

Tsuru 鶴 Soars

Friends of the Gresham Japanese Garden Newsletter



Concrete is Poured

Despite the never ending rain in November, somehow the contractors found a sunny window to pour the concrete in the back of the Kyoudou Center.

Jim Card's intuition in choosing Pliant Property Services as our contractor proved to be the right choice. The crew built the forms per our instructions, and then a week later with a break in the weather, five men worked almost non-stop from 6:45am to 4:30pm to pour, grade, and finish the 1000 sq. ft. of



concrete slab. With the help of Francheska Snyder, we embedded small stones in clusters of 3 called *Fumi ishi* (踏石). *Fumi* translates to letter writing and *ishi* means stone, a Japanese term that refers to a stepping

*over the bridge
end of another year
witness fading colors*

— Bill Peterson

Photo right: Contractors grading the concrete. Photo bottom: Showing a traditional three-stone arrangement.



stone placed at the entrance of a tea ceremony hut, or chashitsu or for us, an exhibiton area.

Needle Pruning Pines

From November to February is a great time to needle prune your pines. The buds have hardened, reducing the mishap of bud damage while needling.

Needle pruning is a mundane task, but the benefits to the tree and therapy for the gardener outweigh the time it takes to complete. Needle pruning begins to reveal the graceful lines and branch patterns. When needle pruning, you begin to unravel the tree's needs. What branches are growing too vertical? Are the bottom branches getting enough light? Are there buds along the branch line?

KEY REASONS TO NEEDLE PRUNE

- **Stimulate new growth:** By removing needles, latent buds are stimulated, and may produce new growth.
- **Balances energy:** Removing needles from overly vigorous branches can redirect energy to weaker areas of the tree.
- **Aeration and light penetration:** Removing the older needles creates space to improve air circulation, disease reduction, and allows more light to reach the bottom branches.
- **Improves aesthetics:** Needle pruning highlights the branch and makes it more appealing to see the branch and its structure.

- Eliminates bud development from shoots where bud growth is undersized.

HOW TO NEEDLE PRUNE

Even though the buds have hardened, it's still a good habit to work from the inside out. Needle pruning forces one to touch every branch, so be patient and work through each branch methodically.

1. Reach into the tree from the underside rather than near the tip, where next year's candles are forming. (See Fig. 1)
2. Remove old, unhealthy and discolored needles. Pines naturally lose their needles after 3-5 years.
3. To pull the needles off of the branch, use your index finger, middle finger, and thumb and lightly twist the needles away from the branch. It's like you're massaging the needles off the branch. Don't tear and damage the bark. (See Fig. 2)
4. Remove needles up to this year's growth. Leave as many needles as you aesthetically think is pleasing. Ideally, leave as little as 7-10 fascicles. (See Fig. 3)
5. The top 1/3 of the tree can be pruned heavier than the lower 2/3 where growth is the greatest.



Left Fig. 1, middle Fig. 2, bottom Fig. 3.



Needle pruning begins to reveal the graceful lines and branch patterns.

俳句

HAIKU CORNER

December's cold grip
Garden sleeps beneath the frost
Life waits for the spring
- Bard

初時雨夕飯買に出たりけり
hatsu shigure yûmeshi kau ni detari keru

first winter rain--
going out to buy
dinner
- Issa

Students are Back!



The Exploratory Worksite Program students are back. This year we broadened our reach to include not only the Gresham-Barlow School District students, but Reynolds School District students too.

This is our fifth year teaching horticulture to students who graduated high school with a modified diploma looking to gain life and work skills.

Extra Muscles



For the past 10 years we have been blessed with LDS church missionaries helping at the Garden during Garden Saturdays.

The holidays provided some extra service work time for the Elders, and the Garden was the recipient.

They were an immense help pulling juncus, moving boulders, spreading gravel, and of course pulling weeds.

We're Covered!

by Mary Dickson

“Vision, research, locating, buying, cleaning, volunteer involvement, and installing,” are all the steps Jim Card, Garden Director, uses for the many projects of renovation and renewal at the Gresham Japanese Garden. Jim used these steps when he wanted to enhance the new roof to look more like a roof you would see in Japan.

Jim was inspired by buildings he saw in Kyoto, Japan, where the entire roof was made from dark charcoal-colored ceramic tiles and adorned at the ends with onigawaras. The Kyoudou Center, a converted double-wide trailer, could not support an entire roof assembled with these 10-pound tiles. Bev Carlon, a longtime volunteer, had similar inspirations as Jim, wanting the Japanese influence roof line for the Kyoudou Center. After researching, they determined that adding tiles to the roof line and all four corners only would give the look they were aiming for.

Once the initial homework was complete, Jim's research took him on a circuitous route to Gaston, Oregon, where a company that used to make tiles (but no longer does) had some old, moss-covered ones for \$5 each. Jim sorted through different colors, and returned with dirty but serviceable tiles. Volunteers cleaned the tiles, and next Jim had to figure out what sort of paint would adhere to ceramic and weather well. He wanted the color to be a glossy, rich black. Ultimately, each tile was first painted with white marine epoxy that will protect them from the rain, and then painted with black boat paint. Seventy-five 10-pound tiles later laid waiting for the next step.

Thank goodness for the missionary Elders that help us on Garden Saturdays. They formed a line from the tiles on the ground up to the roof and placed them exactly where volunteer Chuck Page



The onigawara on the roof of the Kyoudou Center.

wanted them placed. Last, it took about a week for Chuck to meticulously place and install each tile.

You have to look at the roof from a distance to see the impact of the distinctive outline. Jim is thrilled, saying, "The results are exactly what my vision projected! And I'm so happy Bev pushed me to find a solution. And, she generously offered to fund the tiles, which made me even more accountable."

ONIGAWARA TILES

Again inspired by the roofs of Japan, the roof needed a finishing touch. There are special ornamental tiles used on Japanese buildings called onigawara tiles, and tradition says that they protect the building from devils and demons. There are many styles, but Jim thought that having a tsuru (crane) would be appropriate. He contacted

Blane Bellerud, a Gresham ceramic artist, and husband to our ikebana instructor, discussed designing and creating onigawara for the Kyoudou Center roof. Blane

provided three sketches, and two made the cut for the GJG volunteers to vote.

Blane worked for months on the design and sculpting in to clay.

Ultimately, two large onigawara tiles with



the same design, and four smaller pendant disks or *gatou* were created with a similar design as the large ones, but less ornate. Jerry Sunday

provided funding for all the tiles.

First, a plaster mold was made for each size of tile, and then Blane pressed ceramic clay directly into the molds. They were made extra thick to help resist the effects of weather. Last Blane finished the intricate work by hand. The tedious, but necessary ceramic cycle of drying, which was quite a bit longer because the tiles were extra thick, (bisque) firing, glazing, and then a final firing followed.

And, the ending challenge, Jim and Chuck came up with an ingenious method for mounting.

Next time you approach the Kyoudou Center, stop and enjoy the roof, knowing that, once again, members of the volunteer community came together to envision and create something of beauty in the Gresham Japanese Garden.

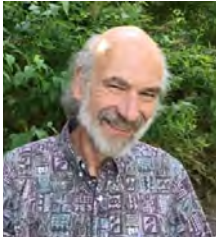


Upcoming Pruning Classes

[REGISTER AT GRESHAMJAPANESEGARDEN.ORG](https://www.greshamjapanesegarden.org)



All Day Hands-on Winter Pruning Workshop: Saturday, January 11, 2025, 10am-4pm – \$100
FRANCHESKA SNYDER, INSTRUCTOR 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 will be the Gresham Japanese Garden's 5th opportunity to prune at Vanport International. There are still many plants that need to be restored to their size and brought back to the vision of the original garden designer, Hoichi Kurisu.



A Recent History of Japanese Maple Cultivars (Since 1945): On Zoom, Thursday, January 23, 2025, 6:30-8pm – \$30
NORM JACOBS, INSTRUCTOR: Instructor Norm Jacob says that we are in a period of change in the world of Japanese maples and a "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. This class will focus on JMs introduced during 1980-2018. *Zoom course is recorded and available for two weeks.*



Pruning Fruit Trees: Saturday, January 25, 2025, 1-3pm – \$45
JONATHAN FAITH, INSTRUCTOR: Late winter is a good time to prune fruit trees because they are dormant and it is easy to see the tree's structure to decide which cuts to make. You can confidently know that your tree will heal pruning cuts during the upcoming spring. Faith will demonstrate how to prune apple trees, cherry trees, and hopefully if Al's Garden & Home has in stock, plum trees and Asian pear trees. In addition, Faith will discuss cross pollination, fertilizers, and fungicide and insecticide sprays. *Don't miss out on a discount coupon to Al's Garden & Home when you attend the class!*



Fundamentals of Conifers, On Zoom: Thursday, February 6, 2025, 6-8pm – \$30
MARYANN LEWIS, INSTRUCTOR: In this online course, instructor Maryann Lewis will cover a variety of conifer basics, from identifying their cultivar, growth pattern, and pruning approach. Learn fundamental pruning techniques for your favorite conifers including pines, spruce, hinoki and others, and how to interpret each cultivar. This class will help you feel comfortable making pruning decisions so you can enjoy conifers even more. *Zoom courses are recorded and available for two weeks.*



Pruning Conifers in the Garden, Onsite, Sunday, February 9, 2025 10:00am-Noon - \$45
MARYANN LEWIS, INSTRUCTOR
This class will build upon the knowledge gained in 'Pruning Fundamentals for Conifers' on the 8th. It will be beneficial to take the Zoom class. We will look at various small conifers in and around Tsuru Island and apply useful techniques and strategies that can be used in any garden style.



Introduction to the Aesthetic Pruning Approach, On Zoom: Thursday, March 6, 2025 6-8pm - \$30
MARYANN LEWIS, INSTRUCTOR: Aesthetics are integral to the stewardship of trees in our gardens. In this online course learn to apply the aesthetic pruning approach to trees and shrubs, including how to assess your plant material, identify the role they play in your garden, and develop a pruning plan to achieve your goals. Aesthetic pruning works in any garden style. *Zoom courses are recorded and available for two weeks.*



Wreath Making + Wine at the Gresham Japanese Garden
ONLY A FEW SPOTS LEFT

Monday, December 2 or Sunday, December 8

[Register here](#)

