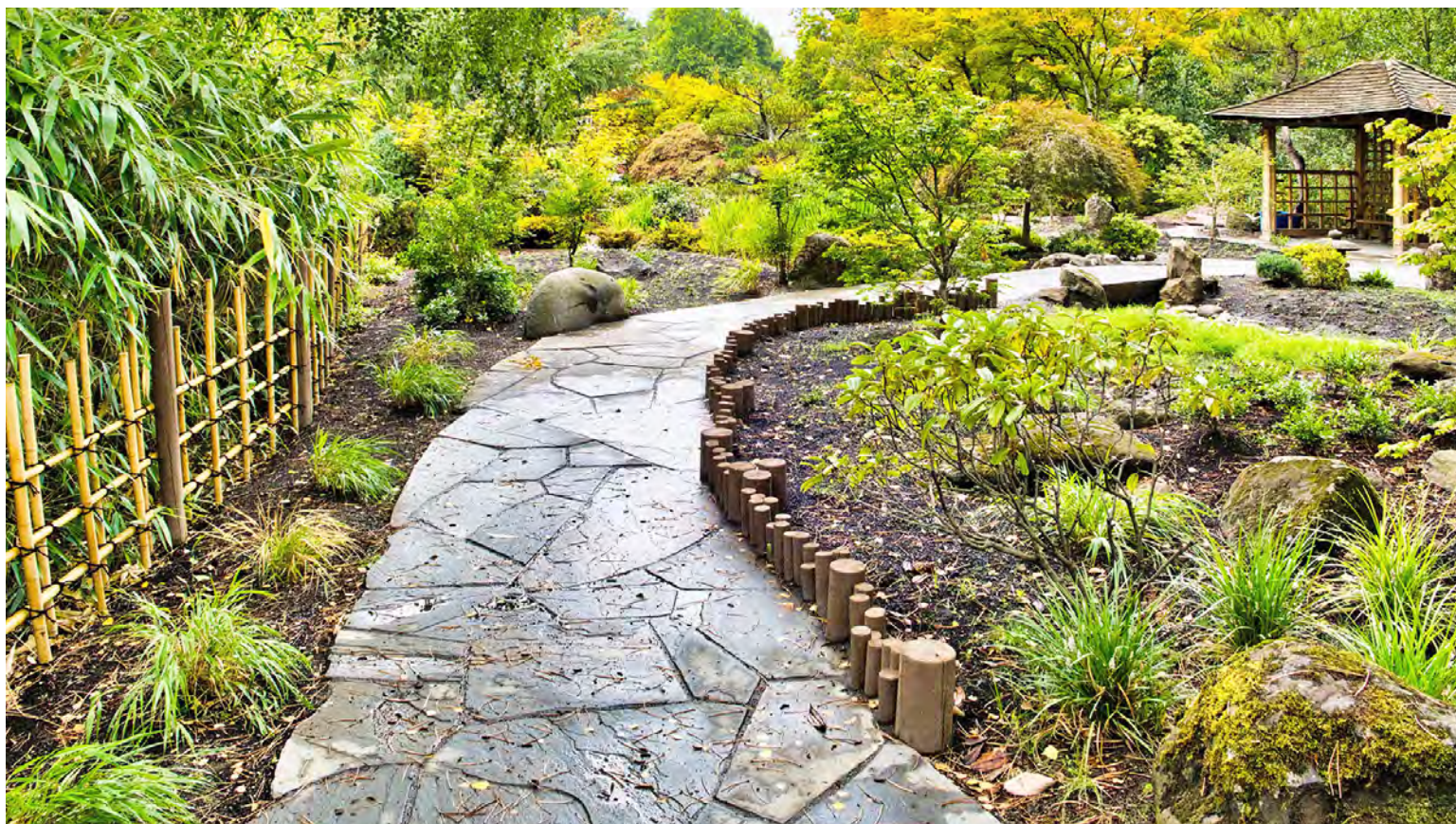


Tsuru Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



What Was Built Together

For more than a year, this newsletter has chronicled the renovation of Tsuru Island. We've written about stone bridges and boulders, pathways and plantings, bamboo fencing and a new garden gate. We've also introduced you to the remarkable craftspeople who have shared their knowledge and devoted countless hours to this garden.

But as we near the end, we've realized that the most meaningful part of this renovation may not be something you can see.

The final weeks of any major project can be exhausting. Schedules tighten, tasks overlap, unexpected challenges arise, and patience can wear thin. Yet, in the midst of managing rentals,

workshops, volunteers, and the final stages of construction, something quite extraordinary has happened.

People kept showing up.

Volunteers have given far more hours than we ever could have asked of them. Our master craftsman postponed his flight home so he could continue working on the garden gate. Students from Kezurou-Kai returned after the workshop to help complete the build. Our bamboo supplier, Dain Sansome, spent two days alongside us building the teppo-gaki fencing.

And there have been countless smaller acts of generosity—meals prepared, tools shared, problems solved, and

*morning chill—
on the garden path
falling leaves*

— Bill Peterson

people asking, "What else can I do?"

As an organization built around volunteer service, we are accustomed to giving. What we weren't prepared for was how much would be given back to us.

Tsuru Island will emerge from this renovation more beautiful than before. But for those of us who have been part of the journey, its greatest legacy may be the relationships formed along the way. Long after the tools are put away and the work is finished, those relationships will remain part of this garden.

Tsuru Island Update

Oh the distance we have traveled. The end of September marked a major milestone in the renovation of Tsuru Island. The word “busy” doesn’t quite put into context the enormity of the projects completed—or the dedication of the people who made them happen.

The roofed garden gate started as two-day and five-day workshops, but ultimately turned into a project spanning more than two weeks. Jay van Arsdale’s dedication to this project was remarkable, and by his example, his apprentices demonstrated that same commitment to their craft. GJG volunteers played an important role as well, providing homemade lunches for workshop participants every day.

At the same time the garden gate was being assembled, another project was taking shape inside the barn. The City generously allowed us use of the entire barn, giving both projects the space they needed to unfold simultaneously. Under the guidance of bamboo consultant Mark Meenan, volunteers built the teppo-gaki fencing that now extends from both sides of the new entrance gate—and then installed it themselves.

Seeing these two traditional elements come together has transformed the entrance to Tsuru Island. More importantly, both were created through shared knowledge, hands-on learning, craftsmanship and an extraordinary amount of determination, commitment and volunteer effort—the very spirit behind this renovation.

And we’re still not done.

Jay has flown home to Oakland, leaving his local apprentices Manny Romanzalez and David Burnard to install the ridge beam and complete the final carpentry work. Volunteers are frantically roofing the garden gate so the final stone work can be laid by Josh Bond, with an aridashi completed by Francheska Snyder. Surrounding plants will tie the new gate, fencing and garden together.

After so many months of construction, stonework, planting, paths, bamboo and carpentry, we are finally getting the opportunity to step back and see how far Tsuru Island has come—and how close we are to completing this remarkable transformation.

To kick off this amazing renovation, we invite all of you to Autumn Illumination October 12-24 sunset - 10pm, thanks in part to the grant from Travel Oregon.



Garden gate workshop participants building in the barn.



The hoisting of the structure.



Volunteers carrying the heavy teppo-gaki panel to be installed.

Haiku Corner

October 2026

俳句

clinging to a twig
now full of nothing but light —
the end of summer

- James W. Hackett 19683

枯枝に鳥のとまりけり秋の暮

kareeda ni / karasu no tomarikeri / aki no kure

on a withered branch
a crow has settled—
autumn dusk

- Matsuo Bashō 1680

Wara Uma



This skillfully braided straw horse (wara uma) carrying hanging sheaves of rice originates from rural mountainous communities. He is believed to protect homes, promote abundant harvests, and ward off misfortune.

Donated from the estate of Loren Siebert by his brother Lee, Gresham Japanese Garden volunteer.

Donation Box

We are often asked by visitors, “How can we donate?” Well, soon there will be a new way to show your support—a donation box on Tsuru Island.

Pictured is the front panel, beautifully created through skillful water-jet cutting by Technical Fabricators in Gresham.

We extend a heartfelt thank-you to everyone who recognizes the dedication of our volunteers and chooses to donate. Your generosity helps us care for the Garden and keep it beautiful for all to enjoy.



Sharing the Garden: Our New Docent Program

With the major renovation of Tsuru Island nearing completion, there is more than ever to see, discover and understand at the Gresham Japanese Garden. We're excited to introduce a new GJG Docent Program that will start next year to help visitors learn more about this very special place.

Our docents won't be leading formal tours. Instead, during busy times you'll find them stationed at the entrance to Tsuru Island, ready to answer questions, share stories and help visitors better understand what they are seeing.

There's an important reason for this approach. At just three-quarters of an acre, Tsuru Island is an intimate strolling garden. Part of its beauty is the opportunity to wander quietly, pause along a path and experience the Japanese garden at your own pace. We also believe that a Japanese garden

shouldn't tell you exactly what to see or how to feel. Observation and personal interpretation are part of the experience.

But sometimes a little knowledge opens the door to seeing much more.

Why is that boulder placed there? What cultivar is a maple tree or ground cover? How is a Japanese garden different from other gardens? And what went into the recent renovation of Tsuru Island?

Our volunteer docents will be there to answer those questions and many more. They will receive training in Japanese garden principles, plants, stonework, pathways, structures, bamboo fencing, garden etiquette and the history of Tsuru Island—including the craftsmanship and thoughtful decisions behind its recent transformation.

Most importantly, our docents will serve as welcoming ambassadors for the garden: available when visitors are curious, while allowing the garden itself

to remain the focus.

Could this volunteer opportunity be for you? You don't need to be an expert in Japanese gardens. We're looking for people who are curious, enjoy learning, are comfortable engaging with visitors and have an appreciation for what Tsuru Island brings to our community. We'll provide the education and resources you need to feel knowledgeable and confident.

Becoming a docent is also an opportunity to deepen your own understanding of Japanese gardens while helping others discover theirs.

Sometimes the best guide to a garden is simply someone nearby who can answer, "I've always wondered about that..."

Interested in becoming a volunteer docent? We'd love to hear from you. Send an email to volunteers@greshamjapanese garden.com to learn more and let us know you're interested in joining our first docent team.

AUTUMN ILLUMINATION AT TSURU ISLAND

Experience the Japanese Garden
in a Whole New Light

OCTOBER 12-24, 2026
SUNSET-10PM • FREE

A GRESHAM JAPANESE GARDEN EVENT

Pruning Program

[Register on the website](#)



Pruning Conifers for Health and Aesthetics: Saturday, October 31, 2026, 1-3pm at Gresham Japanese Garden - \$45 This in-person, hands-on course is designed to deepen your understanding of conifer pruning through an aesthetic lens. Maryann Lewis will guide students in understanding conifer growth biology and seasonal rhythms, applying pruning techniques to maintain plant health and desired size, enhancing landscape aesthetics through thoughtful pruning, recognizing and preserving the natural form of various conifer species. *Licensed landscapers will earn 2 CEU credits.*



Structural Pruning Pines for Character: Sunday, November 15, 2026, 2-4pm on GJG's Tsuru Island - \$45 Watch Laura Dufala, owner of Bentwood Tree Farm, unlock the hidden character within pine trees. Laura will demonstrate structural pruning techniques on *Pinus thunbergii* and other pine species, guiding you toward a deeper understanding of shaping pines with character and care. *Licensed landscapers will earn 3 CEU credits.*



Upright Maple Pruning: Saturday, December 5, 2026, 12-2pm on Tsuru Island - \$45 This is an in-person instructional course with Francheska Snyder much like the weeping laceleaf maple below, but she will concentrate on a few species of upright maples on Tsuru Island. Whether you're a home gardener or a landscape professional, this course offers advanced techniques for pruning upright maples.



Weeping Laceleaf Maple Pruning: Saturday, December 19, 2026, 11am-2pm. Repeated Sunday, December 20 to finish the pruning, noon-3pm at GJG's Ebetsu Plaza - \$55 This is an in-person instructional course with Francheska Snyder. Throughout the course, participants can engage in an open discussion with Francheska as she prunes a large laceleaf maple at GJG. Topics will include pruning techniques that create space and organize branch structure; tree health and sun exposure; managing the desired size; planning for future growth; aesthetics; and more. Whether you're a home gardener or a landscape professional, this course offers advanced techniques for pruning laceleaf maples. *Licensed landscapers will earn 5 CEU credits.*

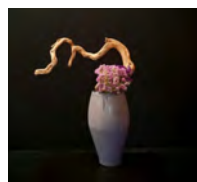
Workshops

[Register under 'Happenings' on the website](#)



The Art of Bonsai: On the third Saturday, 1-3pm or third Thursday, 6-8pm – \$55

BOBBY CURTTRIGHT, BONSAI MASTER: October workshop will focus on styling with aluminum wire. The plant of choice is a Western Hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*), a graceful Pacific Northwest native known for its soft foliage and elegant branching. Bobby Curttright was an apprentice to Bonsai Master Michael Hagedorn. Alongside his three-year apprenticeship, Bobby traveled to Japan for weeks at a time to study under Mr. Hagedorn's sensei, the famous Mr. Shinji Suzuki.



Introduction to Ikebana: Tuesday, October 6, 2026, 1-3pm – \$50

NANA BELLERUD, IKEBANA TEACHER: The October workshop will be on what surrounds us and how we can use ordinary items in our ikebana, as well as an interactive discussion on the arrangement's symbolism and seasonal meanings. Students explore their creativity and turn their ideas into creative pieces of art.



Volunteer Highlight - Roy Zilko

Roy has lived in Gresham for 14 years. He had a long career in freight transportation, starting with Union Pacific Railroad and later for American President Lines and NYK Lines, and last Intermodal Freight.

His interests include hiking, snowshoeing, bicycling (biked over 4,000 miles in the past few years), wine and beer making, photography, ukulele, gardening and travel, both domestic and international.

Roy has been volunteering with the Garden since the beginning of 2026. He's worked on a variety of projects including irrigation, bamboo fence tying, and roofing. He says that volunteering at the Gresham Japanese Garden has been a very rewarding experience and a great way to contribute to the community.