historical Society, May 9-10. They will sell flowers, hanging pots, and more, and we will be selling all of our inventory, from grasses, and tubers, to shrubs and ornamental trees.

The Art of Bonsai Class

[REGISTER FOR BONSAI WORKSHOPS ON THE WEBSITE](#)

The Art of Bonsai: Monthly on the third Saturday, 1-3pm or third Thursday, 6-8pm – \$45 at the Kyoudou Center with Bonsai Master Bobby Curttright

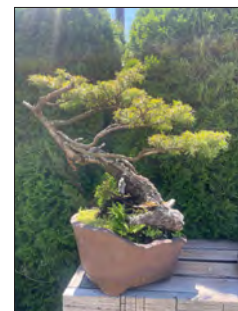
Every month, a new modality and plant is introduced. November's class will focus on saikei. Saikei is a Japanese art form that combines bonsai techniques with elements of landscape to create a living landscape.

Display Kobo: Sunday, November 30, 2025, 2-4pm – \$20 at the Kyoudou Center

In this workshop, you will learn the fundamental elements for displaying bonsai.

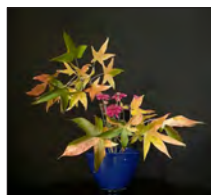
Group Kobo: Sunday, December 14, 2025, 1-4pm – \$20 at the Kyoudou Center

Drop-in format to refine your bonsai, practice wiring, or plan future enhancements.



Introduction to Ikebana Class

[REGISTER FOR IKEBANA ON THE WEBSITE](#)



Introduction to Ikebana: Tuesday, November 11, 2025. 1- 3pm – \$50 at the Kyoudou Center

NANA BELLERUD, IKEBANA INSTRUCTOR: In Nana Bellerud's workshop she will share some starting points of finding materials for ikebana used in our daily lives. For example, finding an interesting fallen branch on a walk can be the centerpiece for Thanksgiving dinner table. There are so many opportunities in nature that can trigger us to create unique and beautiful ikebana. Please join us!