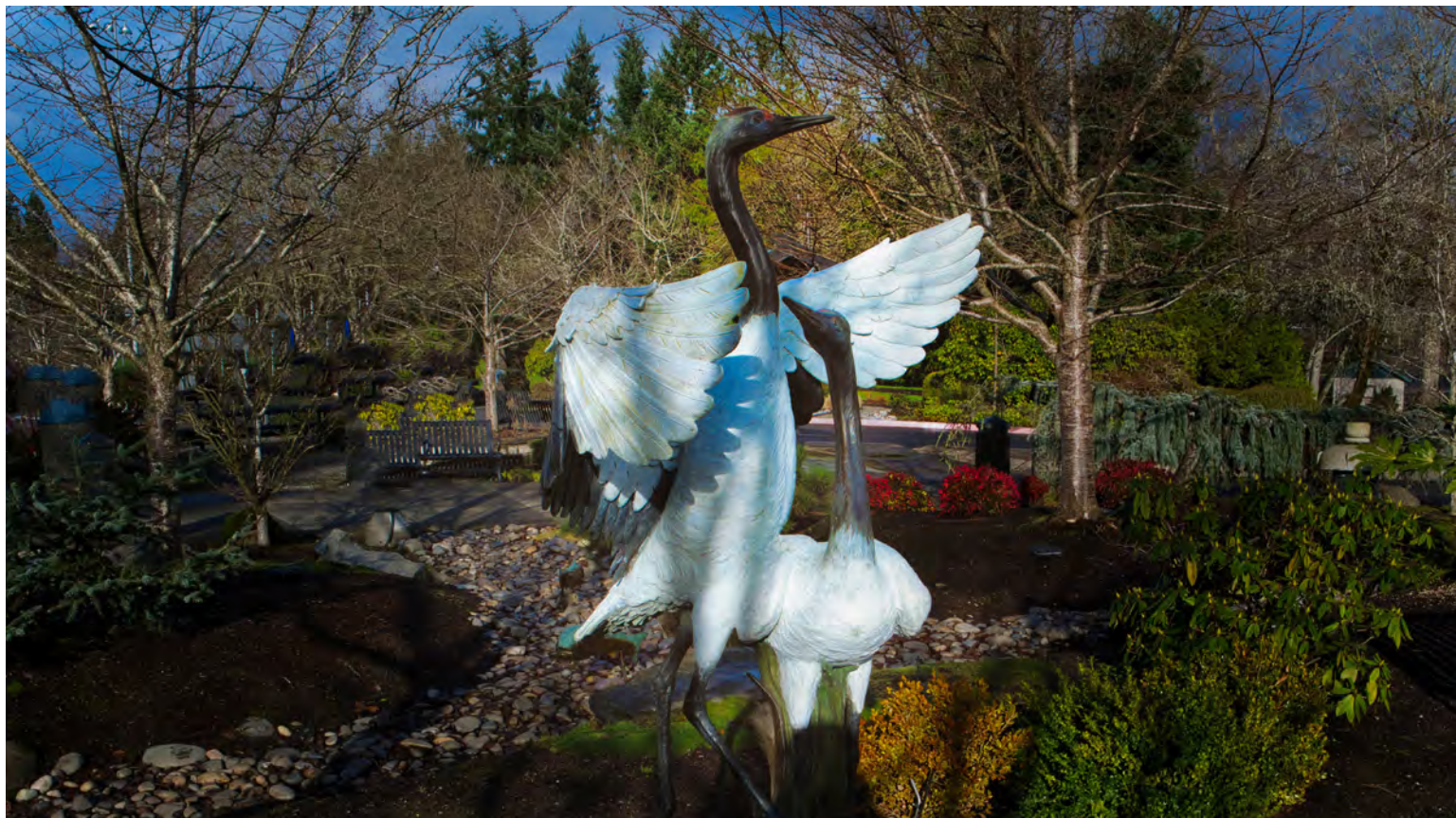


Tsuru 鶴 Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



Raising Money for SnowCap



For three years running, the Gresham Japanese Garden has partnered with Burns Feed Store to raise money for SnowCap Community Charities during their Fill-A-Bag campaign. Shelley Burns-Guisto exclaims, "This event perfectly captures what we

love about our community: creativity, connection, and giving back. Teaming up with the Gresham Japanese Garden for our wreath-making night allows us to have a fun-filled evening while supporting the important services SnowCap provides our neighbors."

"This event perfectly captures what we love about our community: creativity, connection, and giving back!..."

- Shelley Burns-Guisto

Burns Feed Store provides the space and food, while GJG gathers wreath making product and handmade bows for 50 people. Sue Protz says, "It's so

*dancing cranes
a bright winter day
new year thoughts*

— Bill Peterson

much fun to find new greenery for the workshop. This year a beautiful yew tree caught my attention.

The event is always the first Thursday in December, and it fills up fast.



Bamboo: An Intricate Addition to Japanese Gardens

By Mary Marrs

The Gresham Japanese Garden first met Mark Mennan at the conference GJG hosted in 2023, and we have reunited for this renovation. Mark is our Japanese bamboo fencing consultant.

There are three styles of traditional Japanese bamboo fencing going on the island. Yotsumi-gaki is going around the perimeter of the island. You can see through it, and it's just tall enough to indicate a barrier. At the east end of the island are three panels of misu-gaki to shield visitors from the buildings and noise on the other side of Johnson Creek. This fence is almost complete. The third type of fencing that will be installed is teppo-gaki, a style characterized by thick bamboo poles assembled vertically, resembling rows of rifles. Twelve foot sections will flank the entrance gate to Tsuru Island.

When asked what draws him to working with bamboo, Mark enthusiastically says, "It calls to me. Building traditional Asian design fences makes me happy. Perhaps I was a Japanese craftsman in another life!"

In 2015 Mark started [American Bamboo Company](#) in Seattle after years of being mentored by an East Coast bamboo expert and internationally known craftsman. Throw in numerous trips around the world learning about take kaki, the 500-year-old art form, different types of bamboo, and its traditional and historic significance in Asian cultures.



Left: Takashi Miki Sensei standing with Mark

Training under 5th generation bamboo fence builder Takashi Miki Sensei, Mark learned about how bamboo fencing can be an intricate addition to a Japanese garden,

used to screen or direct views, define pathways, and add beauty.

Mark finds that most people he encounters in Japanese gardens want to be there, and working with this volunteer group has been great experience. They are people who really care. "This Gresham crew is amazing, especially the building crew."

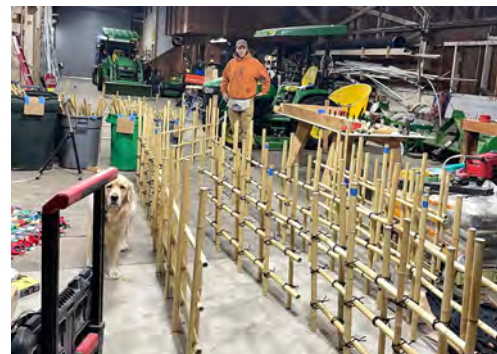
Mark's company builds nine types of traditional Asian bamboo fence designs, and incorporates modern construction elements like metal posts, metal screws, black polypropylene braided rope, and twist ties. But, most importantly is having a reliable supplier of good bamboo. His supplier knows he will only accept the best. It's harvested in Asia during specific moon phases when the sugar content is lowest. Good bamboo and modern elements can prolong the life of a fence.

Along with building bamboo fences, Mark offers workshops and shares bamboo's

historical importance in Asian culture and traditions. He says that's the essence of Japanese gardens, and it's more than just the technical aspect. "For me, it's an honor to represent the culture and craft. Educating people is the best way to keep it alive."

Knowing the merits of bamboo, he exalts its benefits as being an extremely hardy and structurally strong renewable resource. He points out that bamboo helps the environment by sequestering more carbon dioxide than trees and reducing soil erosion with its extensive root systems. "It's an amazing plant!"

While he is considered a master in take kaki, Mark admits that he's always curious, and still learning from every garden he works in. With his tremendous skill and passion, maybe he's just living the life of an ancient Japanese craftsman.



Yotsumi-gaki panels ready to be installed on the island

Haiku Corner

January 2026

2026年1月

First month of the year;
through the frozen window pane,
the world starts over.

- Nick Virgilio

古曆ひたすらおくる月日かな
Furugoyomi / hitasura okuru
/ tsukihi kana

The old calendar
fills me with gratitude
like a song

- Buson

Happy New Year



December 28th marked a special day and time for Nana Bellarud to create the kadomatsu to Tsuru Island.

The kadomatsu (gatepine), 八 is a traditional Japanese New Year placed at an entrance to invite good fortune. The numeral 8, as a Chinese character 八, open at the bottom, symbolizes 'open for opportunities'.

The Year of the Fire Horse



People born in Horse years are known for being energetic, adventurous, and independent, symbolizing vitality and success. In addition it's the year of the rare element 'Fire'.

Appropriately, Tsuru Island's renovation is happening the year of the rare Fire Horse, which symbolizes a powerful, dynamic year of action, new projects, and bold steps.

Exceptional Business Support

Last month we wrote that November was a busy time for the Garden with the installation of fence posts with the help from Hillside Landscape Maintenance. Well, December was also. It felt like Christmas arrived early by the outpouring of support we've received.

The task we needed to achieve was moving 18 boulders sitting at Linnemann Station to Main City Park and then getting them onto Tsuru Island. It involved permits from the City, machinery to load the boulders, a trailer and driver to transport the boulders, and then a crane to move the boulders onto the island. A few of the boulders weighed out at 1,000 pounds.

Our first Christmas present came from Barnhart Crane & Rigging. Founded by Alan Barnhart in 1969 in Memphis, Tennessee as a small family-run company, grown to be one of the largest heavy lifting companies in North America with over 60 branches. We are fortunate that one of the locations is in Fairview. Not only did they agree to do the job, and they did it pro bono.

Curtis Koch, sales representative, explains how Barnhart gives away millions of dollars a year through their employee match program, good deeds like ours, but mainly through The Kingdom Companies Group, faith-based investors who believe they are called into partnership by God to work for the flourishing of humanity.

Curtis, Gunner, and Pat of Barnhart meticulously and safely rigged and lifted the boulders over Johnson Creek and onto Tsuru Island.

Another key player in this job was Troy Guisto with Burns Feed Store. While running a wreath-making workshop (see front page) at Burns Feed Store with Troy's wife Shelley, Sue Protz, GJG Activities Director, was elated when she eyed the exact trailer the Garden needed to haul the boulders to Main City Park. Troy enthusiastically agreed to help us without any compensation.

2025 marked 75 years Burns Feed Store has served everyone from large farms to hobby farmers and gardeners at their store on Orient Drive. They are also known for putting on some great community events. They kick off the holiday season with *Pet Pictures with Santa*, followed by a *Chili Feed and photos with Santa & Mrs. Claus*, and a *Giving Tree for Boxes of Love*, an organization supporting children going into foster care.

Another business we want to recognize is B&R Rental in Gresham. They had the machine we needed to lift the boulders onto the trailer. They discounted their cost. Every bit was a gift to us.

To document the renovation, Josh Kulla with Kulla Photography came out and flew his drone. He got some amazing shots. [Check out crane images here.](#)

We're also happy to acknowledge

the City of Gresham, specifically, Kathy Majidi, Watershed & Parks Director. She made sure the City components were completed by go time: permits, safety, transportation, traffic, etc.

We hope these stories fill your heart like they've filled ours. The Gresham Japanese Garden is always frugal with the money we spend, no matter if it's coming from a grant or your hard-earned donations. Please continue to think of us the next time you decide to give a donation. This renovation. **Tranquility for All Through Accessibility and Authenticity**, will elevate your experience on Tsuru Island.

To donate, we offer Venmo, send us a check, or make a donation online using a credit card. Arigatou!



Top: Troy Guisto with Burns Feed Store with his fully loaded trailer of boulders.
Bottom: Barnhart Crane moving boulders onto the island. Photo credit: Kulla Photography.

Pruning Courses

[REGISTER FOR PRUNING COURSES HERE](#)



The Science and Biology of Pruning: On Zoom, February 11, 2026, 5:30-7:30pm: \$20

For thousands of years, people have used the ancient practice of pruning to manipulate and enhance trees and shrubs. Yet the science and biology behind pruning are still among the most misunderstood practices in the field.

This Tree Talk taught by Chris Roddick will take a deep dive into the science of pruning while looking closely at the biological responses of trees. We'll discuss topics such as cladoptosis

and natural pruning, compartmentalization, and the roll of fungi and plant hormones. And last, how best to make pruning decisions understanding what the plant needs.

**MUST
WATCH**



Pruning Fruit Trees: February, 15, 2026, Noon-2pm, \$45 at the Gresham Japanese Garden

Late winter is a good time to prune fruit trees because they are dormant. It's easy to see each tree's structure to decide which cuts to make, and you can rest assured knowing that the spring is not far off and your tree will soon be able to heal any wounds from pruning. Instructor Jonathan Faith will demonstrate how to prune apple trees, plum trees, nectarine trees, and pear trees in this class.

In addition to demonstrating how to prune each variety of fruit tree, Jonathan will discuss cross pollination, fertilizers, and fungicide and insecticide sprays. *Don't miss out on the discount coupon to Al's when you attend the class!*



Spring Pine Candling: Sunday, May 3, 2026, 1-3pm, \$45 at the Gresham Japanese Garden

LAURA DUFALA, INSTRUCTOR: Learn all about the why's and how's of candling pines. When should you remove the whole candle, and when should you break the candles. Laura will candle, needle, and prune a variety of pines at the Gresham Japanese Garden. This workshop is in person. Bring your gloves. Laura may turn the class into a collaborative session. *This course is certified by the Oregon Landscape Contractors Board. Licensed landscape construction professionals receive three Continuing Education Hours (CEH).*

Specimen Tree and Shrub Sale Every Saturday morning, or by appointment

Stop by Saturday mornings or text [\(503\) 502-7340](tel:5035027340) to make an appointment. Many of the trees and shrubs were removed from Tsuru Island, so are quite large and can make an instant improvement to your landscape. Planting during the rainy season allows the tree time to establish its roots, and be ready to flourish next year.

The Art of Bonsai Class

[REGISTER FOR BONSAI ON THE WEBSITE](#)



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

Every month, a new modality and plant are introduced. January's class will focus on deadwood creation, carving, cleaning, and preservation. Bonsai Master Bobby Cuttrright will share insights about conifers.

Group Kobo: Sunday, February 22, 2026, 1-5pm – \$20 in the Kyoudou Center

This Group Kobo will focus on repotting. Bring your bonsai. Learn how to trim the root ball, refresh the soil, secure into a new pot, etc. Potting soil available for purchase. Drop-ins welcomed.

Introduction to Ikebana Class

[REGISTER FOR IKEBANA ON THE WEBSITE](#)



Introduction to Ikebana: Tuesday, January 13, 2026. 1-3pm – \$50 in the Kyoudou Center

NANA BELLERUD, IKEBANA INSTRUCTOR: This workshop will feature typical Japanese New Year's ikebana and decorations and their symbolism will be featured, while still keeping the principles and core concepts of ikebana. Students can incorporate their ideas into the arrangement.

Materials used in photo: Pine, Contorted Hazelnut, Chrysanthemum, Cotoneaster Berries, and Mizuhiki (decorative cord).