

# Tsuru 鶴 Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



## Tackling a Boulder



In the renovation's design process, a new water feature to replace the existing one was earmarked. While excavating that area to remove some electrical and irrigation connections, we uncovered a buried boulder that had been there since the original Japanese

garden was built in the '70s. All we could see was the top of the boulder that was about 50 inches long and 30 inches wide.

The boulder was too large to remove, but after plenty of calculations, Jim Card and Chuck Page decided they could at least raise it to ground level and become the mae-ishi (前石), meaning "front stone" of the water feature.

They got to work building a pulley system. The cost to purchase a strong enough tripod was too substantial. With leftover timber and a \$90 chain pulley, they made a pulley system, weighing itself close to 500 pounds.

Four volunteers transported the tripod

*a clear cold morning  
the old bridge and bare branches  
walking toward spring*

— Bill Peterson

to Tsuru Island, positioned the boulder with straps and chain, and seamlessly lifted the boulder. Sandy loam was shoveled under, then boulder was dropped to compact the soil.

After the boulder settled in place for a few days, Francheska Snyder and Jim re-raised the boulder, added more sandy loam to get it level, slightly turned, installed a 10x20 foot pond liner underneath, then dropped the boulder to its final resting place.

# Upcoming Free Cultural Events

In traditional Japanese culture, many seasonal festivals (sekku 節句) were originally timed using the lunar calendar. These festivals fall on odd-numbered months and days, believed to carry positive, yang energy: 1/1, 3/3, 5/5, 7/7, 9/9, 11/11.

**3/3: Peach Festival (Hinamatsuri).** Annual event held in the Kyoudou Center



**Gresham Japanese Garden**  
**Hina Dolls Exhibition**  
**March 1, 2026, 10am - 4pm**  
**Kyoudou Center: 219A S Main Avenue**

**March 20-April 4: Spring Festival (Yozakura)** Sponsored by Riverview Bank, enjoy an evening stroll through Ebetsu Plaza where the cherry trees will be illuminated nightly. [See website for schedule of events.](#)



*Photo credit:  
Josh Kulla Photography*

**Celebrating 5/3: Iris Festival (Children's Day):** Family-focused event featuring storytelling, origami, and koi identification at the Gresham Japanese Garden. Check the website for details.

**Celebrating 7/5: Star Festival (Tanabata):** Festival emphasizing wishes, hope, and renewal. Stop by Tsuru Island to write your wishes on colorful paper strips (tanzaku) and hang them from the bamboo branches.



## Volunteer Highlight Jim Buck

Jim and his wife, Maryann, have been volunteering with the Garden since 2014. Jim is the go-to guy for a myriad of tasks: planting, tree consultation, and building.

Jim's other interests include maintaining a large home garden and bee hive, wood-working, hiking with Gresham Senior Hikers group, and serving on the City's Urban Forestry Subcommittee and Gresham Butte Neighborhood Association.

Jim is most proud of restoring two acres of forest of public green space on Gresham Butte.



*The bridge's giboshi were made by Jim.*

## Engelmann Spruce collected from Mt Hood



## Weeping White Spruce



We're excited to find a perfect home for the weeping white spruce (*Picea glauca* 'Pendula') that was removed from Tsuru Island.

In spite of the east winds, we engineered every possible means for its survival, including spraying Wilt Stop, a natural, pine-oil-based anti-transpirant that forms a protective clear film to reduce moisture loss.

## Bucket Brigade



Volunteers come together at the Garden every Saturday morning 9am-noon. Be a contributing citizen by keeping Gresham's gardens beautiful and accessible to everyone.

To find out more about volunteering opportunities, join us February 24, 6-7pm for a volunteer orientation meeting. RSVP: [volunteers@greshamjapanesegarden.com](mailto:volunteers@greshamjapanesegarden.com)

# Tsuru Island Renovation Update

Last month we wrote about the process of transporting boulders to Tsuru Island. With the dry weather this month, Francheska Snyder is making headway getting these boulders in place.



Francheska digging a hole for a boulder—one of many.

To some, the selection and placement of boulders are two of the most important tasks in creating a Japanese garden. The selection of the large boulders was somewhat predetermined by the river-washed boulders already on the island. Figuring out placement, orientation, and depth is an art and skill comfortable to Francheska. See her work in progress on the island. Notice how the placement of the stones subconsciously tells you to turn, slow down, or stop.

Another update you'll notice is the



Machiai installed at the east end of Tsuru Island.

covered seating area called a machiai in the farthest space east, where you will be able to sit and hear Johnson

Creek water flow, and enjoy these peaceful surroundings. The structure was built inside by Jim and Chuck, then disassembled to be transported to Tsuru Island. When it's complete it will have a bench for seating, with an open space for a stroller or wheelchair.

And, do you notice in the photo the bamboo fence behind the machiai? This is called misu-gaki. This style was chosen because misu-gaki bamboo fence panels screen off unwanted views, and define the edge of a garden.



Josh and Francheska at the quarry choosing the basalt columns to create the stone bridges.



A behind-the-scenes update is the meticulous selection of the bridge stones (above images) that are replacing the two small wood bridges that cross over the dry stream bed. Mason Josh Bond and Francheska chose three basalt

columns from a quarry in Corbett. These columns then had to be transported to [Alpine Boulder Company](#) in Pendleton to be wire cut, then brought back to Gresham to be textured so they're not slippery when wet. It's quite a process, and will be a highlight of the renovation.

And last, the plant palette. See the plant palette on the drawing below. Francheska is not only a skilled craftsman; she's also a horticulturist. In her business, Niwa Method, she prunes residential landscapes, and is also a

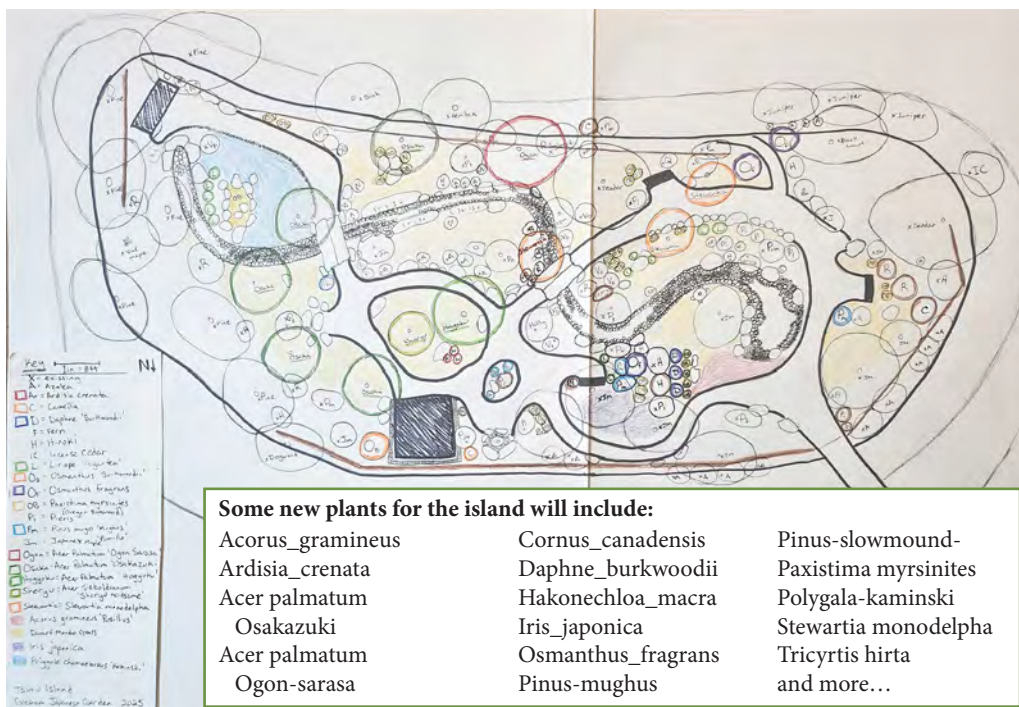
consultant and pruner for the Ashland Japanese Garden. She knows the plant species to match Tsuru Island's wetland environment, and acceptable in Japanese gardens; their practicality in a given space, and viability to survive in different micro climates.

We will start planting in March, and are really

excited to plant the maple groves to fill the middle view.

Next month we will feature a 3D rendering of the renovation.

Stay tuned.



## Some new plants for the island will include:

Acorus gramineus  
Ardisia crenata  
Acer palmatum  
Osakazuki  
Acer palmatum  
Ogon-sarasa

Cornus canadensis  
Daphne burkwoodii  
Hakonechloa macra  
Iris japonica  
Osmanthus fragrans  
Pinus-mughus

Pinus-slowmound-  
Paxistima myrsinites  
Polygala-kaminski  
Stewartia monodelpha  
Tricyrtis hirta  
and more...

# Pruning Courses

[REGISTER FOR PRUNING COURSES HERE](#)



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

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. He will 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 based on the plant's needs. *Video recording is available for two weeks.*

**MUST WATCH**



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

Late winter is an ideal time to prune fruit trees while they are dormant. With leaves gone, it's easier to see each tree's structure and make thoughtful, effective cuts—just as spring approaches and healing can begin. Instructor Jonathan Faith will demonstrate proper pruning techniques for apple, plum, nectarine, and pear trees. In addition to hands-on pruning instruction, the workshop will cover cross-pollination, fertilization, and fungicide and insecticide sprays to support healthy fruit production. *Participants will also receive a discount coupon to Al's Garden & Home with workshop attendance.*

## Specimen Tree and Shrub Sale

**March 21 and March 28, 2026, 10am-4pm:** Choose from a variety of mature plants, to make an instant impact to your landscape. We have a 10' Blue Ice Arizona Cypress, True Dwarf Boxwoods, specimen Contorted Filbert, 3' Golden Euonymus, Red Twig Dogwood shrubs, Burning Bush, and more! Also, the new Bonsai Exhibition Plaza will be open for viewing with bonsai demonstrations by bonsai master, Bobby Curtright.



## Introduction to Beekeeping Seminar

**Monday, March 9, 2026, 6:30-8pm - Free in the Kyoudou Center**

Join us for this free community seminar. GJG volunteer Bruce Janes helps at a commercial apiary, and is a member of three bee clubs. Bruce's philosophy is that to become a successful beekeeper is to learn as much as you can about the bees themselves. Co-instructor Jim Buck will talk about Flow Hives.

[RSVP on website](#) or [email sue@greshamjapanesegarden.com](mailto:sue@greshamjapanesegarden.com).

## Workshops



**The Art of Bonsai: Monthly on the third Saturday, 1-3pm or third Thursday, 6-8pm – \$55 in the Kyoudou Center**

**BOBBY CURTRIGHT BONSAI MASTER:** Every month, a new modality and tree is introduced. February's class will focus on repotting deciduous trees.

**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 welcome.



**Introduction to Ikebana: Tuesday, February 10, 2026. 1-3pm – \$50 in the Kyoudou Center**

**NANA BELLERUD, IKEBANA INSTRUCTOR:** February workshop will concentrate on Valentine's Day Japanese style, while still keeping the principles and core concepts of ikebana. Students explore their creativity and ideas into the arrangements.

REGISTER ON WEBSITE UNDER 'HAPPENINGS'