

Washington Park Arboretum

# BULLETIN



Published by the Arboretum Foundation

Summer 2020

SEATTLE JAPANESE GARDEN 60TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

The “Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin” is a benefit of Arboretum Foundation membership.

For information on membership or advertising opportunities, contact the Arboretum Foundation at 206-325-4510 or [info@arboretumfoundation.org](mailto:info@arboretumfoundation.org).

### Washington Park Arboretum

The Arboretum is a 230-acre dynamic garden of trees and shrubs, displaying internationally renowned collections of oaks, conifers, camellias, Japanese and other maples, hollies and a profusion of woody plants from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Aesthetic enjoyment gracefully co-exists with science in this spectacular urban green space on the shores of Lake Washington. Visitors come to learn, explore, relax or reflect in Seattle’s largest public garden.

The Washington Park Arboretum is managed cooperatively by the University of Washington Botanic Gardens and Seattle Parks and Recreation; the Arboretum Foundation is its major support organization.

### Arboretum Foundation

The Arboretum Foundation’s mission is to create and strengthen an engaged community of donors, volunteers and advocates who will promote, protect and enhance the Washington Park Arboretum for current and future generations.

2300 Arboretum Drive East, Seattle, WA 98112  
phone: 206-325-4510  
[info@arboretumfoundation.org](mailto:info@arboretumfoundation.org)  
[www.arboretumfoundation.org](http://www.arboretumfoundation.org)  
Office hours: 8:30 am–4:30 pm weekdays  
Gift shop hours: 10 am–4 pm daily,  
closed holidays

### OFFICERS OF THE ARBORETUM FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jason Morse, President	Jenny Wyatt, Vice President
Sherrey Luetjen, Vice President	Jeanne Peterson, Secretary
Skip Vonckx, Vice President	Missy Ward, Treasurer
Trina Wherry, Vice President	

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Diane Adachi	Larry Hubbell
Joan Affleck-Smith	Kat Korab
Steve Alley	Jeff Lehman
Shaun Corry	Noriko Palmer
Josh Dickson	Peter Rees
Chris Harry	Mike Riley
Carol Hoerster	Jan Kirkwood Waszak

### EX OFFICIO

Jane Stonecipher, Executive Director,  
Arboretum Foundation  
Fred Hoyt, Director,  
UW Botanic Gardens  
Jesús Aguirre, Superintendent,  
Seattle Parks and Recreation

### Graham Visitors Center

Please check [botanicgardens.uw.edu](http://botanicgardens.uw.edu) for current schedule during COVID-19 response.

Open 9 am–5 pm daily.

Open on these holidays: Presidents Day, Memorial Day,  
Fourth of July, Labor Day.

The Arboretum is accessible by Metro Transit buses #11,  
#43 and #48. For more information: [www.metro.kingcounty.gov](http://www.metro.kingcounty.gov)

### University of Washington Botanic Gardens

The University of Washington manages the Arboretum’s collections, horticultural programs, facilities and education programs through the University of Washington Botanic Gardens. It owns some of the land and buildings and all of the collections.

206-543-8800 voice / 206-616-2871 fax

Office hours: 9 am–5 pm weekdays  
[botanicgardens.uw.edu](http://botanicgardens.uw.edu)

Fred Hoyt, Director

### Seattle Parks and Recreation

The City of Seattle owns most of the Arboretum’s land and buildings. Seattle Parks and Recreation is responsible for park functions throughout the Arboretum. It also manages the 3.5-acre Seattle Japanese Garden within the Arboretum, in partnership with the Arboretum Foundation.

206-684-4556 voice / 206-684-4304 fax

### Washington Park Arboretum Bulletin

Niall Dunne, Editor

Mary Gogulski, Gogulski Design, Graphic Design

Cynthia E. Duryee, Copy Editor

Rebecca Alexander/Miller Library, Proofreading & Factchecking

### EDITORIAL BOARD

Janine Anderson, Garden Designer & Writer	Brian R. Thompson, Manager and Curator
Mary Gogulski, Graphic Designer	Elisabeth C. Miller Library, UW Botanic Gardens
Walt Bubelis, Professor Emeritus, Edmonds Community College	Phil Wood, Garden Designer & Writer
Cynthia E. Duryee, Writer/Editor	John Wott, Director Emeritus, Washington Park Arboretum
Daniel J. Hinkley, Author, Lecturer, Horticultural Consultant	
Christina Pfeiffer, Horticultural Consultant	
Richie Steffen, Executive Director, Elisabeth C. Miller Botanical Garden	

### CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Rebecca Alexander, Plant Answer Line Librarian  
Elisabeth C. Miller Library,  
UW Botanic Gardens

SUMMER 2020 VOLUME 82. ISSUE 2

© 2020 The Arboretum Foundation. ISSN 1046-8749.

# CONTENTS



- 2 Happy “Kanreki” to Our Garden  
— *Jane Stonecipher*
- 3 Designed in the Stroll-Garden Style  
— *Corinne Kennedy*
- 8 Excerpts: Newly Translated Articles by the Japanese Garden Creators — *Niall Dunne*
- 12 Honoring the Design Intent  
— *Pete Putnicki*
- 17 Bibliography: “Bulletin” Articles About the Japanese Garden — *Corinne Kennedy*
- 18 Art Exhibit: Seeing | Seeds | Stories  
— *Rebecca Alexander and Chie Iida*
- 20 HIDDEN TREASURE OF THE JAPANESE GARDEN: Bamboo-Leaf Oak — *Corinne Kennedy*
- 22 PLANT ANSWER LINE: Japanese Umbrella Pine and Wisteria — *Rebecca Alexander*
- 25 A Legacy of Peace Planted in Our Garden  
— *Jessa Gardner*
- 26 IN A GARDEN LIBRARY: Popular Books on Japanese Gardening and Plants  
— *Brian R. Thompson*



*This issue of the “Arboretum Bulletin” is dedicated to all the horticulturists and volunteers who have maintained the Seattle Japanese Garden over the decades.*

*—Carol Ottenberg*

**The Arboretum Foundation thanks Carol for helping underwrite the cost of producing this issue of the “Bulletin.”**

**COVER:** Great Blue Heron hunting in the pond of the Seattle Japanese Garden. (Photo by Aurora Santiago)

**ABOVE:** Family feeding the koi in the Japanese Garden pond. (Photo by Aurora Santiago)



## HAPPY “KANREKI” TO OUR GARDEN!

**T**his summer marks the 60th anniversary of the opening of the Seattle Japanese Garden. We are pleased to share this commemorative edition of the “Arboretum Bulletin” in honor of this special milestone. A favorite part of my role these last three years has been the stewardship of the Garden, and learning more about the people, plants, history and guiding philosophies that grace the pages of this issue and the lovely Garden we all enjoy today.

In Japan, one’s 60th birthday is a special occasion called “kanreki”—generally represented by the color red and signifying rebirth and reentry into childhood. This felt like the perfect theme for the anniversary season and the special programming planned. Of course, no one could

have predicted the COVID-19–related closure! I’m hopeful that by the time you read this, we will be closer to a limited reopening scenario.

Meanwhile, please enjoy the rich variety of features on the Garden’s website ([www.seattlejapanesegarden.org](http://www.seattlejapanesegarden.org)) and social media, including a series of history blogs, haiku-of-the-day, and Michelle Kumata’s “Northwest Nikkei” art installation.

One particularly meaningful part of the Kanreki season is the launch of a special partnership with Green Legacy Hiroshima (GLH), a non-profit organization (<http://glh.unitar.org/>) that propagates seeds from trees that survived the atomic bombing. (See “A Legacy of Peace Planted in Our Garden,” page 25.) The partnership furthers the long and meaningful relationship between Seattle and Japan, acknowledging the past while shaping a greener and more beautiful future. A ceremony to acknowledge the reception of the seeds will be held as soon as is reasonable.

Thank you for helping us celebrate the Kanreki season of the Seattle Japanese Garden. Kampai!

Jane Stonecipher  
Executive Director, Arboretum Foundation

Visitors on the zigzag bridge crossing the Japanese Garden pond. (Photo by David Hollenback)



## SEATTLE JAPANESE GARDEN

# Designed in the Stroll-Garden Style

BY CORINNE KENNEDY

**ABOVE:** The Japanese Garden, with a meandering path around its central pond. (Photo by Fr.Ted/Wikimedia Commons)

The Japanese Garden at Washington Park Arboretum was designed as a stroll garden, a style that dates from the early years of Japan’s Edo period (1603–1868). Large in scale and created for enjoyment, the stroll garden features a central pond surrounded by a meandering path and often incorporates a teahouse. The modern Japanese term for it is *kaiyūshiki teien*, translated as “excursion-style garden.”

Various garden styles preceded it. Large hill-and-pond gardens (*sansui*) were built by the Japanese aristocracy from the 8th to the 11th centuries. Viewed from pleasure boats and large buildings, these included large ponds and high hills, created to represent oceans and mountains.

The 13th century and the rise of Zen Buddhism saw the development of austere, relatively small hardscape gardens (*kare-sansui*) consisting of stones, raked gravel, and few or no plants. Sometimes called “Zen gardens,” these dry-landscape displays were designed for contemplation and meditation. Visitors viewed them from an adjoining veranda instead of experiencing them from within.



The stroll garden at Katsura Imperial Villa, Kyoto—an inspiration for our Japanese Garden.  
(Photo by John Chang/Wikimedia Commons)

## THE TEA GARDEN

In the Momoyama period (1573–1603), tea master Sen no Rikyu refined the tea ceremony into a ritual of harmony, respect, purity and tranquility known as *chado*, “the Way of Tea.” Matcha tea, a green powder whisked into hot water, had been brought from China to Japan in the late 12th century. Initially used in religious rituals, it later became associated with extravagant parties. By the late 16th century, however, the tea ceremony had been distilled into a ritual defined by the Zen aesthetic of *wabi-sabi*, which found beauty in quiet humility, rustic simplicity, imperfection and change—and even in the processes of aging and decay.

Simple in design and materials, the tea garden (*roji*)—and the teahouse itself—embody this aesthetic. The tea garden is an enclosed space with restrained plantings (primarily evergreens) and moss covering the ground. A stepping-stone path, representing a mountain trail, leads to the teahouse. Before the tea ceremony begins, the tea master sprinkles water over the garden—hence the word *roji*, which means “dewy path.”

Guests move through outer and inner gardens to the teahouse, leaving behind the everyday world to participate in the ceremony’s spiritual and ethical essence.

## THE STROLL GARDEN

Stroll gardens were built beginning in the early 1600s, during a period of peace and prosperity. Like tea gardens, they were designed to be experienced from within. Although travel during that time was greatly restricted, nobles and provincial lords (*daimyo*) owned large properties and were permitted to design their own gardens. Reflecting their owners’ interest in aesthetics rather than religion, these gardens were magnificent, more colorful than earlier styles, and created for enjoyment. They were designed to be experienced as journeys past scenes from nature, literature and art. Most contained or evolved from the much smaller tea garden—a core of simplicity within the garden’s splendor.

In the stroll garden, visitors walk slowly past a succession of views and landscape elements, including those characteristic of earlier



**TOP:** The more formal northern area of our garden, with pond and wisteria arbor. A fishing village with harbor lantern is on the right, and an *azumaya* shelter is in the distance. (Photo by Aurora Santiago)



**BOTTOM:** The teahouse and its inner garden, or *roji*. With the green simplicity of its moss and other plantings, the *roji* exemplifies Jūki Iida's naturalistic designs. (Photo by Aurora Santiago)

design concept—collaborated to develop detailed plans. Charged with developing an authentic Japanese garden outside of Japan, they described their design as having been influenced by several notable Japanese stroll gardens—including the earliest one extant, Katsura Imperial Villa (*Katsura Rikyu*).

Iida's contribution to the design was the naturalistic and informal southern section of the Garden, especially the wooded mountain area with its waterfall, cascade, and plantings of mixed deciduous and evergreen trees. The Garden's more formal northern area, including the fishing village and wisteria arbor, was likely designed by Inoshita.

The most powerful design device used in stroll gardens is arguably the garden path, which winds past various landscape elements and vistas. In the Seattle Japanese Garden, we journey through the varied landscapes of Japan—mountains, forests, waterfalls, rivers, islands and the sea. Our experience is shaped by the aesthetic principle of *mie gakure* (usually translated as “hide and reveal”), which ensures that we experience the garden sequentially rather than all at once. Along the way, we encounter the water, stones, plants, animals and structures common to many Japanese garden styles. The elements and viewpoints are concealed and then gradually revealed.

#### VARIED LANDSCAPES OF OUR GARDEN

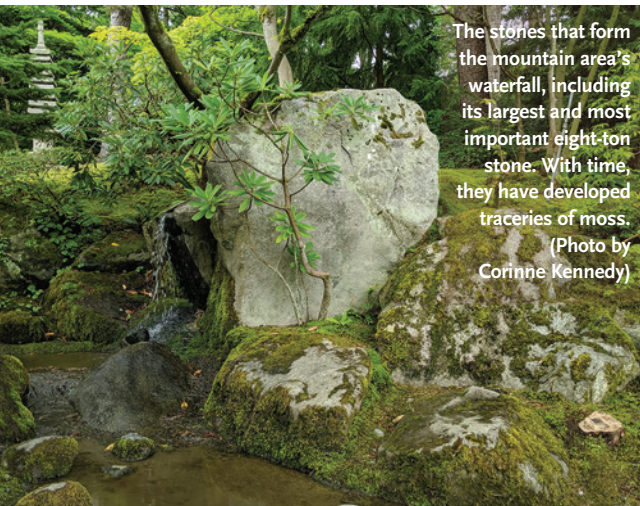
As we pass through the Garden's southern courtyard and entry gate, we enter an area of mixed

styles—ponds, streams, waterfalls, islands, lanterns, stepping-stones, bridges, teahouses and other structures. It has been described as “a sequential garden whose almost limitless succession of views was revealed through movement...like a great drama whose scenes unfolded only through time.”<sup>1</sup>

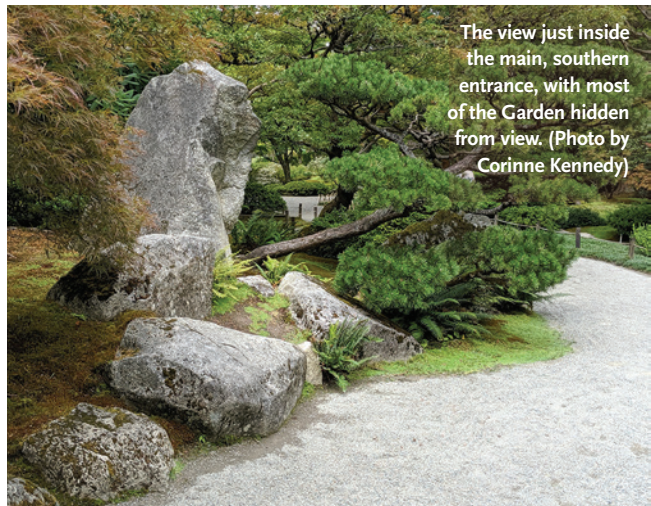
It has also been described as a kind of “mute music, with its own special rhythms and variations.”<sup>2</sup>

#### OUR SEATTLE JAPANESE GARDEN

Our garden's design was a gift from the Tokyo Metropolitan Green Spaces Division. Renowned landscape architect Jūki Iida was chosen to supervise its construction. In all, seven Japanese designers—including Iida and Kiyoshi Inoshita, who produced the original



The stones that form the mountain area's waterfall, including its largest and most important eight-ton stone. With time, they have developed tracteries of moss. (Photo by Corinne Kennedy)



The view just inside the main, southern entrance, with most of the Garden hidden from view. (Photo by Corinne Kennedy)

forest. Plants native to Japan—such as pines, maples, camellias, bamboo and moss—predominate, but Pacific Northwest native plants are included as well. East of the path is a dry streambed flowing through open woodlands. Where the way forks, we take the eastern path (moving counterclockwise through the Garden) and pass by three tall ginkgo trees. Then, the vista opens to our first expansive view of the Garden and its central pond.

Ahead is the Garden's original (eastern) entry gate, the central island with its two bridges bisecting the pond, and a moon-viewing platform on the other side. Also revealed is the northern end of the garden, with its port village. On our way there, we pass by the wisteria arbor, where water from the pond flows out of the Garden. The cut-stone dock and paths reveal the formal and human element that characterizes this harbor area.

A seven-foot stone wall behind the village hints of mountain foothills. Above it, a long row of sculpted azalea—a wave of bright-pink flowers in spring—symbolizes ocean waves or mountain ranges. Benches with expansive garden views are backed by a pine-covered slope.

Leaving behind the port village and the garden's northern end, we pass a densely forested area of broadleaf evergreens before arriving at the *azumaya*, an open-sided wooden shelter for rest and reflection. Situated at the top of a rise, it provides a beautiful view of the Garden and

its orchard of flowering cherry, crabapple and plum. Pausing here, we appreciate the borrowed scenery (*shakkei*) of the larger Arboretum beyond.

At the pond's southwestern edge is the *roji*, a tranquil refuge defined by its many shades of green. A mixed hedge of boxwood, cedar, pieris and evergreen huckleberry surrounds it, pruned in an open style suggestive of the *mie gakure* aesthetic. Participants in the tea ceremony gather in a small waiting station (*machiai*) in the outer garden, before being led to the teahouse—a rustic villa known as “Arbor of the Murmuring Pines” (*Shoseian*). Nearby is the mountain—our Garden's final and most naturalistic section, and the area most reminiscent of the landscapes of Japan.

Except for its flat, highly populated coastal areas, Japan's landscape is dominated by rocky, forested mountains and swift streams cascading down from waterfalls. Our own mountain—densely planted with maples and other trees, both deciduous and evergreen—contains a monumental waterfall, its primary stone an eight-ton boulder. Higher up is an eleven-story stone pagoda, symbolizing a mountain monastery. Here, the elements of water, plants and large, moss-covered stones come together to form one of the Garden's most powerful features.

From the mountain area, we pass downhill to end our journey in the open woodlands of its beginning, where most of the Garden is again hidden from view. Here, and throughout the



Garden, the “hide and reveal” technique helps us to see what is immediately before us, inviting us to experience the space slowly and mindfully. My hope is that each visitor’s journey evolves into a personal dialogue with our unfolding, ever-changing Garden.

---

**CORINNE KENNEDY** is a retired garden designer, Seattle Japanese Garden guide, Elisabeth C. Miller Library volunteer, and member of the “Bulletin” Editorial Board. She’s also a frequent contributor to the Japanese Garden’s blog.

## REFERENCES

“A Guide to the Gardens of Kyoto,” by Marc Treib and Ron Herman. 1980. Kodansha USA

“The Gardens of Japan,” by Teiji Itoh. 1984. Kodansha USA



## The Power of Stone

A moss-covered stone lantern, overlooking the pond.  
(Photo by David Rosen/Slick Pix Photography)

Stone is essential to Japanese gardens—arguably more important than any other garden element. Shinto, Japan’s indigenous religion, saw gods (*kami*) in all of nature, residing in stones as well as plants and animals.

Similarly, visitors to the Seattle Japanese Garden experience the structure, power and energy that stone brings to the landscape. Used both symbolically, and for practical purposes, stones represent mountains, waterfalls, streams, islands and other elements of nature. Important garden ornaments, such as lanterns and an eleven-story tower, are made of stone.

Stones are also essential to the Garden’s construction, maintenance and renovation. Used to create paths and stairs, they also hold back the soil behind the fishing village, and at the edges of the pond. Varying in size, shape, color, texture and use, stones are nonetheless a unifying aesthetic element.

The photo above shows a moss-covered lantern overlooking the pond. Together with the stone it rests upon, it unites water, plant and stone. Yet even this small detail, like the Garden’s monumental waterfall, embodies the beauty and power we experience as we journey through the Garden. ∞



Nobumasa Kitamura  
北村信正



Kiyoshi Inoshita  
井下清  
Blue Ribbon Award Recipient  
Japan 1937



Jūki Iida  
飯田十基

Josef Scaylea, photographer  
“3 Acres of Oriental Beauty,”  
*The Seattle Times*, May 29, 1960

## BUILDING THE GARDEN Excerpts from a New Collection of Articles by the Creators of the Japanese Garden

BY NIALL DUNNE

This year, as part of the 60th anniversary celebration of the Seattle Japanese Garden, a group of Garden volunteers is putting the finishing touches on a collection of articles about the creation of the Garden by two of its designers, Kiyoshi Inoshita and Jūki Iida, garden engineer Nobumasa Kitamura—Iida’s assistant during the construction phase—and others. Most of the articles are from Japanese publications and have been translated into English for the first time for this collection, which also includes archival correspondence, biographical notes, and the original plant list.

Entitled “Japanese Writers on the Japanese Garden in Washington Park Arboretum, Seattle,

1959–2009,” the collection was curated by two long-time Unit 86 Garden guides, Shizue Prochaska and Julie Coryell, both of whom also did most of the translation work. Shoko Majima, a friend of Shizue who works in the Tokyo library system, tracked down and sent her copies of most of the featured articles.

The impetus for the collection came a decade ago, when Shizue and Julie helped create video presentations for the Japanese Garden’s 50th anniversary. “We discussed the need for an archive group,” says Shizue, “that would study the history of the Garden for the sake of future generations. A key step to knowing the past was to translate all the records written by the

Japanese builders of the Garden.” As Shizue and Julie say in their introduction, the article collection enriches our understanding of the builders’ vision, talent and care in the Garden’s creation and continuation.

Asked what they learned from their work on the project, Julie says “Our translations reveal the courage and stature of the people engaged in the gift of the Garden—from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Metropolitan Tokyo Green Spaces Division. They drew from the best historic garden designs in Kyoto and Tokyo, and embraced the adventure of making a beautiful, spirit-infused garden in a different country.” Says Shizue, “I also learned the particulars of Japanese garden building. Nothing is left to chance. Rocks, trees, shrubs, ground covers... they are all carefully selected.”

Julie and Shizue hope to publish the collection soon in print and/or digital form. Keep an eye out for updates on the Seattle Japanese Garden blog.

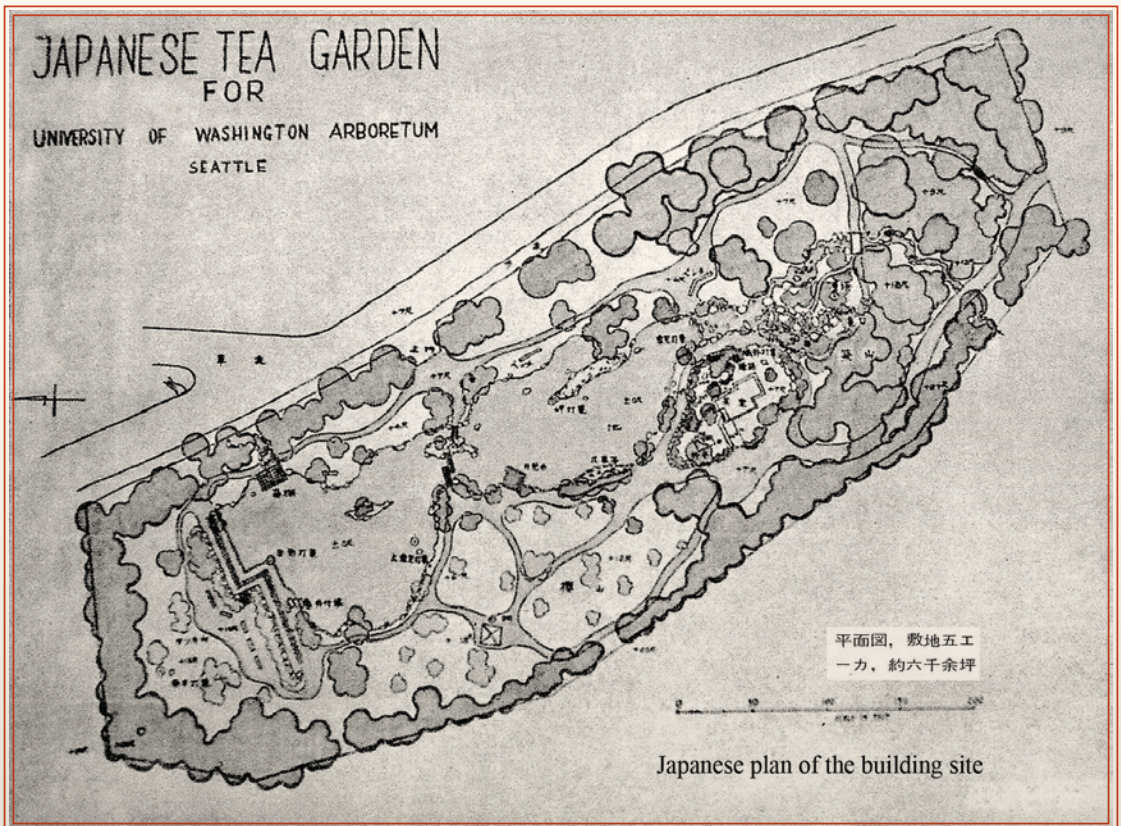
Following are excerpts from three of the articles, one each from Inoshita, Iida and Kitamura.

.....

**Outline of Scenic Beauty**

The south end of the garden site is connected to the hill, so make this area like a mountainous region where conifers grow thick as in the deep forest. From within the forest, an existing stream and prospective short stream flow out. Where the two streams meet, the tea house stands. Make this scenic spot a place of *yusui kanga*, tranquil beauty.

Near the tea house, the forest becomes a plateau. The stream flows over the bank, coursing into the *mizu’umi*, lake. Here and there the lake edge is vertical, and changes to a cape, cobble beach or sandy beach. The north shore features implied houses. [To the west] behind a *tsukimidai*, moon viewing platform, a cultivated area becomes an orchard with plum and cherry



Site plan included in Jūki Iida’s 1974 article in the publication “Niwa.”

trees, and the like. To the north side of the lake, rocks emerge and become islands. Using the central big island, build a bridge to connect the opposite shores.

From the opposite shore, the lake turns into a plain or flat land. The lake shore is low, with a sandy beach and inlet where reeds and Japanese bush clovers grow. The north end of the lake faces an implied village with harbor (and the future clubhouse site). Opposite the harbor is a wisteria arbor for the villagers' recreation. The lower stream of the lake on the east shore passes a rocky area, where it becomes a small river and flows into the ocean (outside the garden.)

As described, water flows out of the mountain and creates the lake. Make the water scene the center of the garden and build a path around it. While strolling the path, different sceneries can be enjoyed along the way.

—From “An explanation of the design of the Japanese Garden in the University of Washington Arboretum,” by Kiyoshi Inoshita

Pamphlet in Collected Papers (1959)

Shizue Prochaska and Julie E. Coryell, translators

.....

### **Teiseki to Jyumoku, Stones and Plants**

...William [Yorozu] took me around hunting for rocks but we could not find what I was looking for. On the evening of the third day as we were returning home along the Snoqualmie River, I heard the sound of dynamite. I asked, “What’s



that?” Told they were making gravel, I climbed a mountain to see. It was a wonderful granite mountain. The granite resembled the [prized] patterned rocks of Kami Ōshima, on Mount Tsukuba and looked well suited for a large garden. Located about 50 miles from Seattle, named Bandera and privately owned, the mountain had never been quarried for garden rocks. So, it was simple to purchase 800 tons.

The next item of business was trees and shrubs for the garden. I had expected some difficulties but after we surveyed local nurseries we found there were plenty of evergreen conifers and deciduous trees such as maples. But the specific Japanese varieties of broadleaf evergreens such as *mochi no ki*, holly, *Ilex integra*; *shii*, tanbark

**TOP:** Jūki Iida surveying the construction site. (Photo: Don Sherwood Parks History Collection, Seattle Municipal Archives)

**BOTTOM:** Heavy machinery was used to expedite construction. (Photo: Arboretum Foundation)

oak, *Pasania* or *Lithocarpus edulis*; and *mokkoku*, *Ternstroemia gymnanthera* were scarce and where I did find them they were not thriving. Assuming there was a lack of soil compatibility, I decided not to use them. As the rhododendron is the Washington State flower, and there are many varieties, I thought that they were very useful as long as I avoided gaudy ones.

The nurseries stocked only small plants under seven inches, which made planting them harmoniously with the large-scale rocks difficult. Most of the trees were upright, requiring deep consideration in how to plant them appropriately. There were abundant choices for ground covers.

### ... *Shoku Sai*, Planting

As I mentioned before, all the plants were the size of starts and difficult to harmonize with the rocks. Sometimes we deliberately slanted the young straight trees. We pruned most of the lower branches of some trees located in the path of view lines. Of course, I had to admit that our work looked pretty strange, however, it was done with the future in mind.

Fortunately, we obtained spruce and yew trees seven-to-eight-foot high so we could plant them from the base of the waterfall up the hill around the *jūsansō-tō* thirteen-story pagoda.... We planted the shorter four-to-five-foot tall, red, black, shore, and white pines around the shoreline and on the middle island. I reminded people they would reach the desired height and shape in about ten years.

—From “*About the Japanese Garden at the University of Washington*,” by Jūki Iida

“Niwa”, No 13, February 1974, pp. 19–24.

Shizue Prochaska and Julie E. Coryell, translators

.....

### **Seko, The Construction (People and Machines)**

... Skilled drivers of tractor or bulldozer were

readily available. Although Mr. Iida’s charismatic personality and his flexible management skills obviously contributed to the rapid completion of this construction project, the efficiency of the machines was a major factor as well. Of course, the work done tended to be rough without remedy. We used on our site trucks, tractors, dump trucks, bulldozers, cranes, tampers, etc. Among these, trucks, dump trucks and bulldozers were useful as we all know. We used handheld tampers for packing small stones and sand into the backside of stonewalls and for pounding cement.

I was curious how they would handle a huge garden rock. For the largest, the *kagami ishi* (mirror rock) [with a smooth, reflecting surface] for the waterfall, weighing about seven-tons, they rented a huge 35-ton crane with a 60-foot reach and with no trouble installed the rock. It was indeed possible to place stones up the hillside, even from a considerable distance. The rental of this machine cost \$200 a day including two operators. This might sound expensive, but the work was done quickly, so it was economical after all. Working together skillfully, the two operators responded well to our detailed requests. Since the crane lifted rocks with chains wrapped directly around them, the moss could drop off and the surface scratched. One needs to be very careful when wrapping rocks with chains.

—From “*The Japanese Garden in Seattle*,” by Nobumasa Kitamura

“Toshi Koen”, No. 26, November 1960, pp. 6–16.

Translated by Keiko Minami Page (2009); edited by Prochaska and Coryell

---

NIALL DUNNE is the editor of the “Arboretum Bulletin” and the communications manager for the Arboretum Foundation.



# Honoring the Design Intent

Constant Change, Adaptive Maintenance, and the Development of the Plant Collection at the Japanese Garden

BY PETE PUTNICKI

Since its opening 60 years ago, the Seattle Japanese Garden has been a place of connection for many Seattle residents and visitors—a place to connect to community, nature, and the unique, intentional narrative experience that the Garden offers.

A crucial aspect of this Garden is maintenance: painstaking maintenance of both the physical elements (trees, shrubs, rocks and water) and, perhaps more significantly, the original intention of the designers. Both types of maintenance—physical and conceptual—must be responsive and adaptive to the dynamic forces of nature so that, as the Garden ages and



LEFT: Dating to 1939, the South Stone Bridge was incorporated into the Garden as if it were a natural feature of the land. (Photo by Aurora Santiago)

RIGHT: Volunteers carefully removing spent flowers from the azaleas. (Photo by Chie Iida)



develops, it grows closer to, rather than farther from, its original intention. Only through expressing this intention in place can the Garden achieve real authenticity.

### ORIGINAL ADAPTATIONS

The original design plans and the early, published descriptions by Jūki Iida provided a solid framework upon which to build our Garden. The distinct regions within the Garden,

the representations of natural imagery (such as forest, sea and mountains), and the celebration of natural beauty that inspired the Garden's creation are still fundamental principles for maintenance and enhancement today.

Adaptation was built into the Garden from day one: The actual, “on-the-ground” construction was adapted to the physical environment from the original concept drawings and plans. From the shape of the pond to the arrangement and layout of the plantings, decisions were made to take advantage of the reality of the Garden space.

In the initial planting, species and specimens were selected based on how available material could be used to communicate the design intention. Asian conifers (such as Japanese red pine, *Pinus densiflora*, and Japanese cedar, *Cryptomeria japonica*) and maples formed the core of the original collection. However, so too did rhododendrons, which are not typically seen in Japanese gardens but were added by Iida due to their prominence in the Pacific Northwest. Likewise, Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) and other native plants, including salal (*Gaultheria shallon*) and huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum* and *V. parvifolium*), were used both as analogues for Japanese plants and to tie the Garden to its location.

A keen observer of nature, Jūki Iida let the natural beauty of the Pacific Northwest contribute to his vision of the Garden. The site chosen for the Garden was part of the existing Arboretum, and Iida incorporated some existing plant material, further attaching the Garden to its environs.

### EARLY DEVELOPMENT AND REALIGNMENT

In the early years, small plants grew larger, moss and other ground covers filled in the bare soil, and the Garden began to integrate with the Arboretum growing around it. During this time, the collection was also expanded, and more plants were added or

Masa Mizuno (consultant) and Pete Putnicki (senior gardener) finger pruning a pine tree by the pond. (Photo by Aurora Santiago)



removed in response to the growth of the Garden, the interest of visitors, and the shifting missions of the curators. Elements of a botanical collection were incorporated into the framework of the Japanese Garden. As time passed, the form of the Garden began to reflect these changes, and the scale, size and shape of the plant material began to reflect a more Northwest woodland aesthetic.

In 1973, Iida returned to visit and helped establish a program of maintenance to bring the existing Garden closer in alignment with the original design concept. A number of large trees, ground covers and other plants were removed; a significant and painstaking pruning program was instituted; and the emphasis was shifted towards refinement of the Garden.

With the vital help of gardeners and consultants such as Dick Yamasaki, Mark Akai and others, an ongoing lineage of maintenance and enhancement was initiated. Gradually, the Garden began to reflect something more than a flat implementation of the design—it began to develop its own identity and became a true and honest fusion of ideals, images and cultures.

## ENHANCEMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

The Seattle Japanese Garden is a garden in the present tense: a place that's living, vital and dynamic.

For example, in the late 1990s, under the guidance of Masa Mizuno (current garden consultant), another significant shift in the plant collection began to take place. Birch, oak, ash, and other large deciduous trees were removed. Individual specimens were slated for removal because their negative impacts outweighed their positive attributes. Trees that were unsuitable for pruning and grooming—and trees that were oversized for the scale of the Garden—were removed.

Trees removed were often “pioneer” species (ones that tend to grow quickly in disturbed or cleared areas)—in other words, trees typical of a “young” forest. For a Garden approaching maturity, these elements were no longer appropriate, in spite of any individual merits. Over the last few years of the twentieth century, a holistic view of the Garden was incorporated into management practice. In essence, each element





Asian maples such as the full moon maple (*Acer japonicum*) form one of the Garden's core collections. (Photo by Chie Iida)



Pines and other trees are expertly thinned and shaped each year to perfect the vision of the Garden. (Photo by Michael Lee)

needed to fit into and contribute to the overall quality of the Garden.

After the initial round of refinements, the focus shifted to the conifer canopy. Trees that were crowding the composition—or were out of scale or disconnecting the Garden from the borrowed scenery of its surroundings—were assessed for removal. An oversized cryptomeria in the Tea Garden and Alaska cedars (*Cupressus nootkatensis*) by the East Gate are examples of the removals from this era.

At the same time, pruning to emphasize the structures of smaller trees was stepped up, helping to create a feeling of depth not dependent on volume. The thoughtful restoration of negative space helped to make the Garden feel larger, rather than sparser. (Note: The removal of large trees from such a carefully curated space presents a series of technical challenges for our crews and contractors. A great deal of thought, planning, and highly skilled execution goes into all of our decisions around the large tree collection here.)

Ground covers were also changed, moss was encouraged, and the negative space between the ground plane and the tree branches added to the feelings of depth.

As the first decade of the 2000s came to end, the addition of the gatehouse, Tateuchi Community Room, and new entrance plantings added to the growing narrative of the Garden. Hakone grass (*Hakonechloa*) and mondo grass

(*Ophiopogon planiscapus*, as well as *O. japonicum* 'Nana'), added texture outside the gate and tied the landscape to the architecture.

### NEW AND FUTURE PLANTINGS

Nowadays, we select plants for their holistic contribution to the Garden. Recent additions include upright varieties of maples (such as *Acer palmatum* 'Aconitifolium'), which connect the upper and lower stories and soften the dark, dense appearance of the conifer canopy. They also include osmanthus, such as *Osmanthus fragrans*, to supplement azaleas as low, textural evergreen foundational plantings or replace azaleas growing unhappily in wet, heavy soils.

Conditions in the garden are not static. The removal of some large trees has changed patterns of light and rainfall, as well as the absorption and translocation of groundwater. On a larger scale, weather patterns are changing in ways that are difficult to predict: Groundwater and air quality are affected as our environment becomes more urbanized, and as more and more pests and diseases are being introduced.

Adaptation is a key factor in the selection of new plants. Some species are showing increased susceptibility to pests and diseases (for example, shore pine and flowering cherries), while other species are not thriving in current conditions. As we look for replacements—or for enhancement planting material—we are seeking species for the future.

A recent example is the replacement of two Japanese maples on the east shoreline. For years, these trees have been suffering in the dense, waterlogged soil along the shore. When seeking to address this issue, rather than try to change the Garden for the plants, we changed the plants for the Garden. In their place, we planted weeping varieties of katsura (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum* ‘Morioka’), which is adapted to wet conditions and hopefully will thrive in this area. Moreover, the original plans included a half dozen weeping willows (*Salix babylonica*)—pioneer trees that have almost all been removed. We hope the katsura, though a new addition and adaptation to the collection, will honor this intention.

As we get a better handle on how site conditions are changing with time, we also look forward to the increasing availability of plant material

that may be better suited both to the physical environment and the aesthetics of our Garden. For example, warmer, drier conditions have made varieties of evergreen oak more popular in the Pacific Northwest. Various evergreen oak species, including *Quercus glauca* and *Q. phillyreoides*, are “workhorse” shrubs and small trees in gardens all over Japan and would be a wonderful addition to our Garden.

Gardens are never “done.” They are living, active spaces, and their growth and change is part of why they mean so much to us. At the Seattle Japanese Garden, we creatively manage and adapt to that change in order to preserve the original vision of the designers. Here, one can experience a treasure unique to certain gardens: the timelessness of unceasing change. 🌿

---

PETE PUTNICKI is the head gardener at the Seattle Japanese Garden.

---



## Help Preserve the Vision of the Garden

Photo: Aurora Santiago

Join our Camellia Circle and embrace the idea of constant renewal within the Seattle Japanese Garden. Our donors are committed to maintaining the beautiful design we were gifted and stewarding it into the future with thought and care.

For more information, contact Lee Benner, Development Director, at [lbenner@arboretumfoundation.org](mailto:lbenner@arboretumfoundation.org) or 206-325-4510.



**CAMELLIA CIRCLE**  
SEATTLE JAPANESE GARDEN

WHERE IN THE “BULLETIN”?

# A Select Bibliography of Articles on the Japanese Garden

BY CORINNE KENNEDY

Photo by Jeffrey Miller.

For the 60th anniversary of the Seattle Japanese Garden, I compiled a comprehensive list of articles published in the “Arboretum Bulletin” on this 3.5-acre horticultural jewel. I found more than 60 articles, either specifically about the Garden or linked to it in some way. The list has already proved very useful for various 60th anniversary projects, such as a new booklet that Unit 86 is creating about the development of the Garden’s plant collection.

Thanks to the Biodiversity Heritage Library, all of these articles are available for free online at [www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/139633#/summary](http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/bibliography/139633#/summary). Below is a list of just 20 of the articles, demonstrating the diversity of topics covered. The full list is available to peruse at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library, or email the library for a copy at [hortlib@uw.edu](mailto:hortlib@uw.edu).

- “Our New Japanese Garden,” by Brian O. Mulligan. Summer 1960 (V23, #2, pp. 74–75).
- “Our Japanese Garden,” by Jūki Iida & Associates. Winter 1960 (V23, #4, pp. 135–137).
- “Lanterns in the Garden,” by Doris Butler. Summer 1971 (V34, #2, pp. 13–17).
- “Jūki Iida [an obituary],” by Kenneth Sorrells. Winter 1977 (V40, #4, p. 13).
- “The Tea House in the Japanese Garden,” by Kenneth Sorrells. Spring 1980 (V43, #1, pp. 7–9).
- “Seattle’s Japanese Garden, 25 Years Old,” by Ruth Vorobik. Fall 1985 (V48, #3, pp. 16–20).
- “Wildlife in the Seattle Japanese Garden,” by Timothy W. Grendon. Summer 1989 (V52, #2, pp. 14–15).
- “Some Favorite Trees in the Japanese Garden,” by Arthur Lee Jacobson. Summer 1990 (V53, #2, pp. 8–9).
- “Taking Photos in the Japanese Garden,” by Joy Spurr. Summer 1990 (V53, #2, pp. 12–13).
- “The New, Old Pine in the Japanese Garden,” by Jim Thomas. Spring 1994 (V57, #1, pp. 2–3).
- “Tour of the Japanese Garden,” by Leroy Collins. Spring/Summer 1995 (V58, #1&2, pp. 43–46).
- “The Japanese Design Connection: Northwest Natives in the Japanese Garden,” by Arthur R. Kruckeberg. Winter 1998 (V60, #1, pp. 14–18).
- “How Visitors View the Japanese Garden,” by Carolann Freid. Winter 2000 (V61, #4, pp. 13–15).
- “Restoring Still Waters: 40 Years of Damage Now Ended for Japanese Garden Pond,” by Elizabeth Moses and Jan Pirzio-Biroli. Spring 2002 (V64, #1, pp. 12–15).
- “Around the Garden in One Thousand and One Questions: A Designer’s Introduction to Seattle’s Japanese Garden,” by Iain Robertson. Spring 2006 (V68, #1, pp. 16–23).
- “First Impressions Are Important: The New Japanese Garden Gatehouse,” by Iain Robertson. Winter 2008 (V69, #4, pp. 3–7).
- “New Plantings at the Japanese Garden,” by Jan K. Whitner. Spring 2009 (V71, #1, pp. 27–29).
- “An Appreciation of the Japanese Garden,” by Barbara Engram. Summer 2009 (V71, #2, pp. 20–25).
- “Continuity & Change: The Seattle Japanese Garden Comes Home,” by Paige Miller. Spring 2016 (V78, #1, pp. 21–23).
- “Tamamono Shrubs: Creating a Serene Foreground in the Japanese Garden,” by Corinne Kennedy. Winter 2019 (V80, #4, pp. 16–18).

# SEEING. SEEDS. STORIES.

## A Seattle Japanese Garden 60th Anniversary Exhibit

BY REBECCA ALEXANDER  
AND CHIE IIDA



"Moon Viewing," by Michelle Kumata.

The Seattle Japanese Garden opened to the public in June of 1960. Today, the Garden is one of the most highly regarded Japanese-style gardens in North America and is visited by over 125,000 visitors from around the world annually.

In a rapidly growing city, the Garden has become a place where one can take a moment to appreciate nature, reconnect with loved ones, heal, dream and celebrate ordinary elements in life. Every day hundreds of people walk the Garden paths, each on their own unique journey.

This August, the Seattle Japanese Garden and the Elisabeth C. Miller Library will co-host "Seeing | Seeds | Stories," an exhibit marking the 60th anniversary of the Garden. It will feature five local artists portraying the Garden with their

stories. They will each create their own narrative of the space, expressing through their individual mediums the unseen moments that make a visit to the Garden special. The exhibit will also feature a collection of photographs and other historical materials from the Garden's archive.

### About the participants

*Kathleen Ashby Atkins* makes photographs of many subjects, especially wildlife, botanical life and architecture. "When I take photographs in a garden, I absorb the aesthetic of artists who work directly with plants, soil, rocks, water, and weather and who bring with them in their endeavors other human crafts. When I'm in a garden, I'm not the first or only artist in a landscape: I walk on a path wrestled out of flux by a gardener."

*Kathy Hattori* is a textile artist and founder of Botanical Colors ([botanicalcolors.com](http://botanicalcolors.com)), a natural-dye company that provides materials and training to artisans who want to work with sustainable methods. “Natural colors are a beautiful antidote to the specter of climate change. Each piece I make questions issues of air, water and soil use: How does this textile affect these fundamental requirements for life?”

*Michelle Kumata* is a graphic artist who works in a variety of media ([michellekumata.com](http://michellekumata.com)). For this exhibit she has created paintings that focus on stories of Nikkei—people of Japanese descent living outside of Japan. Specifically, her work will celebrate the Seattle Japanese Garden and our local Nikkei community of 1960.

*Elijah Pasco* is an urban sketcher ([elijahnpasco.com](http://elijahnpasco.com)) whose illustrations are featured in his regular column, “The Campus Sketcher,” in the University of Washington’s student newspaper, “The Daily.”

*Markel Uriu* is an interdisciplinary artist ([markeluriu.com](http://markeluriu.com)). Her work explores impermanence, maintenance and the unseen. Drawing from her Japanese and Irish-American heritage, she is particularly interested in liminal (transitional) spaces and explores these concepts through research, ephemeral botanical narratives, installations, and two-dimensional work.

## SCHEDULE AND BACK-UP PLANS

As of publication, the exhibit is scheduled to take place on-site in both locations:

### SEATTLE JAPANESE GARDEN

August 6 to 28, 2020, during regular open hours

**Opening reception:** Thursday, August 6, 5–7 p.m.

**Artists:** Kathleen Ashby Atkins, Elijah Pasco, Markel Uriu

### ELISABETH C. MILLER LIBRARY

August 4 to 28, 2020, during regular library hours

**Opening reception:** Friday, August 7, 5–7 p.m.

**Artists:** Kathy Hattori, Michelle Kumata

**Also featuring:** Seattle Japanese Garden Historical Archive

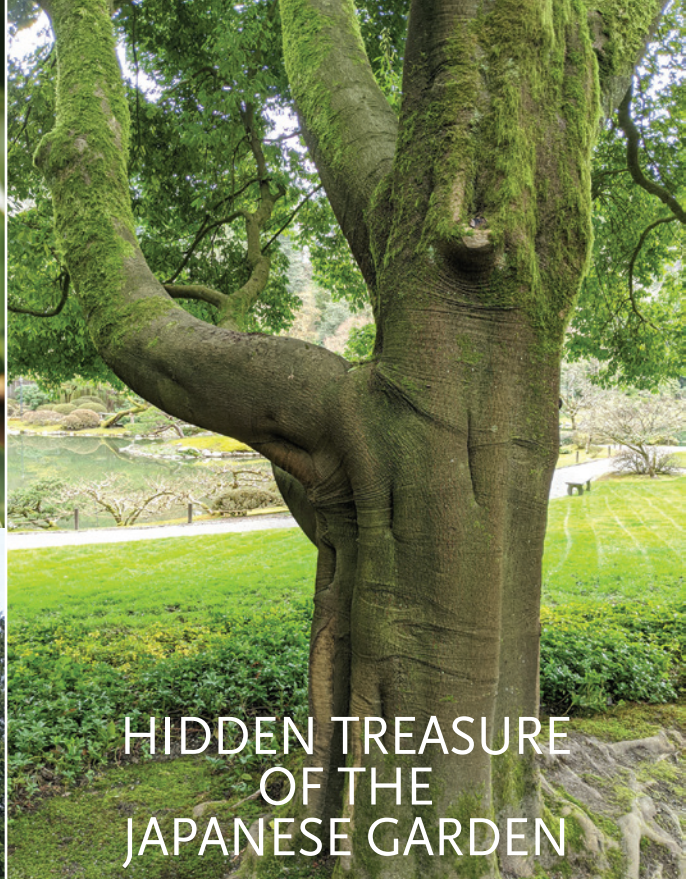
Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, there is a chance that the physical, on-site event could be postponed until a later date. If it is, there will likely be a digital exhibit with highlights of the artists’ work. Keep an eye on the Miller Library ([millerlibrary.org](http://millerlibrary.org)) and Japanese Garden ([seattlejapanesegarden.org](http://seattlejapanesegarden.org)) websites for updates. ∞

---

**REBECCA ALEXANDER** is the manager of Reference and Technical Services at the Miller Library. Chie Iida is the events coordinator at the Seattle Japanese Garden.



“Bamboo Fence Tie” by Kathleen Ashby Atkins.



## HIDDEN TREASURE OF THE JAPANESE GARDEN



Acorn photo  
courtesy of Harum  
Koh/Wikimedia  
Commons;  
tree photos by  
Corinne Kennedy.

### *Quercus myrsinifolia* **Bamboo-Leaf Oak**

BY CORINNE KENNEDY

**B**amboo-leaf oak (*Quercus myrsinifolia*) is one of my favorite trees in the Seattle Japanese Garden. A uniquely beautiful broadleaf evergreen that adapts well to our region, it deserves to be more widely planted in gardens here. I love its elegant, glossy-green foliage, and its smooth, broad, horizontally ribbed trunk, which looks just like the leg of an elephant. It is clearly an oak species, but the slender evergreen leaves clustered at the branch tips give it a hint of bamboo.

Two specimens—planted here in the late 1960s and early 1970s and now over 40 feet tall—stand next to each other in the Garden’s densely planted and very shady northwest corner. Although they’re near the path, they can easily be missed by visitors failing to look upwards.

*Quercus myrsinifolia* is native to mixed evergreen forests of central and southern Japan. It is also found in Korea, southern China, Laos and other parts of East Asia. Unlike the evergreen oaks of the Mediterranean and the western U.S., it grows in areas of high summer rainfall.

Additional common names include Japanese live oak and Chinese evergreen oak. In Japan, it is known as *shira kashi*, which translates as “white oak”—a reference to the color of the wood. The species name, *myrsinifolia*, alludes to the genus *Myrsine*, which includes glossy-leaved evergreen trees and shrubs, some with foliage similarly clustered at the branch tips.

In Japan, bamboo-leaf oaks are planted at temples and shrines, also as shade trees in parks and as tall hedges. Its size is often artfully

controlled by the annual removal of leaves and branches throughout the tree, a type of pruning known as *chirashi*. The tree's dense, hard wood was historically used to make hand tools and *bokken*, wooden training swords used in martial arts. Even today, drumsticks made of bamboo-leaf oak are readily available.

In the wild, *Quercus myrsinifolia* can reach 60 feet tall or more; in cultivation, the tree is smaller, usually reaching between 30 and 50 feet. Narrow when young, the tree gradually develops a compact-rounded crown. Its glossy, leathery leaves are lance-shaped, about 2½ to 4 inches long, and finely toothed on their upper halves. Drooping—and held alternately on the stem—the leaves emerge a deep crimson color rather late in spring and then mature to medium green with paler green undersides. Other features include olive-brown young shoots, smooth silvery-gray bark, and that broad, horizontally ribbed, elephantine trunk I mentioned.

Bamboo-leaf oak blooms in May, with two kinds of flowers: upright, somewhat inconspicuous female flowers that appear in the upper part of the tree, and male flowers that grow lower down and resemble golden catkins. The female flowers develop into egg-shaped acorns, one half-inch to one inch long, held in groups of two to four. Each acorn's cap features three to six concentric rings.

*Quercus myrsinifolia* has no serious pests or diseases, adapts to varied soil and light conditions (full sun to partial shade), and—once established—is remarkably tolerant of heat and drought. It's also one of the most cold-tolerant of the Asian evergreen oaks, hardy to at least USDA Zone 7 (minimum temperature 0 degrees Fahrenheit). Surprisingly, its drought-tolerance is greatest when summer temperatures are high—not what you'd expect of a tree adapted to high summer rainfall. In areas with less reliable summer heat, the tree performs best in full sun, and with good drainage and regular irrigation.

The first planting of *Quercus myrsinifolia* at the Seattle Japanese Garden occurred in 1960,

the Garden's inaugural year. A gift from Carl S. English, Jr., the plant sadly failed to establish. Fortunately, the next two attempts were successful: an 18-inch plant, received in 1960 from the U.C. Davis Arboretum and planted out in 1967; and a six-inch seedling, received in 1963 from Donald Stryker, of Langlois, Oregon, planted in about 1971. Currently, the Garden's two trees constitute half of the Washington Park Arboretum's collection of *Quercus myrsinifolia*. (Other local specimens can be found at the Ballard Locks and in Redmond's Marymoor Park.)

In the Summer 1990 issue of the "Arboretum Bulletin," which honored the Seattle Japanese Garden's 30th anniversary, Arthur Lee Jacobson wrote that our two trees were "superbly healthy and handsome year round." Thirty years later, they are still thriving.

Though *Quercus myrsinifolia* is rare in the United States, its adaptability and cold hardiness are becoming more well known, and some specialty nurseries have begun to offer it. I wish I had space for this magnificent tree in my own garden. 🌿

---

**CORINNE KENNEDY** is a retired garden designer, Seattle Japanese Garden guide, Elisabeth C. Miller Library volunteer, and member of the "Bulletin" Editorial Board. She's also a regular contributor to the SJG blog.

---



**PARTNERSHIP**  
**berger**

Elegant patterns of spaces and views  
that unfold over time.

Landscape Architecture  
bergerpartnership.com

Q&A from the Miller Library's Plant Answer Line

# GROWING TIPS: JAPANESE UMBRELLA PINE & WISTERIA

BY REBECCA ALEXANDER

This regular column features Q&A selected and adapted from the Elisabeth C. Miller Library's Plant Answer Line program. If you'd like to ask a plant or gardening question of your own, please call (206) 897-5268 (UW Plant), send it via the library website ([www.millerlibrary.org](http://www.millerlibrary.org)), or email directly to [hortlib@uw.edu](mailto:hortlib@uw.edu).



**LEFT:** Japanese umbrella pine in the Pinetum at Washington Park Arboretum. (Photo by Niall Dunne)

**ABOVE:** Japanese wisteria in the Seattle Japanese Garden. (Photography by John and Kathy Willson)

**QUESTION:** How can I propagate a Japanese umbrella pine (*Sciadopitys verticillata*)?

**ANSWER:** Not a true pine, *Sciadopitys verticillata* is a unique conifer endemic to Japan. The sole member of its genus and family (Sciadopityaceae), it has no close relatives and is considered a “living fossil” due to its long presence in the fossil record (230 million years). Called *koyamaki* in its homeland,

the species is one of Japan’s “Five Sacred Trees of Kiso” used in the construction of Shinto shrines. However, it’s now classified as “near threatened” by the International Union of Conservation due to pressures from logging and wood harvesting. This makes growing the plant in cultivation an important conservation strategy.

Umbrella pine is an eye-catching tree that performs well in our region. Indeed, the Great Plant Picks website ([greatplantpicks.org](http://greatplantpicks.org))



recommends it for the Northwest: “The thick, dark green needles of this unusual evergreen conifer are held like the ribs of an umbrella around its stems, giving it a unique appearance. It is very slow-growing and columnar in shape, which makes it suitable for small gardens.”

Peter Thompson’s book, “Creative Propagation” (Timber Press, 2nd ed., 2005), states that *Sciadopitys verticillata* can be propagated by seed or cuttings (the latter method in autumn, early winter or early spring). Seeds will grow into the form inherited from the parent trees; trees derived from cuttings vary in shape. Thompson says you can take cuttings from almost any part of the plant but recommends taking them from the leader shoot in order to produce a symmetrical tree with an upright form.

The following propagation information comes from the USDA Forest Service National Seed Lab’s profile of *Sciadopitys verticillata*: “The seeds should be sown in the fall or stratified for sowing in the spring. Umbrella pine is not easy to grow and is extremely slow-growing when propagated from seed...It has a tendency to form several leaders...Umbrella-pine can also be propagated by layers or by cuttings of half-ripened wood in summer...A nursery in Oregon propagates solely by cuttings because of faster results.”



**QUESTION:** Is it acceptable to cut off the hanging pods from a Japanese wisteria? Will cutting them have any adverse effects on blooming next year? Some of ours are hanging so long that we keep walking into them! Maybe I should cut them and bring them inside for decoration?

**ANSWER:** Cutting off the seedpods on your *Wisteria floribunda* is not a problem; just be careful not to cut the stems back too far (unless you are intending to prune, which you can certainly do if you need to control growth), as there may be buds on the wood that will become next spring’s flowers.

The July/August 2004 issue of “Fine Gardening” (pp. 55–58) has a helpful, illustrated article by Meghan Ray on wisteria pruning that includes the following warning:

“Some seedpods may be left on the vine for winter interest, but just know that if you bring them inside, warm temperatures will cause them to explode.”

“Wisteria: The Complete Guide,” by James Compton and Chris Lane (Royal Horticultural Society, 2019), describes two different methods of pruning:

In the traditional method, prune in midsummer—after flowering—by cutting back “all the green vegetative shoots of the current season’s growth arising from the branch framework and spurs, to five or six leaves, cutting just above a bud. Any regrowth made after this pruning should also be cut back in late summer (September in the UK). Then in winter (January to February in the UK), cut these shoots back further, to two or three buds.”

A more simplified method involves cutting back in early summer, when the current season’s shoots have grown about three feet. Cut back to three or four leaves. “Some pruning will need to be carried out again in midsummer and in late summer if more shoots have been produced. There may need to be a final tidy up of thin, wispy shoots of late growth in autumn,” but you may be able to skip winter pruning.

Compton and Lane also delve into a cultural history of *Wisteria floribunda* in Japan. The vine is entwined with the story of Amitabha Buddha (Amida Butsu), who was thought to have come down to earth on a purple cloud to show people the path to paradise, the Western Pure Land. Because of this, wisteria was often planted in the gardens around Buddhist shrines and temples.

In Shintoism, there is a deity (“Youth of the Haze on the Spring Mountain”) who has his mother weave him a suit of armor and bows and arrows, all from wisteria vine, to impress his beloved. Miraculously, when he appears at her home, his armor blooms and wins her heart. Wisteria has been frequently depicted in Japanese paintings and prints over the centuries and is mentioned in classic Japanese literature, including Murasaki Shikibu’s “The Tale of Genji,”

which may be the world’s first novel. Chapter 33 of the book is entitled “Wisteria Leaves.” Here’s an excerpt:

“There is much to be said for cherry blossoms, but they seem so flighty. They are so quick to run off and leave you. And then, just when your regrets are the strongest, the wisteria comes into bloom, and it blooms on into the summer. There is nothing quite like it. Even the color is somehow companionable and inviting.” 🌸

## TAXONOMIC TRIVIA: Plants With Japanese Genus Names

**Akebia:** Latinized from Japanese plant name, *akebi*.

**Aucuba:** Latinized Japanese, from *aokiba* or *aokoba* (*ao* green + *ki*, *ko* tree + *ba* leaf).

**Fatsia:** The name *fatsi* is an approximation of the old Japanese word for “eight” (*hachi* in modern romanization), referring to the plant’s eight leaf lobes. In Japan, it is known as *yatsude*, meaning “eight fingers.”

**Hakonechloa:** A blend of Japanese (*Hakone*, from the hot springs region of Mount Hakone, in Honshu) and Greek (*chloa*, meaning green shoots, grass, verdure).

**Kirengeshoma:** *ki* yellow + *rengeshoma* lotus flower + *shoma* hat.

**Nandina:** Latinized from *nanten*, the Japanese word for heavenly bamboo, which also means “southern sky.”

**Neoshirakia:** Monotypic genus in the Euphorbiaceae, named for Dr. T. Shiraki, a Japanese economic entomologist.

**Sasa:** Japanese term for certain dwarf bamboos.

**Shibataea kumasasa:** Zigzag form of bamboo named for Keita Shibata, Japanese botanist, 1878–1949. Species name = *kuma* bear + *sasa* dwarf form of bamboo.

**Tanakea:** Plant in Saxifragaceae named for Yoshio Tanaka (1836–1916), Japanese botanist and entomologist and co-author of “Useful Plants of Japan.”

**Tsuga:** Japanese vernacular name for hemlock cedar.

**Sources:** “Garden Shrubs and Their Histories,” by Alice Coats (1992); “The Names of Plants,” by David Gledhill (2008); “Etymological Dictionary of Grasses,” by Harold Clifford and Peter Bostock (2007); Missouri Botanical Garden Plant Finder; Wikipedia.

**REBECCA ALEXANDER** is the manager of Reference and Technical Services at the Miller Library, located in the UW Botanic Gardens’ Center for Urban Horticulture (3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle). She is also a contributing editor to the “Bulletin.”

# A Legacy of Peace Planted in Our Garden

BY JESSA GARDNER



In early 2019, volunteer Susan Ott Ralph recommended this project and reached out to the Green Legacy Hiroshima Initiative about participating. Susan was inspired by a visit to the San Diego Japanese Friendship Garden, where she encountered some “peace trees” with a plaque describing their history.

Luckily, Arboretum Foundation Board member Noriko Palmer was planning to visit Japan in autumn and

was able to arrange a meeting in Hiroshima with GHL volunteers to discuss the project in person. The GLH sent us seeds from five different tree genera: *Camellia*, *Celtis*, *Diospyros*, *Ginkgo* and *Ilex*. They arrived safely and were received by Ray Larson, Curator of Living Collections at the University of Washington Botanic Gardens.

The seeds have germinated, and all the young plants are being lovingly tended to by UW Botanic Gardens staff at the Center for Urban Horticulture until they are large enough to be planted in the Japanese Garden. Once in the Garden, the plants will be marked with plaques detailing their important history.

As soon as it is reasonable to do so, we will hold a ceremony to acknowledge and formally accept these trees into the Garden.

*Reprinted from the “Seattle Japanese Garden Blog” ([www.seattlejapanesegarden.org/blog](http://www.seattlejapanesegarden.org/blog)).* ☺

---

**JESSA GARDNER** is the programs manager at the Seattle Japanese Garden.

**TOP LEFT:** A survivor ginkgo tree in the Shukkeien garden, Hiroshima. (Photo courtesy Green Legacy Hiroshima)

**RIGHT:** Seedlings of *Ginkgo biloba*, *Diospyros kaki* (Japanese persimmon), and *Celtis sinensis* var. *japonica* (Japanese hackberry) in the UW Botanic Gardens greenhouse. (Photo by Ray Larson)

As part of the Seattle Japanese Garden’s 60th anniversary celebration, we are excited to announce a new partnership with the Green Legacy Hiroshima (GLH) Initiative ([glh.unitar.org](http://glh.unitar.org)). The history of the Seattle Japanese Garden is a beautiful story of collaboration between Japan and Seattle, and we honor that long history with this new project to bring GLH Initiative plants to our garden.

“The GLH Initiative is a global volunteer campaign, aiming to disseminate the universal message of trees that survived the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Created in 2011 by two friends, Nassrine Azimi and Tomoko Watanabe, GLH shares worldwide the double message of caution and hope that the unique survivor trees of Hiroshima (and ultimately Nagasaki) represent, recalling on the one hand the dangers of arms of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular, and on the other hand the sacred character of humankind and the resilience of nature.”<sup>1</sup>

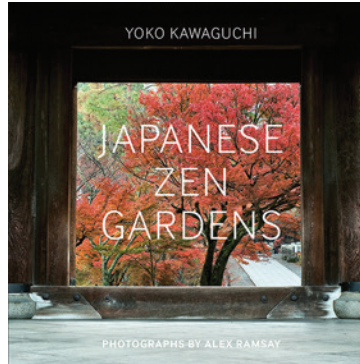
Our Garden is the first in the Pacific Northwest to join this global partnership. By growing the offspring of survivor plants propagated by GLH, we commemorate the lives lost in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and become an ambassador for the initiative’s message of peace and love of the natural world.

<sup>1</sup> From “About the Green Legacy Hiroshima Initiative,” accessed 4/28/2020, <http://glh.unitar.org/en/about/>.

# POPULAR JAPANESE GARDENING AND PLANT BOOKS

BY BRIAN R. THOMPSON

The Japanese gardening section at the Elisabeth C. Miller Library is large and varied—and well-liked by our patrons. Readers are especially keen on the symbolism, design and maintenance of gardens in Japan, and how Japanese flora influenced their development. Profiles of Japanese-style gardens in this country are also popular. In honor of the 60th anniversary of the Seattle Japanese Garden, the following is a survey of some of our most well-circulated books.



## Designing a Japanese-Style Garden

Marc Peter Keane has published several books based on his landscape architecture degree from Cornell University and the 18 years he spent in Kyoto designing gardens. His earliest, “Japanese Garden Design” (published in 1996), has stood the test of time.

The first section is a well-illustrated introduction to broad concepts such as Zen gardens, tea gardens and stroll gardens. The author emphasizes the context that led garden designers to create these “new forms of gardens and, more importantly, new ways of perceiving what a garden is [author’s emphasis].”

The final third of the book is about design: the principles, techniques and elements. I wouldn’t recommend relying on this book for help developing your own garden, but rather for understanding the intentions of the creators of

established gardens. In those intentions, Keane sees a myriad of perceptions, including the garden “as a living entity with a spirit” or “as a painting, an object of contemplation, a spiritual passageway, or as a work of religious art.”

For designing your own space in a Japanese style, consider “The New Zen Garden” (2004) by Joseph Cali. He is another American who lived many years in Japan, using his education as an interior designer. In this book, he urges his readers to treat the garden as an extension of the home’s indoor space, and is very practical and systematic in his advice.

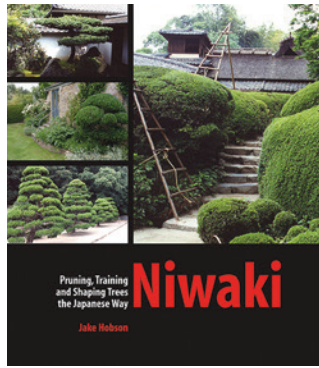
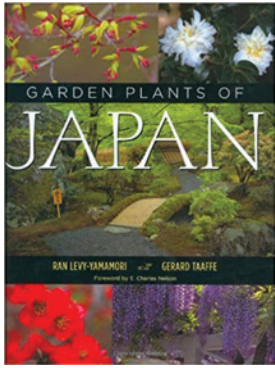
For expertise in specific elements of the garden, Cali includes tutorials by Japanese landscape architects, artisans and garden designers. Topics include lighting, building walkways and walls in traditional styles, and even how to arrange a dry waterfall.



## Zen Gardens

Yoko Kawaguchi's book "Japanese Zen Gardens" is an excellent source of Japanese gardening history, focusing on the dry-landscape (*kare-sansui*) traditions associated with Zen Buddhist temples. Alex Ramsay's gorgeous photographs and interpretive diagrams of these temple sites bring the history alive. The dry-landscape style may seem static to those outside Japan, however Kawaguchi clearly shows an ongoing evolution, including its use for gardens not associated with temples.

This book would be excellent reading for planning or recalling a trip to Japan, especially if centered on Kyoto. While too large for a traveling guide, it is written in an instructive style for



## Japanese Flora in Gardens

The four main islands of the Japanese archipelago stretch north to south along the same latitudinal range spanning from Portland to the northern shore of the Gulf of California. This range has given rise to a diverse flora, including many species found nowhere else. If you include all the small islands, almost one-third of the 5600 species found in Japan are endemic.

Unlike their European and North American counterparts, Japanese gardeners have historically relied heavily on their native flora for their planting palette. The focus of "Garden Plants of Japan" is on the plants of horticultural importance, including the many cultivars and hybrids that have been developed. Also included are some



a visitor. Kawaguchi was born in Japan, but has lived much of her life in either North America or the UK, and has an ability to interpret and correlate both western and eastern aesthetics.

Like Keane, she focuses the latter half of her book on symbolism. This includes the symbolism of plant selection and, in some cases, removal. At the temple of Tofuku-ji in Kyoto, for example, all the ornamental cherry trees were chopped down around 1400. All the maples suffered the same fate in 1869, although these have mostly grown back. In both cases, the trees were removed because the temple monks considered them a diversion. Kawaguchi summarizes this reasoning: "Are they not perhaps too showy for a temple setting, making people think about temporal pleasures rather than reflect on the state of their souls?"

important and even iconic plants that originated in nearby China and Korea.

The authors—Ran Levy-Yamamori, from Israel, and Gerard Taaffe, who learned horticulture in Ireland, England and Scotland—bring an international perspective to their work. Both are fluent in Japanese and had long-running gardening columns in "The Japan Times," the most circulated English language newspaper in Japan.

This encyclopedia is, at first glance, much like others on recommended garden plants. Closer inspection reveals the uniqueness of its subject matter. What British or American garden encyclopedia would have a whole chapter on garden mosses, or would assess all woody plants for their suitability as bonsai subjects?

Each entry not only has the necessary information for successful garden culture and good design choices, but also includes fascinating reading about traditional uses in Japanese culture. For example, *Lycoris radiata* (*higan bana* in Japanese or spider lily in English) is “rarely planted in gardens because the red flowers remind people of the dead. However this flower is frequently found growing around Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples.”

### Maintaining a Japanese-Style Garden

Jake Hobson is another European author who moved to Japan. Although now returned to his native England, he writes “*Niwaki: Pruning, Training and Shaping Trees the Japanese Way*” from his experience in Japan, including working at an Osaka nursery.

“The reliance on trees and plants is no different from most other gardening cultures in the world, climate permitting. What is different, however, is how the trees look.” These trees, or *niwaki* in Japanese, are “pruned to fit into the landscape of the garden in a way that is peculiar to Japan.”

Hobson thinks these practices can be adapted for Western gardens, but counsels his readers to not slavishly follow Japanese plant selection. Instead, he urges the gardener to apply the Japanese level of intensity in the care of garden trees using species that flourish locally.

The author summarizes this intensity as an effort to create a “character of maturity” by “training and pruning branches to give the impression that they are larger and older than they actually are.” He then relates these practices to many of the Western traditions used on fruit trees to increase yields. This requires consistent and ongoing pruning.

To illustrate these concepts, Hobson relies on mostly traditional Japanese garden trees but with some English examples. I came to the conclusion that this style might not suit everyone’s taste, but this book gives you an in-depth introduction to the concepts and the process of *niwaki*, and gave me a greater appreciation of this approach to gardening.

### Japanese Botanical Illustration

“*Flora Japonica*,” published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in 2016, is really two books in one. The first part provides a rarely documented history of Japanese botany with an emphasis on the literature and illustration of the native flora. The oldest surviving example dates from 1274 and surprisingly was intended to identify plants used by veterinary surgeons. It is considered to be very comparable to European works of the same era.

Botanical illustration flourished in the Edo period (1603–1868), a time when Japan was politically stable but closed to other cultures. “*Flora Japonica*” includes many beautifully reproduced examples of this era, again with many parallels in style to European publications of the same time period, despite very limited interaction.

The second and main part of the book is a celebration of botanical illustration by Japanese artists of today. The nearly one hundred works were originally commissioned for an exhibit presented at Kew, “chosen to represent the unique richness of the Japanese native flora and the influence of Japanese plants on gardens in the West.” These works are beautiful for their artistry, and the extensive notes provide considerable botanical and horticultural background for the subjects.

### Japanese Orchid Mania

Japanese horticulture is known for intense specialization with certain plants; chrysanthemums are an example. Less well known is a more recent (almost 100-year-old) infatuation with orchids. Much of this craze was due to one man, Shotaro Kaga (1888–1954)—a banker by trade, who established a major orchid nursery at Oyamazaki, near Kyoto, in the 1920s.

Kaga hired a business partner who was skilled at orchid cultivation, while he concentrated on the promotion of the orchids grown and the hybrids developed at Oyamazaki. For marketing, he turned to the long-practiced Japanese art of wood block printing. He was fortunate to find a skilled artist, Zuigetsu Ikeda (1877–1944), who created many watercolor images that were the basis for these prints.

This story and the art are captured in “Rankafu: Orchid Print Album,” another publication by Kew featuring several authors. They argue that the practice of woodblock art, which has an equivalent form in Europe, reached an epitome in Japan. “The quartet of publisher, artist, carver, and printer all contribute to the quality of the woodblock print. It is rare that these four stars are in such perfect alignment that an exceptional example of this art form is created. The *Rankafu* woodblock print set is such a type example.”

It took long determination by Kaga to achieve his goal, with the dangers for his country during World War II (and to himself, for his quiet opposition to the war). The prints were not issued until 1946 but became prized collector items. In “Rankafu,” the complete set of 83 prints are presented together, along with many watercolors by Ikeda that were not developed into woodblocks. It is a beautiful book, but also a fascinating story of the intense, collective effort by many to produce lasting beauty.

## Bibliography

Cali, Joseph. “The New Zen Garden: Designing Quiet Spaces.” Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2004.

ISBN: 4-7700-2981-0, \$32.00.

Hobson, Jake. “Niwaki: Pruning, Training and Shaping Trees the Japanese Way.” Portland, OR: Timber Press, 2007.

ISBN: 978-0-88192-835-8, \$34.95.

Kawaguchi, Yoko, Alex Ramsay, photographer. “Japanese Zen Gardens.” London: Frances Lincoln Limited, 2014.

ISBN: 978-0-7112-3447-5, \$50.00.

Keane, Marc P. “Japanese Garden Design.” Rutland, VT: C. E. Tuttle, 1996. ISBN: 0-8048-2071-6, \$39.95.

Kirby, Stephen, Toshikazu Doi, and Toru Otsuka. “Rankafu: Orchid Print Album.” Richmond, Surrey, UK: Kew Publishing, 2018.

ISBN: 978-1-84246-668-1, \$50.00.

Levy-Yamamori, Ran and Gerard Taaffe. “Garden Plants of Japan.” Portland OR: Timber Press, 2004.

ISBN: 0-88192-650-7, \$59.95.

Yamanaka, Masumi, Martyn Rix, Hideaki Oba, Jin Murata, and Tetsuo Koyama. “Flora Japonica.” Richmond, Surrey, UK: Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-84246-612-4, \$42.00.

## Reviewed previously in “The Bulletin” (issue date in parentheses)

Brown, Kendall and Melba Levick, photographer. “Japanese-Style Gardens of the Pacific West Coast.” New York: Rizzoli, 1999. ISBN: 0847821099. (Spring 2007)

Brown, Kendall and David Cobb, photographer. “Quiet Beauty: Japanese Gardens of North America.” North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Pub., 2013. ISBN: 978-4-8053-1195-0, \$34.95. (Fall 2013)

Brown, Kendall and David Cobb, photographer. “Visionary Landscapes: Japanese Garden Design in North America the work of five contemporary masters.” North Clarendon, VT: Tuttle Pub., 2017. ISBN: 978-4-8053-1386-2, \$24.95. (Fall 2018)

Kuitert, Wybe. “Japanese Gardens and Landscapes, 1650-1950.” Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. ISBN: 978-0-8122-4474-8, \$69.95. (Fall 2018)

Kuitert, Wybe. “Themes in the History of Japanese Garden Art.” Honolulu: Univeristy of Hawai’I Press, 2002. ISBN: 0824823125. (Fall 2018)

Tsukamoto, Yotaro and John Creech. “Japanese Horticulture: Origins and History.” Yokohama-shi: Woods Press, Inc., 2015. ISBN: 978-4907029043. (Spring 2017)

## Previously Reviewed in the “Bulletin”

Kendall Brown has written several books about Japanese style gardens in North America, and I have reviewed most of them in the “Bulletin.” Many of the featured gardens are on the Pacific Coast and open to the public. He has also profiled the major designers of these gardens.



Other previously reviewed books include two by Wybe Kuitert that provide an in-depth history of Japanese gardens from the earliest time through the middle of the 20th century, concentrating on the symbolism of their art and their importance in Japanese society. Yotaro Tsukamoto and John Creech tell a parallel history of Japanese horticultural practices and how they have changed with Western influences.

All of these books are listed in the bibliography section, with the date of the original review. The reviews can be accessed through links from the Miller Library’s online catalog ([www.miller-library.org](http://www.miller-library.org)).



Arboretum Foundation

Washington Park Arboretum

2300 Arboretum Drive East

Seattle WA 98112-2300

[www.arboretumfoundation.org](http://www.arboretumfoundation.org)

NONPROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

**PAID**

SEATTLE, WA

PERMIT NO. 126

An arboretum  
is a dynamic  
collection of  
woody plants  
for research,  
education,  
conservation  
and display.



*Asclepias curassavica* 'Red Butterflies'

**molbak's**  
garden+home  
[molbaks.com](http://molbaks.com)

A proud supporter of the  
Washington Park Arboretum,  
Molbak's has been helping  
Northwest gardeners bring  
lasting beauty to their own  
backyards for generations.

- Inspiring ideas
- Informative seminars
- Gorgeous plants for garden + home

(425) 483-5000 • 13625 NE 175th St., Woodinville • [molbaks.com](http://molbaks.com)