

# Tsuru Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



## Easing Congestion on the Island

If there is one takeaway from caring for Tsuru Island it is that adapting to change is important. Whether it's pruning shrubs because they are growing into one another, replacing the rope fencing because it's frayed at the ends, or in this last assessment, changing the path to ease congestion.

We're happy Tsuru Island is a destination, but the Japanese garden only occupies 3/4 of an acre which includes the same ingress and egress. Unfortunately, these limitations cause congestion on the pathway during peak hours.

We've been watching the increase of

visitors and the flow of traffic for the past few months and decided we needed to adapt to change again.

Along the main stretch of path, we took out a shrub to allow a space for the bench to be moved four feet off the path. We installed a 4' x 4' pad of blue stone leftover from the original construction to create a bump out. This additional space allows visitors to step off the main path and let others readily pass by.

*golden trees  
in a summer evening  
another earthday*

— Bill Peterson



# What is That Plant?

The question asked most frequently is, what is that plant?

The specimen, *Cotoneaster dammeri* 'Coral Beauty', was probably planted during the garden's creation in the early '70s, then forgotten and not pruned.

When you look up *Cotoneaster* on the Web, it says "ground cover, shrub and tree all for this one cultivar; Fast growing, spreading with dense prostrate branches."

It was uncovered during the rebirth in 2011, but it wasn't a priority until about 2013 when one day volunteer Misuzu Sarver asked if she could thin and eliminate the trailing branches. About an hour later when Jim Card returned to the bridge he found this uniquely shaped shrub that no one recognized. Sarver trimmed it for a few years, and then passed the pruners to another volunteer for a few more years.

When Judy Beattie joined the garden in 2021, the *Cotoneaster* did not have a designated pruner. When she walked over the bridge into the garden, and noticed the plant off to the left, it was wild and crazy, not pruned. In Judy's words,

"Just like any rowdy teen, the plant was acting out. It seemed that way because no one was focused on it. When Sue Protz offered an ambassador position to be in charge of the unruly *Cotoneaster*, I jumped on the chance!"

"The plant care is simple, but requires consistent care. During the winter the plant goes dormant so there isn't much growth, but come spring when it finally wakes up, it is bursting with energy."

"After taking care of the *Cotoneaster* now for three years, the best part for me is pruning while people enter the garden. It sits at the end of the bridge as a warm welcome to every visitor. It sets the tone for the whole experience. People notice it more now that it looks good and are quick to complement on its unique shape. Being from Texas, I



Beattie poised to trim the beloved *Cotoneaster*.

can't help but think of the big fluffy Texan clouds as I shape the bush into place. I now think the *Cotoneaster* has a Texan accent too!"

*I now think the Cotoneaster has a Texan accent too!*

Judy is continuing the legacy of pruning the *Cotoneaster* and through this relationship they are the best of friends. It strategically sits at the base of the bridge to give each visitor a friendly welcome and a warm send off.

## 俳句

### HAIKU CORNER

*this scorching summer,  
nature's meek apology  
for bitter winters.*

- Jass Aujla

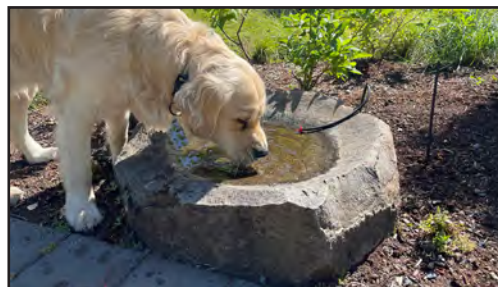
雨三粒天から土用見舞かな

*ame san tsubu ten kara doyo mimai kana*

*three raindrops  
a greeting card from heaven...  
midsummer heat*

- issa

## Dogs Get Fresh Water Daily



In the front of the Kyoudou Center we have a boulder that was intentionally chosen with a large indentation so it could hold rain water, and is purposely placed near the pathway where dogs walk by.

Recently we plumbed the entrance garden with irrigation *and* added an emitter to the dog boulder. Now, rain or sun, dogs will have fresh water!

## Planting the Entrance Garden



After months of bare dirt surrounding the Kyoudou Center's sign, GJG finally has completed the entrance garden planting.

The garden primarily consists of native plants including *Cornus sericea*, *Carex tumicola*, two *Mahonia* species, *Ribes aureum*, and *Oemleria cerasiformis* which grows upright and will eventually form a screen to the Kyoudou Center's walkway.

# The Return of *Yosegaki Hinomaru*

by Rex Ziak, OBON SOCIETY

In August of 1945 the war between America and Japan came to an end. Japan formally surrendered on September 2nd aboard the U.S.S. Missouri. Americans immediately budgeted \$200 million and a team of 13,000 workers searched every continent for their missing servicemen. Typically the deceased were buried in battlefield cemeteries but remains were discovered in wreckage, sunken ships, and along jungle trails. Several hundred thousand missing Americans were recovered and the remains returned to their families.



Unfortunately, no effort was made to recover Japanese servicemen.

And during the occupation, the Japanese families were not allowed to travel. To console these MIA families, the officials sent a box containing one rock. At least that gave every Japanese mother or wife something to bury.

As a result, today more than one million Japanese servicemen are listed as "Missing In Action" and every one is someone's brother, father or uncle. And those family members are still alive.

Fortunately, the Japanese created a unique tradition. Before leaving home the parents, neighbors and friends signed their names on a Japanese flag. Each serviceman carried his flag until his final breath. Many of these flags were brought home by returning American servicemen.

Since each flag is absolutely unique and specific as DNA, they can be traced back to family.

Rex and Keiko Ziak, founders of the Astoria based non-profit organization OBON SOCIETY, were the first to realize that in the absence of any physical remains, the return of these flags might provide the Japanese some intimate connection with their lost relative. And so they began their work: Two people

sitting at a kitchen table with a pen, paper and a laptop computer.

Keiko built a team of volunteers to help search while Rex organized a cataloging and archiving system. This had never been done. It took four years before the first flag was returned to the family.

The Japanese families dearly embraced the returned *Yosegaki Hinomaru* flags. (*Yosegaki Hinomaru* mean Good Luck Flag.) They wept, hugged the fabric and often spoke directly to it saying, "You have finally come home."

Many families carried the *Yosegaki Hinomaru* to their family cemetery to 'show' the ancestors that their missing son had finally returned home.

Meanwhile, the American veteran families were thrilled to provide a Japanese family with some relief. The families often exchanged letters and photographs. Many Americans said it was the most important thing they had ever done.

This work has resulted in an unexpected profound discovery. The Japanese family reacted to the *Yosegaki Hinomaru* with the same emotion as American MIA families when they received the bone remains of their missing family member. Even the language each family uses is identical.

There had never been a situation where human remains could be compared with non-human remains. Scientists and forensic anthropologists see a difference, however, the MIA family's do not.

The human and non-human remains provided the contact with their missing



A *Yosegaki Hinomaru* returned to the family.

relative and thus it provided the same closure.

This has led to the creation of the terminology to describe this phenomena. *Yosegaki Hinomaru*.

OBON SOCIETY is preparing for the future. The year 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the beginning of peace between America and Japan. It is estimated that 50,000 *Yosegaki Hinomaru* were brought to American soil as souvenirs from WWII. If even a small percentage of these are returned to Japan, this will become the most profound demonstration of peace and reconciliation the world has ever seen.

Last year the Government of Japan awarded Rex Ziak with the "Order of the Rising Sun" in recognition of his contribution to promoting understanding and friendly relations between Japan and the United States.

The August 15 festival of Obon honors the spirits of one's ancestors. People return to ancestral family places, visit and clean their ancestral graves.

OBON SOCIETY adapted their name from this traditional Japanese Shinto season of remembrance.

For more information see [obonsociety.org](http://obonsociety.org).

# Upcoming Pruning Classes

## **All Day Hands-on Pruning Workshop, Saturday, September 7, 2024 10:00am-4:00pm – \$100**

For the intermediate pruners, a hands-on opportunity to prune a variety of plants at a Japanese garden in Boring, OR, learning alongside Francheska Snyder, a professional aesthetic pruner trained in Japan who owns her own business, Niwa Method.

This is the Gresham Japanese Garden's 5th opportunity to prune at Vanport International. There are still many plants that need to be pruned and brought back to the vision of the original garden designer, Hoichi Kurisu.

## **Propagating Conifers from Cuttings, Saturday, November 2, 2024, 1-3pm - \$55**

Learn how to successfully propagate Chamaecyparis, Cryptomeria, Tsuga, Thujaopsis and other suitable conifers by rooting cuttings. Instructor Norm Jacobs will decode plant physiology, explain the selection of containers, soil mixes, and the role of rooting compounds. Norm will demonstrate, and you will prepare the cuttings from branches and sticks. Last Norm will share experience about aftercare and future transplanting of your cuttings. Class includes all the propagation materials: pots, soil, rooting compound, and plant tags.



### **GJG Instructor, Norm Jacobs**

Norm began gardening at age six, trimming boxwood, pruning roses, and tending his grandparents' vegetable garden. When his family moved to the Bay Area, CA, he landscaped tract house lots. College was math and physics at Berkeley, but fledgling programs for public "pension gardens" and "edible classrooms" drew his attention. With his botanist-wife he has operated a propagating nursery (Arbutus Garden Arts) for 30+ years.

Norm specializes in Japanese maples, dwarf conifers, Epimedium, and flirts with woodland peonies among other genera, all of which are propagated and grown from plants which have performed well in their SE Portland urban garden and nursery.

## **The History of Japanese Maple Cultivars: Zoom, Thursday, January 23, 2025, 6:30-8pm - \$30**

Instructor Norm Jacobs says that we are in a period of change in the world of Japanese maples, are in a period of "changing of the guard" in the world of Japanese maples with the future uncertain. That said, many select introductions of the last 30 years (the period of my most intense activity) are still rare or just making their way into propagation in numbers adequate to lower prices and improve availability. New plants continue to enter our evaluation program each year. This class will focus on JMs introduced during 1980-2018. Here are a few outstanding maple specialists instructor Norm Jacobs will discuss:

- Jack Muldoon, Trans-Pacific Nursery - Acer X circinatum Ki setsudore +
- Del Loucks, Del's Japanese Maples- Emerald Lace, Beni hoshi +
- Talon Buchholz, Buchholz Nursery, active though nursery now owned/operated by Matt and Tim Nichols (Mr. Maple) - The Ghost series (Sister, Amber, First, etc), Fairy Hair, Geisha Gone Wild, Bloody Talons
- The Dutch: Firma Esveld (the van Gelderen family) - shirasawanum aureum, Ariadne +
- Masayoshi Yano - Kurenai jishi, and author of [Book for Maples](#)

## **Propagating Broadleaf Shrubs, Saturday, June 7, 2025 1-3pm - \$55**

In this class learn how to successfully propagate deciduous and evergreen plants such as Rhododendron, Ribes and other suitable woody plants from cuttings. Instructor Norm Jacobs will explain plant physiology as it pertains to successful propagation, explain the selection of containers, soil mixes, and the role of rooting compounds. Next Norm will demonstrate and you will prepare stick cuttings from harvested branches. Last Norm will share experience about aftercare and future transplanting of your cuttings. Class includes all the propagation class materials: pots, soil, rooting compound, and plant tags.

[REGISTER ON WEBSITE](#)