

August/September 2024



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HAIKU

Dapples of sunlight  
The path of summer's sun  
Seeking its own way

– Peter Kendall

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Dear Members,

In May, I announced that in January of 2025, I will be retiring. After 33 years of public service, during which I was fortunate to see Portland Japanese Garden blossom into a world class cultural organization, the time has come for me to pursue some of my other dreams and life aspirations. I encourage you to read more about my decision and what I plan to do next on our website, [japanesegarden.org/ceo-retirement](http://japanesegarden.org/ceo-retirement).

The outpouring of support has been amazing. I am deeply grateful for the kind words I have received from so many of you—thank you. We are developing a transition plan that will ensure Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute will not break stride as they continue to provide beauty, serenity, and cultural understanding for our community. We look forward to sharing those details in the coming weeks.

During my tenure, one accomplishment I'm particularly proud of is the integration of carefully planned successions of leadership. Often unseen, the Garden will spend years if not decades thinking ahead to the future and has hired and promoted highly talented and admired individuals—always with the idea that they'll be next to help shepherd the organization.

Lisa Christy, who was promoted to Executive Director at the beginning of 2024, is someone I must start with first. She joined the organization nearly 10 years ago and immediately demonstrated immense skill in strategic thinking that has always been underlined by compassion. She's fostered deeper ties with our community, has helped drive record-setting admission, and

has championed improved accessibility. I'm confident in her ability to lead our organization during this transition period.

Aki Nakanishi, our Arlene Schnitzer Curator of Culture, Art, and Education, is gifted in fostering mutual understanding and has maintained and strengthened the Garden as a home of world-class Japanese cultural programming. His passion and deep knowledge are certainly going to make us the premiere center for arts, training in Japanese gardening, and cultural exchange in the Pacific Northwest. I spent nearly a decade recruiting Aki, and it was worth it!

Hugo Torii, our Garden Curator, is another key leader that we recognized the talents of many years ago. If you want to know how good he is, just look at the Garden. Its health and beauty depends on keen oversight, the ability to nurture a team of gardeners, and artistic vision. His generous spirit and desire to be an ambassador for Japanese gardening makes him uniquely suited to be next in a lineage of Japanese-born garden experts who have fostered our grounds.

Misako Ito, Executive Director of our Japan Office in Tokyo, has already made a lasting impact since being hired last year. She has been instrumental in strengthening our connections with some of Japan's foremost thought leaders and leading organizations both private and public, all of which help the Garden maintain its acclaimed authenticity and high standards of excellence.

This group of executive leadership, combined with our dedicated and remarkable staff, passionate volunteers, and highly engaged and experienced Board of Trustees and Foundation Board has me extremely reassured that Portland Japanese Garden will remain a crown jewel of Portland for decades to come. And now, it's time to walk the Garden. We're in the final days of summer and it's as beautiful as ever.

With gratitude,

Steve Bloom  
Chief Executive Officer



A visitor studies the Sand and Stone Garden in late summer. 📷 Julie Gursha

## Member News & Events

### *Bon-Odori*: Celebrate Life with Dance

August 31

A highlight of summer festivals in Japan is the *bon-odori*, or bon dance. Each region in Japan has their own version of the dance, as well as different music. In Japanese Buddhist tradition, *bon-odori* is a way to entertain and send off the spirits of our ancestors and celebrate life. Come learn the dances, see people dressed in *yukata* (summer kimonos), and to hear and feel the sound of *taiko* drums at this free Garden event!



Guests at O-Tsukimi watch the moon rise from Portland Japanese Garden's Mount Hood overlook. 📷 Jonathan Ley

### *O-Tsukimi*: Take in the Beauty of the Harvest Moon

September 16 - 18

Moonviewing, or *O-Tsukimi* in Japanese, is the practice of gazing at the full moon and enjoying its sacred beauty. There is no better place in Portland to share the romance and mystery of this special custom than from the eastern overlook of the Pavilion with its views of the city skyline and Mount Hood.

Tickets will open to those in the Golden Crane Recognition Society on August 7. Garden Members will be able to make reservations beginning August 14.

### Enjoy the Signature Beverage of Japan

September 29

Connect with the culture of Japan through its signature beverage: *sake*. Explore the structure, history, and brewing of a selection of sakes from Japanese microbreweries presented by the Garden's long-time partner Joto Sake.

Tickets will open to those in the Golden Crane Recognition Society on August 21. Garden Members will be able to make reservations beginning August 28.

## Experience Portland Japanese Garden from a Different Perspective

### Extended Evening Hours

August 11 & August 29

Members are invited to experience the Garden's tranquility in the golden light of sunset. Take advantage of the long summer evenings to enjoy our grounds without the crowds. Members are not required to reserve a time to visit during these special and exclusive hours and may arrive during regular public hours and stay.

### ASL Tours

August 17 & September 21

Explore Portland Japanese Garden's history, landscape architecture, and culture with a free docent-led tour with American Sign Language interpretation. These tours are for individuals who are deaf and hard of hearing and their family and friends only. To learn how to register, go to [japanesegarden.org/asl-tour](http://japanesegarden.org/asl-tour)

### Member Tours

First Saturday of Every Month

Join one of our volunteer guides on a free Garden tour for members and their guests only, during member hours. Our knowledgeable tour guides, some of whom have been patrons of our organization for decades, will provide members with interesting and informative cultural, historical, and horticultural information about the Garden.

### Exclusive Preview: Explore the Restorative Art of *Kintsugi*

September 28

Portland Japanese Garden will feature *Kintsugi: The Restorative Art of Naoko Fukumaru* in our Pavilion and Calvin and Mayho Tanabe Galleries from September 28 through January 27, 2025. *Kintsugi* is an ancient method of mending damaged ceramics using *urushi* (natural lacquer) dusted with powdered gold. Members are welcome to enjoy the exhibition before it opens to the public during Member Hours. To plan your visit, go to [japanesegarden.org/kintsugi](http://japanesegarden.org/kintsugi)

You can read Fukumaru's thoughts on her art on p.10.



Artist Naoko Fukumaru applying a layer of *urushi* lacquer to achieve a smooth surface of the broken joins as part of the *kintsugi* method of mending.

📷 Naoko Fukumaru

For all the latest details on Garden events, including dates and times, go to [japanesegarden.org/events](http://japanesegarden.org/events) and for reminders and updates, sign up for our weekly e-newsletter at [japanesegarden.org/newsletter](http://japanesegarden.org/newsletter)



Masaki Shimada, Portland Japanese Garden Volunteer and Seasonal Bonsai Caretaker, seen floating candles during the toro nagashi (lantern floating) portion of O-Bon in 2023. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden

## Volunteer Spotlight: Masaki Shimada

### Beloved Garden Volunteer Delights in Reconnecting with Japanese Culture and Sharing its Gifts with Guests

Portland Japanese Garden could not pursue its mission of *Inspiring Harmony and Peace* without its remarkable group of volunteers. More than 180 individuals from a diverse group of backgrounds help the organization in innumerable ways, including providing richly detailed tours, guiding guests through artwork on display in our exhibitions, and tending to the physical landscape itself. One of these gifted and bright individuals is Masaki Shimada.

Shimada can be seen giving back in the Garden in a variety of roles—he has helped provide guests with directions or information about the landscape as a roving garden monitor, meticulously sweeps moss as a horticultural volunteer, has been a docent for the organization’s art exhibitions and Ellie M. Hill Bonsai Terrace, and has even tended the bar for the occasional Garden event. He also works part-time as the organization’s Seasonal Assistant Bonsai Caretaker.

Shimada was born in Nagaoka and raised in nearby Mitsuke, a small city in Niigata Prefecture, Japan. While he first lived in Oregon as a student at Willamette University in Salem, he didn’t visit Portland Japanese Garden until he returned to the state in the 1980s when he took a position with the Consul General of Japan in Portland. His first time walking the grounds coincided with a momentous occasion for the organization: a visit from His Excellency, Nobuo Matsunaga, former Ambassador of Japan to the United States (1985-89). “I was surprised, the Garden was well-made and so authentic,” Shimada remembers. “I thought, ‘Wow! Who did this in Portland, Oregon?’”

Shimada left the Japanese consulate in 1992 to work for Tokyo International University of America at Willamette University, ending his 28-year tenure with the school as Director of Student Affairs & Leadership Team in 2020. As the pandemic began to overtake the world, Shimada turned to the land for comfort. “I was home in Portland, and I started to work in my yard that I had neglected for decades,” he recalls. “I realized how just touching the soil made me calm, almost meditative.” Shimada would join Portland Japanese Garden as a volunteer shortly thereafter. “This is a place that you can visit and be away from reality and calm yourself. It’s a healing place—I felt so lucky to become a volunteer.”

“This is a place that you can visit and be away from reality and calm yourself. It’s a healing place—I felt so lucky to become a volunteer.”

MASAKI SHIMADA | PORTLAND JAPANESE GARDEN VOLUNTEER AND SEASONAL ASSISTANT BONSAI CARETAKER

If Shimada feels lucky to be a volunteer, it’s felt tenfold by the Garden. “Masaki is universally adored by volunteers and staff alike at Portland Japanese Garden,” shares Sarah Lynch, Volunteer Programs Manager. “He brings so much intelligence, care, and skill to his work. What I admire most about Masaki, though, is his kindness. It is a quality that he radiates and that makes him undeniably wonderful to work with and to know.”

While Shimada grew up with an affinity for nature and the horticultural arts, he credits Portland Japanese Garden for igniting his passion for bonsai. After working with the Garden’s Bonsai Consultant Michael Hagedorn and even creating his own collection of the miniature trees, he was hired on as a Seasonal Assistant Bonsai Caretaker.

“I am grateful to have Masaki working with us as a volunteer and seasonal assistant bonsai caretaker,” says Garden Curator Hugo Torii, praising Shimada. “He works tirelessly to help foster our landscape and his enthusiasm and spirit reinforces our love for what we do. He is essential in sharing Japanese culture with our team of gardeners.”

Shimada highly encourages volunteering at Portland Japanese Garden: “It’s fun and something I love to do. The staff and volunteers are so enthusiastic about our Garden and amazing cultural programs, and want to share with all the visitors—it’s a sharing environment. I’m just grateful people outside of Japan are appreciating our culture and are using it as a vehicle to make people happy. There are a lot of negative things going on in the world, but this place can provide a different feel, a different experience. Sometimes people need to forget about these negativities and immerse themselves in the healing force of the garden’s natural beauty to go back to the basic, simple happiness. Being here makes you realize you can find happiness. It’s very simple—this is a happy place. My retirement has been wonderful because of the Garden.”

To read more about Shimada’s life and work as Seasonal Assistant Bonsai Caretaker, visit [japanesegarden.org/shimada](https://japanesegarden.org/shimada)



Masaki Shimada, Portland Japanese Garden Volunteer and Seasonal Bonsai Caretaker, tends to bonsai during the Bonsai Society of Portland Exhibition held at the Garden in April. 📷 Portland Japanese Garden

To learn more about the roles our volunteers serve at Portland Japanese Garden, visit [japanesegarden.org/volunteer](https://japanesegarden.org/volunteer)



Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler and Sapporo Mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto on the east veranda of the Pavilion. Jonathan Ley

## Demonstrating the Importance of Culture and Diplomacy

### Sapporo and Portland Mayors Celebrate 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Sister-City Relationship at Portland Japanese Garden

2024 marks the 65th anniversary of one of the United States' oldest and strongest sister city relationships—Portland, Oregon in the U.S. and Sapporo, Hokkaido in Japan. This sister city relationship, which has fostered an everlasting friendship across the Pacific, has also come to be manifested in more tangible forms, including Portland Japanese Garden. The formal bond created with Sapporo was a catalyst for the development of Portland Japanese Garden and the Japanese city and its people have been instrumental in the organization's continued success for more than 60 years. The Garden was honored to celebrate the milestone anniversary by holding a reception for Sapporo Mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto and Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler in June.

"I'm glad for this memorable 65th anniversary and this great party with Mayor Wheeler," shared Mayor Akimoto in remarks delivered on the Mount Hood Overlook near the Garden's Pavilion.\* "My first visit to Portland was 35 years ago. It's my pleasure to be here with all of you looking at Mount Hood over there and the city of Portland and in this beautiful Japanese garden. Mount Hood looks like Mount Fuji...it took me 20 hours to come here from Sapporo [through] connecting flights. When I got to Portland it felt like I had come back to Japan. It's hard to find a [Japanese garden as beautiful] as this one in the U.S., but it's also hard to find in Japan too. ...I hope this friendship we have nurtured for 65 years will continue for 70 years, 80 years, 100 years, and forever."

"This place where we stand is truly a global gathering place," followed Mayor Wheeler. "[Portland Japanese Garden] is a place of commonality in a time where we desperately seek commonality. I'm grateful for the role cultural institutions like this play in revitalizing our city and for what they teach us about the value of working together and creating cross-cultural understanding. A gathering place like this was made possible 65 years ago in 1959 when Mayor Shrunk of Portland and Mayor Harada of Sapporo co-signed a document stating their firm belief that a sister city relationship would contribute importantly to global peace. In the 65 years that have followed the impact of our sister city relationship has reverberated well beyond our cities, inspiring many other sister city relationships to be established today. Think about this. Two nations who were once at war are now the greatest of allies, and we demonstrate the power and the importance of culture and diplomacy to the rest of the world."



Garden Curator Hugo Torii (right) gives Sapporo Mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto a tour of Portland Japanese Garden. Jonathan Ley

The formal remarks concluded with Mayors Wheeler and Akimoto as well as Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute CEO Steve Bloom writing down wishes for peace to be hung up on a Wish Tree, an art installation by peace advocate and artist Yoko Ono, held in the Garden in collaboration with gardens on four different continents and the Nobel Peace Center in Norway.

*\*Mayor Akimoto's remarks were delivered in Japanese and translated live. They have been edited for clarity.*



Naoko Fukumaru in the process of creating her artwork. © Naoko Fukumaru

## The Art of Healing

### Reflections from Kintsugi Artist Naoko Fukumaru

Portland Japanese Garden is thrilled to feature *Kintsugi: The Restorative Art of Naoko Fukumaru* in our Pavilion and Calvin and Mayho Tanabe Galleries this fall. *Kintsugi* is an ancient method of mending damaged ceramics using *urushi* (natural lacquer) dusted with powdered gold. This type of mending highlights the beauty of imperfections, rather than trying to hide them. This timely exhibition will explore universally resonant themes of healing through the artwork of kintsugi artist and master conservator Naoko Fukumaru. In this article, Fukumaru shares her impressions from her 2022 visit to Portland Japanese Garden and discusses the art of kintsugi.



"Timeless Magic," 2023. Taisho era (1912-1926) black Raku ware, urushi lacquer, 24K gold, and resin.  
© Naoko Fukumaru

## Thoughts from Naoko Fukumaru

### Ingredients of the Garden

"I visited Portland Japanese Garden in November 2022. I was drawn in by each element of the landscape, which brought up nostalgic childhood memories of my grandparents taking me to various Japanese gardens in Kyoto. Moss carpets created spaces of deep tranquility and transcendent beauty; water flowing through the rocks of the creek symbolized the flow of life; and skillfully pruned pine trees were stylized structures that lent each of the specimens its own personality. I was fascinated by the authenticity and magic of Portland Japanese Garden. At the end of my visit, I realized that care and love are the main ingredients of this place. It was unmistakable that staff, volunteers, visitors, and all who were involved in this Garden, were giving so much love, care, passion, and pride here. This truly resonates with my kintsugi artwork. Kintsugi is a 500-year-old art form of mending damaged ceramics with urushi, natural lacquer, dusted with powdered gold. This method of mending is seen as enhancing the beauty and value of objects by celebrating their imperfection and impermanence. This approach is the opposite of traditional Western ceramic restoration, in which the damage to the work is sought to be hidden, which I studied and practiced for 25 years."

### The Process of Mending

"The kintsugi process is time-consuming—it takes several months to complete a piece. The first step is to reassemble the fragments of a broken object with *Mugi-Urushi*, which is made from wheat flour and water with urushi lacquer. Once reassembled, joints and chips need to be filled with *Sabi-Urushi*, which is made of stone powder, water, and urushi lacquer. The filler needs to be sanded to make a smooth surface. Then several layers of urushi lacquer are applied over the filler. Finally, gold powder is applied and polished up. It is important to let lacquer cure properly between each process for a few days or weeks, and curing also needs to happen in very specific humid and warm conditions."

### A Story of Healing

"I spend several months restoring each ceramic with care and love. When the owners are reunited with their kintsugi-restored ceramics, they are amazed at how the damage has transformed into beauty. Many tell me, 'Wow, this is more beautiful than when it was complete. I am happy that the ceramic got broken.' To me, this is extraordinary. I never heard this compliment in all my 25 years doing traditional Western ceramic restoration. Kintsugi teaches us how to forgive ourselves and others and how to make a better world by applying its philosophy to everyday life. I am truly looking forward to sharing my stories and artwork with your community this fall."

*Kintsugi: The Restorative Art of Naoko Fukumaru* debuts in our Pavilion and Calvin and Mayho Tanabe Galleries on September 28 and runs through January 27. To learn more, go to [japanesegarden.org/kintsugi](https://japanesegarden.org/kintsugi)



From left to right, a lively discussion moderated by Makoto Yokohari featuring Kengo Kuma, Takahiro Inoue, and Shiro Wakui. © Ken Katsurayama

## Sparking Innovation in the World of Japanese Gardening

### Japan Institute Co-Presents Symposium at University of Tokyo with International Horticultural Expo 2027

In May, Japan Institute and Portland Japanese Garden collaborated with the International Horticultural Expo 2027, also known as “GREEN x EXPO 2027,” to present a symposium at the acclaimed University of Tokyo in Japan. Titled “Why Japanese Gardens Now?” the event convened some of the nation’s preeminent thought leaders in the fields of gardening, architecture, landscape architecture, and academia to discuss the global appreciation of Japanese gardens. They examined the evolving cultural significance of these vital natural spaces, their ability to foster community, and what the future holds in store for them.

“There is a feeling within the interrelated fields of Japanese gardens, be it landscaping, construction, or research, that there has been some stagnancy over the past few years,” shares Misako Ito, Executive Director of Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute’s Japan Office. “Our organization is quickly becoming perceived as an agent of change in Japan. Many see the Garden as being able to enable these industry players to think about their work in a way that can spark innovation while still honoring tradition and maintaining authenticity. This symposium helped illustrate one of Japan Institute’s greatest attributes—its capacity for facilitating key players to meet and share dialogue that will strengthen our collective ability to foment change for the better.”

GREEN x EXPO 2027 is a prestigious event that its organizers expect will see 15 million visitors when it opens in Yokohama in 2027. Representatives from a diverse group of nations will be present to promote and share their horticultural knowledge. Masato Komura, Secretary-General of the Japan Association for the International Horticultural Expo 2027 writes, “We hope that it will provide visitors with opportunities to gain new perspectives on flowers, greenery, agriculture, and food, and inspire them to work to create a world for tomorrow that is sustainable and in harmony with nature.”

At the symposium, attendees heard remarks from Professor Atsushi Tsuda, Vice President of the University of Tokyo. A panel discussion followed, featuring Takehiro Inoue (Landscape Architect, Ueyoshi Landscape Co. Ltd), Shiro Wakui (Chairperson, GREEN x EXPO 2027 Lab), Makoto Yokohari (Professor, University of Tokyo), and Kengo Kuma (Architect). Kuma, who designed the Cultural Village of Portland Japanese Garden and the auditorium where the symposium was held, and Wakui are both members of the Garden’s International Advisory Board.

Following a spirited discussion, Akira Matsuda (Associate Professor, University of Tokyo) discussed Kaitoku-en before guests enjoyed a tour of it. Kaitoku-en is a renowned Japanese garden on the University’s campus that visitors to Japan are often unaware of. A designated national cultural property, the garden has been in the care of the University of Tokyo since 1928 and was used by the Meiji Government to welcome visiting foreign dignitaries. After their garden tour, guests reunited for a networking event and reception.



Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute CEO Steve Bloom (right) congratulates Shiro Wakui, Chairperson of GREEN x EXPO 2027 Lab, on a successful event. © Ken Katsurayama



Misako Ito, Executive Director of Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute’s Japan Office. © Nina Johnson



### Did You Know We Have a Japan Office?

In 2022 Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute established its permanent, year-round presence in Tokyo at the International House of Japan, commonly referred to as I-House. This exciting endeavor affords the organizations better opportunities to collaborate with its partners in Japan. Hired in 2023 to run this important space is its Executive Director, Misako Ito. Ito is establishing a networking framework that will maintain, strengthen, and add connections between Portland Japanese Garden and Japan Institute with organizations and individuals in Japan. She also supports Japan Institute’s three programmatic centers: the International Exchange Forum, International Japanese Garden Training Center, and Global Center for Culture & Art.



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Portland Japanese Garden

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Portland Japanese Garden



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If you live more than 100 miles from the Garden and would like to join our Global Ambassador Society, please contact Claire Eisenfeld, Director of Philanthropy at (503) 542-0281 or [ceisenfeld@japanesegarden.org](mailto:ceisenfeld@japanesegarden.org)

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Members of the Phoenix Legacy Society have named the Garden as the ultimate beneficiary of a planned gift. We are grateful to the following people for letting us know of their plans to support the Garden in this enduring way.

If you would like to include the Garden in your estate plans, or if you have already done so and would allow us to list you as a Legacy Society Member, please contact Claire Eisenfeld, Director of Philanthropy, at (503) 542-0281 or [ceisenfeld@japanesegarden.org](mailto:ceisenfeld@japanesegarden.org).

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Portland Japanese Garden

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For inquiries on supporting Japan Institute, please reach out to our Chief Development Officer, Jennifer Baumann, at (503) 595-5225 or [jbaumann@japanesegarden.org](mailto:jbaumann@japanesegarden.org)

Recognizing all those who have made a gift in support of our Path to Peace Campaign for Japan Institute, helping us be a leading global voice for cultural understanding, in pursuit of a more peaceful, sustainable world.

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Portland Japanese Garden



Attendees of Portland Japanese Garden's Asian American Native Hawai'ian Pacific Islander Heritage Month Roundtable Discussion in May. Portland Japanese Garden



Friends toast each other at the Garden's annual reception for the Golden Crane Recognition Society in June. Nina Johnson



LionTree Chief Impact Officer and former UNICEF CEO Caryl Stern giving remarks at the annual reception for the Golden Crane Recognition Society in June. Nina Johnson



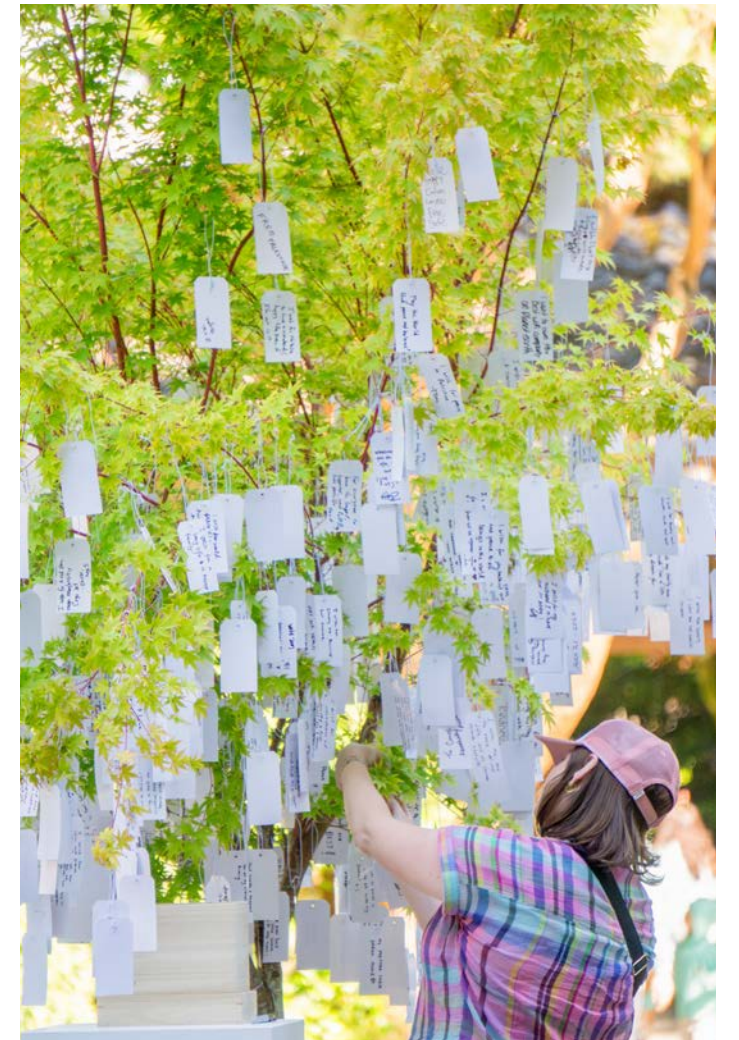
Peter Putnicki, Senior Gardener of Seattle Japanese Garden, prunes pines in the Flat Garden as he participates in Portland Japanese Garden's Professional Gardener Work Exchange Program. Portland Japanese Garden



Two young garden guests figure out what wishes they'll write during our Tanabata celebration in July. Portland Japanese Garden



Curator Emeritus Sadafumi Uchiyama offers guidance during the Garden's Maple Pruning Workshop in July. Portland Japanese Garden



A guest reaches out to put a wish on a maple tree during the Garden's art installation in the Cultural Village in June, SPREAD PEACE: Wish Tree by Yoko Ono. Portland Japanese Garden



A scene from Portland Japanese Garden's member tour to Japan in May. Here the participants are outside the Meiji Shrine in Tokyo. Portland Japanese Garden

**DID YOU KNOW...?**

Seen below in a photo from 2023 is Reverend Zuigaku Kodachi, Head Priest of the Buddhist congregation, Nichiren Shu Minorikai, and Professor Emeritus at Lewis & Clark University. Reverend Kodachi first moved to the United States from his native Japan more than 60 years ago. He is the person who initiated the annual hosting of *O-Bon*, or the Spirit Festival, at Portland Japanese Garden. This important Buddhist festival honors ancestors and prays for the souls of the departed. The Garden has held this event since 1976, with Reverend Kodachi always present to chant the Lotus Sutra as candles illuminate the Strolling Pond Garden.

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