



“Fujitaro Kubota...and his garden”

Film Discussion Guide for Community Groups



Written and produced by Kubota Garden Foundation
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ABOUT THIS DISCUSSION GUIDE

This discussion guide was designed to complement the Kubota Garden Foundation's documentary, "Fujitaro Kubota... and his garden" when showing the film to adult community groups. It provides introductory context, acknowledgments, and discussion questions. It was produced by Kubota Garden Foundation volunteers: Barb Yasui, Debbie Kashino, Susan Mise, Linda Fricke, Lori Dugdale, Joy Okazaki, and Ellen Phillips-Angeles.

FILM INTRODUCTION

This is the story of Fujitaro Kubota, who came to the United States as an immigrant from Japan in 1907. He started a landscaping business, nursery, and display garden in 1927 in the Rainier Beach neighborhood of southeast Seattle. He created many gardens throughout the Pacific Northwest infusing traditional Japanese garden design with the Pacific Northwest plant palate.

Kubota Garden began as a place to showcase Fujitaro's work for future clients, but grew into a community gathering place. Despite the horror of incarceration during World War II, discriminatory citizenship and land laws, and other obstacles, Mr. Kubota persevered and stayed true to his principles. Kubota Garden is his masterpiece. His wish was fulfilled in 1986 when the garden was purchased by the City of Seattle to create a public space for the community to enjoy.

The Kubota Garden Foundation, founded in 1988, is a non-profit corporation that was established to support, enhance, and perpetuate the Kubota Garden within the spirit of Fujitaro Kubota and his son Tom Kubota.

Kubota Garden exemplifies 60 years of vision, effort, and dedication of the Kubota family and 30 years of commitment by the City of Seattle and Kubota Garden Foundation. It is one of Seattle's most beautiful and inspiring places. The garden provides a serene space for visitors to walk, reconnect with nature, take photos, relax, picnic, or attend events.

FILM STRATEGY

This 50-minute documentary film is intended to be educational, inspirational, and an introduction to Kubota Garden. It focuses on the early days of the garden through 1986, when it was purchased by the City of Seattle. It features former colleagues, family members, clients, and community members who share their thoughts about Fujitaro Kubota and his development of the garden. The story is told through interviews that are skillfully knitted-together and photos from the Kubota Garden Foundation archives and other sources.

For copies of materials and access to the film:

You may download materials from the Kubota Garden Foundation website www.kubotagarden.org and the video from DENSHO:

<http://ddr.densho.org/ddr-densho-354-2125/>

For questions and comments contact the office at:

info@kubotagarden.org

206-725-5060

www.kubotagarden.org



COMMUNITY PRESENTATION OUTLINE

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Understand the history of Kubota Garden, how it came to be.
2. Appreciate the experiences of Fujitaro Kubota, an immigrant from Japan.
3. Describe key elements of Kubota Garden – stone, plants, water.

Materials

1. “Fujitaro Kubota... and his garden” Film
2. Postcards of historical images from the garden
3. Evaluation
4. Kubota Garden Self- Guided Tour brochure
5. Kubota Garden Foundation membership envelopes
6. Sign-in sheet requesting more information (volunteering)

Lesson Plan Outline (1.5 hours)

1. Welcome group (4 minutes)
2. Provide overview of the program (5 minute)
3. Show film “Fujitaro Kubota...and his garden” (50 minutes)
4. Complete evaluation form (5 minutes)
5. Lead discussion about the film (20 minutes)
6. Share information about Kubota Garden and Kubota Garden Foundation (5 minutes)
7. Closure (1 minute)

1 hour (without discussion after the film or more detailed information about the Foundation and garden)



LESSON PLAN

1. Welcome group.

Thank attendees and acknowledge those that helped organize the meeting.

2. Provide overview of the program.

Briefly introduce yourself. Explain the purpose of the program is to share an inspiring story, a documentary film about Fujitaro Kubota and how Kubota Garden came to be.

3. Show film.

4. Complete evaluation of the film.

Ask attendees to fill out the evaluation form. Note: Form is also designed as a Survey Monkey tool that can be sent electronically after a film showing.

5. Lead discussion about the film.

If time permits, lead a discussion about the film.

Start with open-ended questions to elicit reactions.

- After watching the film, what were your reactions?
- Was there a message in the film?
- Why do you think Fujitaro Kubota was able to overcome the obstacles (incarceration, rebuilding his garden) that could have prevented the creation of his garden?
- Given what you learned in the film, what do you think Fujitaro Kubota's legacy is?
- Why is it important to have Kubota Gardens in the middle of an urban city?
- What did you learn about Kubota Garden?
- What are some lasting impacts of Fujitaro Kubota and his family on the local community and beyond?
- What can you do to preserve Fujitaro Kubota's vision?
- What questions do you have?

6. Share information about Kubota Garden and Kubota Garden Foundation.

Share the Self-Guided Tour brochure and historical postcards. Encourage attendees to visit the garden, become a member of the Foundation, and volunteer with the Foundation. Pass around sign-in sheet requesting more information.

7. Closure.

Thank attendees for participating.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Special thanks to Gary Thomsen, Creek Productions, who artfully produced the film using the words and emotions of those interviewed, photographs, and cover footage.

Kubota Garden Foundation archivists provided invaluable material and photo indexing.

- Ernie Dornfeld
- Alyssa Enders
- Stephanie Ikeda

The film editorial committee provided many hours of volunteer service developing the film.

- Ernie Dornfeld
- Joy Okazaki
- Ellen Phillips-Angeles
- Jason Wirth

The film would not have been possible without the generous contributions of the Kubota family and those who were interviewed.

Kubota Family

- Linda Kubota Byrd
- Wendy Goade
- Cathy Hem
- Oz Hem
- Margo Izutsu
- Jeff Izutsu
- Allan Kubota
- Susan Mise



Interviewees

- Marilyn Ahearn, granddaughter of John Olsen, neighbor and friend of Fujitaro Kubota
- Don Brooks, Senior Gardner from 1988 to 2018
- Richard Brown, former Executive Director, Bloedel Reserve
- Linda Kubota Byrd, granddaughter of Fujitaro Kubota
- Ernie Dornfeld, Kubota Garden Foundation historian
- Kentaro Kojima, Stone Sculptor
- Allan Kubota, grandson of Fujitaro Kubota
- Susan Mise, granddaughter of Fujitaro Kubota
- Ciscoe Morris, former Senior Gardener, Seattle University
- Joy Okazaki, Kubota Garden Foundation Board President
- Mary Anne Parmeter, Kubota Garden Foundation historian
- Karl Shearer, former Kubota Gardening Company crew
- Don Shimono, Landscape Architect
- Terry Welch, Landscape Designer
- Margaret Ann Wiltse, Rainier Beach community activist

Kubota Garden Foundation

10915 – 51 Ave S, Seattle, WA 98178

The Foundation is a non-profit organization formed in 1989 to continue a partnership with the City and assure the preservation of the entire 20-acre garden as envisioned by the Kubota family. With the support of staff, KGF volunteers implement many programs and projects: conduct tours, greet visitors, help with garden maintenance, and organize publicity and capital projects to build special garden features such as the Terrace Overlook. Working with partner organizations, volunteers implement free cultural and educational events.

Kubota Garden

9817 – 55 Ave S, Seattle, WA 98118

Kubota garden, one of the loveliest places in Seattle, is a public, 20-acre Japanese garden. It is owned by the City of Seattle and managed by Seattle Parks and Recreation. It is open every day during daylight hours and is free of charge.

Its unique history, design, pruned pines, use of stone, waterfalls, ponds, wonderful collection of mature plants, and sense of exploration combine to create a beautiful and serene place. It will lift your spirit and delight your eyes. It is a popular place for people from many cultures to walk, relax, gather for celebrations, picnic and take photos year-around.



EVALUATION

1. How would you rate *Fujitaro Kubota... and his Garden*?

What a waste of my time It was pretty boring It was nice, but I didn't learn anything I learned so much or revived great memories I have to tell my friends and family to see it

2. How did you hear about the film?

- Rainier Beach Community Club meeting or email
- KGF Email
- Facebook Event Notification
- Vanishing Seattle Facebook post
- Article in South Seattle Emerald or International Examiner
- Friend/Family/Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

3. What questions did the film raise for you?

4. How helpful was the staff at the event?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Somewhat helpful
- Not so helpful
- Not at all helpful

5. What did you like about the event? What improvements would you have made?

6. How many times have you been to Kubota Garden?

- Never been
- Once



Kubota Garden Foundation

- 2-10 times
- More than 10

7. What's your ZIP CODE?

8. Are you interested in more information about:

- Becoming a Kubota Garden Foundation Member
- Volunteer opportunities with Kubota Garden Foundation
- Future Kubota Garden Foundation events and plant sales

Please fill out sign-in sheet with your contact information.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your feedback. We look forward to seeing you at the Garden.