



## Connecting Cultures: Japanese Flowering Cherries in America

March 18, 2023, 1:00-4:30pm  
Auditorium, Administration Building, National Arboretum

Since the mid-19th century, appreciation of Japanese flowering cherries has grown in the United States, melding Japanese aesthetics and techniques with a distinctly American flair. Today, the U.S. National Arboretum stands as a center of American appreciation for Japanese flowering cherry trees, growing about 60 cultivars. The oldest flowering cherry trees on the Arboretum's grounds were planted in the early 1950s, and these aging trees provide an opportunity for us to experiment with a traditional Japanese method of tree rejuvenation.

Noted Japanese expert Kurato Fujimoto will work with our staff preceding this symposium to install traditional-style wooden crutches to support the heavy branches of two old weeping cherry trees. This half-day program will cover the history of Japanese cherry trees in America, ancient cherry trees and restorative practices in Japan, the flowering cherry research program at the Arboretum, and a tree-side presentation of the traditional Japanese support system.

### PROGRAM

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| 1:00        | Welcome & Introduction  |
| 1:15 – 1:45 | <i>The Art of Aging: Cherry Trees in Japan</i> (Ron Henderson)                    |
| 2:00 – 2:30 | <i>Japanese Flowering Cherry Trees in America</i> (Anthony Aiello)                |
| 2:45 – 3:15 | Break for refreshments & snacks   |
| 3:15 – 3:45 | <i>Flowering Cherry Research at the U.S. National Arboretum</i> (Margaret Pooler) |
| 4:00 – 4:30 | <i>Outdoor Demonstration of Japanese Crutching Method</i> (Kurato Fujimoto)       |

## SPEAKERS

**RON HENDERSON**, RLA, FASLA, is an international leader in landscape architecture design, history, research, and education. His broad range of research includes gardens and contemporary urbanism in China and Japan, arboriculture and horticulture practices, botanical drawing, landscape-based urbanism, and driverless cities. Since 2015, Henderson has served as Professor and Director of the Master of Landscape Architecture+Urbanism program at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT). His pilgrimage in Japan to visit the oldest cherry trees is the subject of the exhibit *Sakura Orihon: Diary of a Cherry Blossom Journey*, on display at the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum from March 4 through April 2.

**ANTHONY AIELLO** is the Associate Director, Collections at Longwood Gardens. Previously, he served for twenty-two years as the Gayle E. Maloney Director of Horticulture and Curator at the Morris Arboretum. Tony has traveled the world in search of novel plants suitable for growing in the Delaware Valley. His interests include temperate trees and shrubs, including flowering cherries in particular, as well as economic botany and the history of horticulture. He has written extensively about his travels as well as his historic and plant interests.

**DR. MARGARET R. POOLER** is the Research Leader in the Floral and Nursery Plants Research Unit (FNPRU) at the U.S. National Arboretum, which is part of USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Margaret and her team focus on developing improved woody ornamental plants and related breeding technologies useful to the nursery and landscape industries. FNPRU has released four flowering cherries to the trade: *Prunus ×incam* 'First Lady', *Prunus campanulata* 'Abigail Adams', *Prunus* 'Helen Taft', and *Prunus* 'Dream Catcher'. If she had to limit herself to working with just one genus, Margaret says it would be flowering cherries.

**MR. KURATO FUJIMOTO** is a master gardener based in Kanazawa (Ishikawa Prefecture) on the snowy west coast of Japan. He has 25 years of experience, including working under the master gardener Araya in Kanazawa for 6 years. He has been working on tree maintenance at Kenrokuen Garden, one of Japan's three great daimyo gardens, in Kanazawa for more 20 years. He also leads tree maintenance and gardening on various projects throughout Kanazawa. He is a master in *yukitsuri* (rope-tenting) and *hōzue* (brace/crutch) design and maintenance.

