

June/July 2023



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Bird song, to and fro  
 — a garden's invitation  
 to come, to explore

— Peter Kendall

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THE GARDEN PATH

FOR QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS  
 Email [marketing@japanesegarden.org](mailto:marketing@japanesegarden.org)



Dear Members,

I've had the pleasure of serving as Portland Japanese Garden's Board President for more than a year now — it was wonderful to meet so many of you at the Annual Meeting of the Membership in late April. Thank you for your support and investment in the Garden as well as your genuine interest in learning about the latest news coming out of the organization. It is because of caring members like you that this Garden has become such a cornerstone in our community.

Thoughts of legacy and the impact left by those who have come before us have been on my mind a lot lately, especially with Portland Japanese Garden celebrating its 60th anniversary.

As some of you know, I have a very personal connection to the Garden. My dad, who was a WWII veteran, planted one of the wisteria at the Wisteria Arbor nearly 60 years ago. Recently, I walked through the Garden and passed a mature rhododendron near the Sapporo Pagoda Lantern. As the owner of a landscape design and garden center company, I couldn't help but notice it was a rhododendron named "Bowbells." I kept wondering, "Is that rhododendron one that was propagated and grown by my grandparents Bernard and Florence Esch?" They were one of two rhododendron propagators who imported seeds from England and then grew them in the Portland area. Bowbells was one of their favorites. My grandparents donated and sold rhododendrons to thousands of Portlanders between 1945 and 1965. I know some of those ended up in Portland Japanese Garden.

In fact, when the Garden was first built, there were several plants that were rescued or donated from the neighborhood. They continue

to thrive and bring joy to people like you and me today. This joy extends far beyond Portland. In the middle of a world fraught with conflict and controversy, Portland Japanese Garden and its sibling organization, Japan Institute, help create a space for peace. One of the goals of Japan Institute is to illustrate how a garden can use the common love of nature to foster diverse communities and bring people together, no matter their differences. This is a lofty goal, but one I believe is within reach. What a meaningful adventure. What an impactful endeavor. My breath is taken away by the possibilities! What a legacy this could be for Portland, Oregon, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond.

I am honored to be part of the legacy of Portland Japanese Garden and to serve as President on this Board of Trustees. Buoyed by our world-class volunteers, staff, and you, our members, this Board is comprised of some of the most thoughtful, determined, and driven people. We are proud and humbled to take on the task of continuing the success of the Garden and establishing the foundation of Japan Institute.

Here's to brighter days ahead.

With gratitude,

Drake Snodgrass  
 President, Board of Trustees

## Member News & Events

### *Behind the Shoji* Summer Marketplace Member Preview and Reception

June 30 / 6:30 – 9pm

Join us for a member-only preview and reception to gain first access to our annual artisan marketplace. *Behind the Shoji* will open to those in the Golden Crane Recognition Society at 6:30pm and to all members at 7pm. The marketplace opens to the public on July 1 and runs through September 4. More about this beloved summer tradition can be read on page 8.

Reservations are required. To sign up, please visit [japanesegarden.org/bts2023](https://japanesegarden.org/bts2023)

### Twilight Hours for Patron and Steward Members

June 23, July 14, & August 4 / 7 - 9pm

Exclusive to our Patron and Steward Members, Twilight Hours is a series of three evenings throughout summer when the days are longest. Join us to experience the Garden at a time most don't get to experience, with our spaces illuminated by the golden light of dusk. These evening events will feature music, refreshments, and light appetizers.

### Maple Pruning Workshops

July 29 & August 5

The Garden's highly coveted Maple Pruning Workshops provide a basic understanding for Japanese maples and various types of maple pruning methods and techniques. Tickets for Garden Workshops are available to members only through a lottery system to ensure equal opportunity for those wishing to participate. The lottery for both Maple Pruning Workshop dates will open to all members on June 28.

### Seasonal Stroll with the Chief Curator

August 3 / 8:30am

Come stroll Portland Japanese Garden with our Chief Curator, Sadafumi (Sada) Uchiyama. Uchiyama is a fourth-generation Japanese gardener and landscape architect who has been at the Garden for over 15 years, playing a key role in the construction of the Cultural Village, Entry Garden, and establishment of the International Japanese Garden Training Center and Japan Institute.

Reservations will open exclusively to members on Wednesday, July 5.

Two young visitors to Portland Japanese Garden hold wishes on bamboo sticks during a Tanabata festival celebration.

Jonathan Ley



### Member-Only Hours & Tours

In addition to regular member-only hours from 8-10am every morning the Garden is open, this summer Portland Japanese Garden members can enjoy seeing the Garden in its beauty in as the sun begins to set. To learn more about membership benefits, including those for our photographer members, go to [japanesegarden.org/membership](https://japanesegarden.org/membership)

#### Member Extended Hours

All levels of membership and guests of members welcome.

June 12 / 7 – 9pm  
June 25 / 7 – 9pm  
July 6 / 7 – 9pm  
July 28 / 7 – 9pm

#### Photographer Member Extended Hours

For photographer-level memberships only.

June 8 / 7 – 9pm  
July 16 / 7 – 9pm

#### Upcoming Member Garden Tours

June 3 / 9 – 10am  
July 1 / 9 – 10am

For information on all Extended Member Hours and Member Tours throughout the rest of summer, keep an eye on our weekly e-newsletters, future editions of *The Garden Path*, or our website: [japanesegarden.org/events](https://japanesegarden.org/events)

### New! American Sign Language Tours

Portland Japanese Garden is continually striving to become a more accessible and welcoming place for all. In this spirit, the Garden is will offer guests complimentary\* docent-led tours with American Sign Language Interpretation (ASL) on four Saturdays this summer. ASL tours will explore Portland Japanese Garden's history and landscape architecture. These tours are for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing and their family and friends only. ASL tours are available on 6/24, 7/15, 8/19, and 9/16 at 1pm. Attendance is limited to 15 people and free registration is required prior to the tour. For more information, go to: [japanesegarden.org/events](https://japanesegarden.org/events)

ASL tours are available because of a generous grant from Oregon Cultural Trust and Multnomah County Cultural Coalition.  
\* Complimentary with general admission.

### *Tanabata*, The Star Festival

July 2 / 10:30am – 2:30pm

*Tanabata*, The Star Festival, commemorates the one day a year the star-crossed lovers Orihime, the Weaver Star (Vega), and Hikoboshi, the Cowherder Star (Altair) meet in the sky. Visitors can write a wish to add to the colorful display of *tanzaku*, or wish strips, hanging from bamboo in the Garden's Crumpler Bamboo Allee. Visitors will also have the chance to hear the *Tanabata* story and listen to a *taiko* performance by Takohachi at 11:15am and 12:45pm.



© William "Robbie" Robinson

## A Japanese Garden with Oregon Ingredients

### How Portland Japanese Garden is Made by the Community, For the Community

While Portland Japanese Garden's 12 acres are confined to its home city, it manages to transcend its physical boundaries and transport visitors across an ocean to Japan. Amazingly, it does this despite being enveloped by an unmistakably Pacific Northwest forest and featuring elements that have never known a home other than Oregon. Unlike many Japanese gardens around the world that depict one style, the unique collection of five different styles at Portland Japanese Garden required early Garden leaders to motor to locations near and far across the Beaver State to find the right materials. While their collection of many materials, such as stones, from wild areas in Oregon is no longer allowed today, it was permissible in the 1960s. Interviews conducted by former Portland Japanese Garden Board of Trustees President Ed McVicker (2009–10) help illustrate their efforts.

### Columbia River Gorge

The Sand and Stone Garden features stones in an arrangement that has often been interpreted as a depiction of the story of Buddha (the tall stone) sacrificing himself to feed starving tiger cubs (the seven smaller stones). William "Robbie" Robinson, former Head Gardener of Portland's Parks and Recreation Bureau, and one of the most important contributors to the Garden's construction, told McVicker that the efforts to source the tall "Buddha stone" almost went awry.

"I took [the Garden's original designer, Professor Takuma Tono] up to right around Starvation Creek Park," Robinson shared, referring to a natural area adjacent to Interstate 84. "There's a whole mountain that has a wall built to keep the mountain from coming down. There were a few options up there, way up on the loose gravel. One of my sons-in-law went up there and got the Buddha stone started down the hill. All the shell rock that was up there started to come down too. I thought, 'Oh my god, if this doesn't stop coming down, it will plug up the highway and Columbia River Gorge. The rocks kept coming down and finally stopped within two feet of the road. We almost had a big disaster.'"

### 60th Anniversary Special Story

As part of our 60th anniversary, we'll be highlighting a different element of our history in every issue of *The Garden Path* in 2023!

Other stones in this garden space were procured in manners far less dramatic. Robinson shared that the stones that serve as a foundation for the garden's stucco walls are from the Historic Columbia River Highway. The tiger cubs, meanwhile, were taken from areas off the Wapanitia Pass.

### City of Portland

The Flat Garden features Portland Japanese Garden's only weeping cherry – a dictate from Professor Tono who felt its blooms were so dramatic that more than one would have been too much. This stunning tree is from a nearby neighborhood in Portland. Once belonging to local resident Dr. George Marumoto and his family, the weeping cherry was rescued from a street targeted for expansion. Now nearly 80 years in age and nearly fifteen feet in height, it radiates in hues of bright pink and is a reliable bellwether of spring.

Expressing a more muted grandeur than the weeping cherry are long, white slabs of granite seen throughout the Garden. These are sourced from the 1966 renovation of the Portland Civic Auditorium, now known as the Keller Auditorium. *The Oregonian* reported at the time that after a "quiet preservation ceremony," the granite slabs, previously used as stairs into the theater, were lifted gently out of place and lowered into a truck bound for the Garden. They can be seen today in several areas, including the Eastern side of the Pavilion.

Other stones from the greater Portland area were also repurposed within the Garden, including those placed in front of the Sapporo Pagoda Lantern in the Strolling Pond Garden. Originally from Dodge Park, an area east of Portland along the Sandy and Bull Run Rivers, these stones are arranged to represent the Japanese island of Hokkaido, a prefecture with the capital city of Sapporo, Portland's sister city. The sole reddish-hued stone in this tableau was sourced from Terrebonne, Oregon, a stretch of land about 30 minutes north of Bend.

### Mt. Hood

The Garden features so many stones taken from Mt. Hood that former Garden Director Hoichi Kurisu (1968–73) joked, "Even now on a clear day we can see Mt. Hood from [the East Veranda] and there's a little section that is missing. That's because the Japanese Garden took it all."

"Most of the river stones came from Mt. Hood," former Garden Director Masayuki Mizuno (1977–80) shared. "We harvested them in rivers or former rivers, where the water had polished the stones for thousands of years. We were lucky that we were issued a permit from the state to harvest them." Some stones, however, were not as willing to come back to the Garden.

"They were very fun trips to gather river stones, but there was an incident when we were trying to cable a large boulder," Mizuno recalled. "[Former Head Gardener] Michael Kondo and I strapped the cable around it, thinking that it was enough. When the big crane truck started to pull the boulder up, the wire was not tight enough and the boulder came loose. It came falling really fast, and fell right in between Michael and me. We were in awe."



Top: The Flat Garden's weeping cherry with its donors, the Marumoto family. Bottom: Garden Director Masayuki Mizuno (1977-80) supervises the placement of granite steps next to the Pavilion. © William "Robbie" Robinson



A look at previous years of Behind The Shoji. 📷 Jonathan Ley

## Behind the Shoji Brings Hard-to-Find Japanese Wares to Portland

### Annual Summer Marketplace Connects Cultures Through Crafts and Goods

*Behind the Shoji* is one of Portland Japanese Garden's most beloved summer traditions. An annual show and sale of Japanese and Japanese-inspired wares, visitors can peruse and purchase from a variety of curated items often unavailable short of a visit to Japan itself. What makes this elevated and distinctive shopping experience stand out is the level of care and the miles traveled that go into determining which items will be available.

"I travel to Japan yearly to attend the Tokyo International Gift Show and visit a new region each year to meet with craftsmen in their studios and shops," shared Ashley McQuade, Director of Buying and Merchandising. "The most rewarding part of my travels is creating partnerships with independent craftsmen—I'm always left feeling inspired by the experience. With these partnerships, the Garden supports their livelihoods and, in some cases, helps keep interest in their crafts from waning. In return, we offer our visitors a unique product selection and help to create a greater understanding of Japanese craftsmanship and culture."

Whether they're sourced directly from Japan or elsewhere, McQuade journeys to find items that authentically reflect Japanese culture and aesthetics but will also interest Western audiences. "We focus on contemporary products that are crafted through traditional practices," McQuade noted. "For example, many knife makers today use the same methods and techniques that have been used by sword makers for hundreds of years. Our Iseya line of Japanese handled kitchen knives are made in Seki City in Gifu Prefecture, an area known as a Samurais sword-smiths' town and is now a center of modern Japanese cutlery manufacturing. By continuing to make knives, these craftsmen honor and preserve the skills of generations of those who came before them, and people can own something that has more utility in their homes."

*Behind the Shoji* is a shopping experience, but the motivation behind offering it ties directly into Portland Japanese Garden's goals of introducing authentic aspects of Japan to an unfamiliar audience. "I think it speaks to how we're more than a garden," McQuade offered. "We're also a cultural organization, and this marketplace offers a tangible connection to Japanese culture."

## 2023 Marketplace Will Feature Items from Kyoto and Gunma

Portland Japanese Garden partners with several talented craftspeople both in Japan and around the world to help bring *Behind the Shoji* to life. One craftsman of note whose wares will be on sale includes Masao Kiyoe. Kiyoe is a first-generation craftsman of *shibori-zome* (Japanese tie-dye). With a storefront in Kyoto near the Kiyomizu-dera Temple, Kiyoe creates magnificent noren (curtains) and tapestries by extracting different colors from flowers, fruits, vegetables, and even insects to dye fabrics. These natural sources create something warmer than a chemical dye is capable of.

Joining Kiyoe's noren and tapestries will be *kokeshi* (wooden dolls) from Fujikawa Koegi. This Gunma Prefecture-located company is led by Chairman Shoei Fujikawa, a master of the medium who has been crafting dolls since 1959. Fujikawa and the company that bears his name prides themselves in preserving Japanese cultural heritage through its *kokeshi*, handmade wooden dolls that date back to the Edo period of Japan in the 19th century. Among these expertly carved figures in the marketplace will be Mizuno, a doll made from Japanese Zelkova, a wood beloved for its bright and dynamic grain.

Goods from Kiyoe and Fujikawa will be but a few of the items available for purchase. Below is a preview of what visitors can expect to see.



Hama Koma, wooden tops made with potter's wheel techniques from Iroiro Hama Koma. 📷 Iroio Hama Koma; Shibori-zome, Japanese tie-dye, from Kyoto craftsman Kiyoe Masao. 📷 Kiyoe Masao; Mizuno, a kokeshi doll, from Fujikawa Koegi. 📷 Fujikawa Koegi; Japan wax candles from Kawagoe-based company Haze. 📷 Haze; Handcrafted Japanese kitchen knives from Seisuke Knife. 📷 Seisuke Knife; Hi-ogi, wooden fans, from Yamani. 📷 Yamani

*Behind the Shoji* runs from July 1 - September 4 in the Pavilion Gallery.



James Florio

## Cultivating Portland Japanese Garden's Japan Institute

### Oregon ArtsWatch Profiles the Garden's Sibling Organization

In 2023, Oregon ArtsWatch, an arts journal that offers news, analyses, and interviews about traditional art forms and cultural topics, published a feature on Japan Institute. Below is an excerpt of this article, reprinted with the author's permission.

By Brian Libby

By the time he first visited the Portland Japanese Garden eight years ago, while serving as the Cultural Affairs Specialist at the United States Embassy in Tokyo, Akihito Nakanishi had already been invited several times. Why travel away from Japan, he wondered, to see a Japanese garden? "When I actually did, oh my God, I was blown away," Nakanishi remembers, "not just by the sheer quality of the garden, but the community that the Portlanders have managed to build over those close to 55 years."

Yet in his current role as Portland Japanese Garden's Arlene Schnitzer Curator of Culture, Art, and Education, Nakanishi also knows they've run out of space for the lectures, art exhibits, and classes, an array of programming that has blossomed since completion of the \$37.5 million Cultural Crossing complex of buildings (designed by famed Japanese architect Kengo Kuma) beside the original garden in 2017.



That's where Japan Institute comes in. Established in 2022 as a global cultural initiative of Portland Japanese Garden, it's a chance to offer a broader array of classes and studios devoted to traditional Japanese arts and crafts, as part of its International Japanese Garden Training Center, as well as to welcome artist residencies for Japanese artists to travel here as part of an ongoing two-way cultural exchange.

"I don't think there has been anything like this," Nakanishi says of Japan Institute. Searching for precedents, he recalls the artist-residency programs offered by the Institut Français (the cultural arm of the French foreign ministry) in three cities: the Villa Kujoyama in Kyoto, the Villa Medici in Rome, and the Villa Velazquez in Madrid. "But of course we are a 100% nonprofit organization, not supported by any government. Even the Japanese government doesn't support us in a fully-fledged way," Nakanishi explains. "So it's a very unique venture."

"One of the purposes of the Garden is really to transport people to some place that they haven't really experienced before," Nakanishi says. "But for Japan Institute we also tried to go back to the drawing board that spells out our mission as inspiring harmony and peace. That really encapsulates the spirit of what we are trying to do that we can't quite do at the Garden. We'd love to be able to facilitate these creative conversations and keep attracting great talents from all over the world who we can then connect to the local arts community here. Without that big dream, I don't think this many people would have jumped on the bandwagon."

To read the entire article please go to [japanesegarden.org/Cultivating-Japan-Institute](https://japanesegarden.org/Cultivating-Japan-Institute)

"...we owe it to the community to keep giving back the way we think would benefit the city, the city's cultural vibrancy."

AKI NAKANISHI

Arlene Schnitzer Curator of Culture, Art, and Education



Subtle Intimacy: Here and There, an exhibition by Japan Institute's first Artist-in-Residence, Rui Sasaki. Jonathan Ley

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Brian Libby is a Portland, Oregon-based design journalist and critic covering design, visual art, and film. His writing has been published in nine sections of *The New York Times*, and he has been the *Portland Tribune's* architecture critic since 2016. Brian has also written for *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Atlantic*, *Dwell*, *Metropolis*, *The Oregonian* and Oregon ArtsWatch, among others. A graduate of New York University, he is the author of the 2022 monograph *The Portland Building* as well as 2019's *Collaboration for a Cure: The Knight Cancer Research Building and the Culture of Innovation*.



International Japanese Garden Training Center Director, Sadafumi Uchiyama, supervises a Waza to Kokoro learner. 📷 Jonathan Ley

## Blending Tradition and Modernity to Offer World-Class Instruction

### Japan Institute's International Japanese Garden Training Center

Ever since their introduction to North America at the 1876 World's Fair in Philadelphia, Japanese gardens have proliferated on the continent. While some like Portland Japanese Garden have had been cared for and maintained by a lineage of landscape experts trained and educated in Japan, others have haven't always had the same opportunity. Enter the International Japanese Garden Training Center, one of three programmatic centers of Japan Institute. "There's over 200 or maybe 250 publicly accessible Japanese gardens in North America alone," notes its Director, Sadafumi Uchiyama. "So, in order to keep these places pristine and beautiful, we need people to maintain these gardens."

The International Japanese Garden Training Center, or Training Center for short, teaches the traditional skills and techniques for creating and fostering Japanese gardens, while acquainting learners with the garden's cultural heart. Offering workshops, themed tours, school programs, lectures, professional seminars, and design intensives, the Training Center offers students of all levels the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the Japanese garden and its philosophies. It does this with an evolutionary educational approach unique to the world.

Traditional methods of instruction in the discipline of Japanese gardening, which relied on years of hands-off observation, have seen diminishing utility in a modernizing world, particularly in the West. Rather than see this essential and



(Top) Waza to Kokoro learners practicing stone work. (Bottom) Waza to Kokoro learners participating in tea ceremony. (Right) A Waza to Kokoro student hard at work. 📷 Jonathan Ley

life changing form of horticultural and artistic expression become endangered, the Training Center instead infuses its educational offerings with the classroom characteristics most North Americans are familiar with, including lectures. The results have led to industry recognition, including a Garden Excellence Award from the American Public Gardens Association and the Award of Excellence from the American Society of Landscape Architects.

The Training Center's world-class offerings shine in its flagship program, *Waza to Kokoro*. *Waza to Kokoro*, a three-part seminar for professionals in Japanese gardening and landscape-related disciplines, focuses on the hands-on learning process of stonework in the tea garden, supplemented with theoretical instruction, and practice in topics including garden design, pruning, bamboo fence construction, aesthetics, history, and traditional tool use. These technical skills gain context through the culture of tea to nurture a sense of aesthetics, balance, and composition. This July, *Waza to Kokoro* will convene learners at the intermediate level, with lectures provided by Uchiyama.

"What can Japanese gardens become?" Uchiyama once told the American Society of Landscape Architects. "Our responsibility is to also move the tradition forward, because tradition is only one little step within a long evolution."



To see this list online, go to [japanesegarden.com/support-your-garden](http://japanesegarden.com/support-your-garden)  
For corrections, contact [development@japanesegarden.org](mailto:development@japanesegarden.org)

Cumulative giving to the Annual Fund from February 1, 2023 through March 31, 2023

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Thank you



📷 Tyler Quinn

📷 Thomas Armeli



Portland Japanese Garden

PHOENIX  
LEGACY  
SOCIETY



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

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March 1, 2023 – March 31, 2023

### GIFT IN MEMORY OF BETH BUCHANAN

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Portland Japanese Garden



Garden Curator Hugo Torii, Chief Curator Sadafumi Uchiyama, CEO Steve Bloom, and Board President Drake Snodgrass reveal the wooden plaque on the Nezu Gate, named in honor of Koichi and Mihoko Nezu

📷 Nina Johnson



Portland Japanese Garden International Advisory Board Member Mimi Gardner Gates and CEO Steve Bloom at the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting

📷 Nina Johnson



Seasonal bonsai caretaker and volunteer, Masaki Shimada (l), and bonsai expert and consultant to Portland Japanese Garden, Michael Hagerdorn, put bonsai on display on the Frank and Gail Jubitz Oregon Terrace.

📷 Portland Japanese Garden

Dr. Joshua Walker, President of Japan Society, speaks at the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting

📷 Nina Johnson



Akemi Saitoh, chairwoman of the Yasuhiko & Akemi Saitoh Foundation, at the 2023 Annual Membership Meeting.

📷 Nina Johnson



Children's Day guests on the Zig-Zag Bridge enjoying the joyful swimming of koi.

📷 Julie Gursha

Textile artisan Judilee Fitzhugh guides a participant of a March 2023 workshop held in the Yanai Classroom.

📷 Jonathan Ley



A member of enTaiko beams after concluding a song on Children's Day.

📷 Julie Gursha



Bee de Weese (l) and her husband, Board of Trustees Vice President Doug de Weese (r) with former Oregon State Speaker and current Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center CEO Lynn Snodgrass.

📷 Nina Johnson

**60TH ANNIVERSARY FUN FACT | DID YOU KNOW...?**

In the Flat Garden there are two islands that are traditional symbols of happiness. The longer island is thought to resemble a gourd, which were traditional containers for sake. Because of this, the circle by its side could be thought of as a sake cup. While they are, like much of Portland Japanese Garden's plant life, green today, this was not always so. They were originally composed of ruby dianthus, a perennial shrub with brilliant pink flowers that were grown near the offices of Portland Park and Recreation Head Gardener William "Robbie" Robinson. The Garden's original designer, Professor Takuma Tono of Tokyo Agricultural University, requested their addition after he saw them growing at his Portland hotel. According to Robinson, they proved difficult to maintain and so the decision was eventually made to replace them with what we see today.

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