



# Tsuru Island

Editor: James Card

## Mountain Ash Dedication

Last summer during the bridge dedication ceremony, the representatives of Gresham's sister city Ebetsu, presented the garden with two plaques and a gift of 30,000 yen (\$250) intended for the purchase of a "Mountain Ash" tree. Attending the ceremony was Mayor Shane Bemis and his family, the board of directors for the Gresham Ebetsu Sister City Association and many volunteers. One plaque is displayed in Gresham City Hall's main lobby and the other is displayed by the Ash tree. The plaque is mounted on a display pedestal made of Purple Heart wood.

The Mountain Ash is the city tree of Ebetsu, Japan just like the Hogan cedar is the chosen tree for the City of Gresham. The Ash tree, rated at 2-inch caliper, was purchased from J Frank Schmidt Nursery and planted last spring. It is now in full leaf and doing well.

This Ash is a deciduous tree is actually a Sorbus and not an ash like the name suggests. It will lose its leaves this fall as soon as the weather turns a bit colder. During the spring after it gains its leaves back the tree will also produce a fruit that is considered a berry. The berry is a brilliant red and appear in bunches like grapes.



### Behind The Scenes:

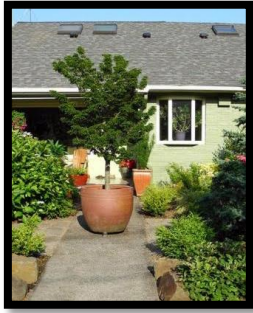
At a recent "Volunteer Day" presentation, Mark Vossbrink gave a presentation of the history of Kokedama (a form of bonsai) and provided an opportunity to make some. This Bonsai, which is made of a moss ball, originated in Japan during the Edo period (1603-1868).

Born in Hawaii, Mark was exposed to Japanese bonsai as a child influenced by his grandmother and uncles' involvement in the art form. He joined his uncle on a bonsai related trip to China which increased his knowledge and understanding.

Mark's Japanese grandmother would take him into the forest and show him plants that were growing in unusual and natural ways. Part of the bonsai process is to replicate nature and make it appear old. "The item does not have to be old but has to have the illusion of being old." says Mark.

Mark refers to bonsai as the "black hole" of gardening where the possibilities are endless. He is absolutely right; it can be endless with over 5 million bonsai enthusiasts in China alone. Mark is presently fostering about 40 bonsai of his own: juniper and spruce being his favorite plants. It takes a bonsai about 8-10 years to mature and developed enough to be a quality plant for sale.

Mark has recently been invited by his uncle, who is 94 now, to go to Washington DC to attend the re-opening of the bonsai exhibits promoted by The National Bonsai Foundation and developed by the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum.



### A NEW PLANT TO THE GARDEN

The garden has received donated plants from many sources with each having its own story. Many of those plants came from Toni and Barry Busse which came from the nursery of Toni's father, Tom. Now Toni's cousin, Sheri Swiggart and her husband, Brad have donated a mature Japanese maple called "Shishigashira". This particular tree also came from Tom's collection and was potted and place where you see it in the first picture. The newly retired couple lived in the Eastmorland area for about 16 years and decided that they would sell their house and travel. Because the tree had a special meaning to them they did not want it to go with the house. They wanted this exceptional tree to be cherished as they had. The tree had been placed at the entrance of the home for viewing. It weighs about 750 pounds. This maple will stay in the pot and we will continue to prune it in a typical aesthetic style for such a maple. The pot has a rim that is cast to the inside of the diameter and it would have to be broken to remove the tree. Currently this beautiful specimen is positioned by the entry to the "Resource Center" where it will get a drip line in the next few days.



Cont. from page 1 – **Behind the Scenes:**

Armed with a degree in Art from the U of O, Mark has also become enthralled in the world of ceramics which can go hand in hand with bonsai and ikebana formulations. The base and the plant must complement each other.

So what does Mark do with this knowledge and natural talent that he possesses? At this time he is selling his products and supplies at the Vancouver Farmers Market on Saturdays and the Milwaukie Farmers Market on Sundays and various other markets.

When asked about his hobbies, Mark chuckled and said that it is very difficult to have an absorbing hobby when you are involved with bonsai to the level that he is. But he enjoys bees. He has a hive of honey bees and boasts that his neighbors have really nice plants in their yards although they may not realize why.

Mark's real passion is teaching art of bonsai and ikebana. He teaches seniors through the Portland Parks and Recreation programs. The next one will begin in October 2016; once a month for three months. There will also be a similar program about bonsai at the "Resource Center" in the next few weeks. Watch for the announcement on our web site - [greshamsistercity.org](http://greshamsistercity.org)

We all want to thank Mark for joining us at Tsuru Island and look forward to working with him in the future.





## Plant Search

Each month some plants in and around the garden will be showcased. The first 3 were featured in the July issue. Here are the highlighted items for this month. Clues will be provided in the description to be able to visit the website and identify the plant and then venture to the garden to find that particular plant. Any questions or comments please sent to [gresham.japanese.garden@gmail.com](mailto:gresham.japanese.garden@gmail.com)

#7 – This plant comes from a bulb that can be separated from the plant and replanted to another area including pots. Yoshiko Ture donated some from her personal garden. They will bloom in spring keeping its foliage until the winter when it will be cut back.

#8 – the original plant at this site was destroyed by the beaver. This beauty has brilliant red branches during the winter. The colder the weather, the redder it becomes. The location of this plant is intended to draw the eye to the east along with red berries and leaves of other plants as a distraction its real prize.

#9 - Originating in Japan and China this plant enjoys the shade and moisture and are a true perennial. Some varieties like sun and will do well but most prefer the light without the heat. This plant was purchased at a plant sale for the exact area it is placed. As it continues to get bigger the surrounding neighbors will be moved. Check to see if it has an odor.

## Gresham Rotary Club

The garden cannot be successful without the help of significant partners. We are fortunate to have a great partnership with the Gresham Rotary club. For the past several years the garden has received a donation from the club in the amount of \$1000. The donations have gone to the Kaz Kids program, supply items for maintenance, additional plants as the garden develops, and has supported the construction of the azumaya building.

The Rotary Club was introduced to Tsuru Garden through the efforts of Tad Tsuneyoshi and John Harold. Tad, John and other Rotary members have volunteered with the garden on many occasions from the beginning. They also coordinate presentations to the Rotary membership.

To acknowledge the partnership a brief ceremony was given and a presentation of a plaque which was placed at the Azumaya. Participating in the annual Rotary Club Steak Fry has been a pleasure. Tsuru Island garden will contribute to door prizes in the future.





## Change of plans

If you recall some of the pine trees in the garden were attacked by “pine beetles”. 4 pines were lost and removed. They were to be replaced by Incense Cedars. Loosing large trees as we did is a major game changer for the garden. Walking the path with the aged trees present gave a sense of longevity, and provided shade from branches and foliage effecting the temperature and micro-climate of the areas beneath. The Incense Cedar is a bit messy and can grow out of proportion. With more discussions, Incense Cedar was not a good fit.

A tree native to Japan, called *Cryptomeria japonica* "Yoshino" will be the star of this area. Only one tree will replace the previous 3. The new tree is about 6 feet tall, will grow about 12-15 inches per year and is manageable. The old stumps will not be removed. Re-arrangement of the existing plant materials may be necessary to balance the area. This tree will be trained to push upward and once the branching is at head height, it will be allowed to grown over the path way.

In place of the remaining 2 trees a Japanese umbrella- pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*) donated by Toni and Barry Busse, has been planted. The one other spot was filled with a larger Japanese lace leaf maple (*Acer palmatum, dissectum*), donated by Cardscapes Creative Landscapes.



Yoshiko & Ron Ture

## Plant Sale

*Saturday September 24<sup>th</sup> was a very busy day at the garden. Ron, Yoshiko and Tomiko did a wonderful job of putting the plant sale together. A total of \$900 was received plus folks came back after the sale to purchase more.*

*Donated foods from our Gresham business partners were provided for the volunteers. They are: Cheap Charlie, Chuy's, Jazzy Bagel, M&M, Nicholas, and Twisted Carrot. Please support them with your patronage.*

*Each plant sale is a learning experience that allows us to improve. This year some sample plants were placed at the garden so visitors would know about the sale and what would be available for purchase. Next year with scheduled dates we will advertise in the Downtown Business Association flyer and other publications in the area.*

*Many volunteer hours have been spent pruning and prepping the plants for this project, which includes repotting and watering. Thanks to Yoshiko for all of her hard work and direction to those that assist her.*



Tomiko, Tad, Mayor Bemis,  
Jim and Ron  
Dedication of Mountain Ash tree

