

# A Teacher's Guide to Kubota Garden

Elementary School





Kubota Garden Foundation

*Written and produced by:*

## **Kubota Garden Foundation**

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Garden Location:

9817 55th Ave S | Seattle, WA 98118

Kubota Garden Foundation

10915 – 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue South | Seattle, WA 98178-2160 | 206-725-5060

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## To TEACHERS

We hope these materials will help you with your trip to Kubota Garden and make your visit more meaningful and interesting. Please feel free to duplicate any of these materials and to adapt them to fit your class. If you do make adaptations, would you please share these with us along with your evaluation?

We are glad to share the beauty and peace of the garden. We feel it is important to emphasize to the children that **this is a garden and not a playground**. Pre-trip activities should include a discussion about the difference between a garden and a playground and appropriate behaviors in a public garden such as Kubota Garden.

A second emphasis is the **care of the garden**. The Seattle Parks Department personnel and the Kubota Garden Foundation volunteers work very hard to keep the garden healthy and enjoyable for visitors. Please discuss with children what they can do to take care of their environment and in particular, their visit to the garden.

There is a drinking fountain and portable toilet in the upper part of the Garden, just inside the Entry Gate. There are three picnic tables inside the side gate. Follow the wall south of the parking lot.

The Garden is located at:

9817 55th Ave S | Seattle, WA 98118



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## OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Learn about the history of Kubota Garden.
- Find and identify some of the important physical features of Kubota Garden.
- Learn to appreciate and protect nature.





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## **KUBOTA GARDEN MANNERS**

### **DO:**

- 1. Enjoy the garden**
- 2. Stay on the trails**
- 3. Stay with your chaperone**
- 4. Follow directions**
- 5. Pick up after yourself**

### **DON'T:**

- 1. Pick flowers, leaves or other plant parts**
- 2. Walk in flower beds**
- 3. Throw things**
- 4. Wander off by yourself**
- 5. Go into the ponds**



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## WHAT IS KUBOTA GARDEN LIKE?

- ❖ A temple?
- ❖ A garden?
- ❖ A cultural display?
- ❖ A park?
- ❖ A fine arts museum?
- ❖ An historical site?

Visitors say: “All the above!” It is definitely a very special place. To help EVERYONE enjoy their visit and to keep Kubota Garden safe, here are some guidelines for your visit:

Teachers, adults, and tour guides should all teach children that Kubota garden is not a playground, a climbing yard or an amusement center.

- Children should be within sight of supervising adults and within voice control at all times. Because a visit to Kubota Garden is an educational experience, they are expected to listen to the tour guide.
- The open lawn areas are open for walking, sitting, and for picnics. Please explore the paths, but stay out of the planted areas. Stamping down the soil hurts the plants.
- Plants are not to be picked, broken, climbed, or damaged in any way. Kubota Garden is a treasure and misuse is considered vandalism.

The Kubota Garden Foundation and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation hope that **everyone, especially children, leave the garden with awareness that it IS a special place and provides many opportunities to grow in knowledge and wonder and to enjoy nature.** Please help us in our mission to encourage appreciation and understanding of the garden. Thank you.



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## HISTORY

Fujitaro Kubota was born in Kochi Prefecture, Shikoku Island, Japan, in 1879. In 1907 he immigrated to San Francisco and, after working his way up the coast, decided to make Seattle his home. He managed apartment buildings and then owned some apartments. In 1923 he started his gardening business.

Initially the service he provided was maintenance gardening, but it gradually became a landscape and garden design business. Needing more space for nursery stock, he searched Seattle for a suitable site. When he saw the property on Renton Avenue he decided that it had everything he needed: space, water and interesting topography. At that time the land was a logged-off swamp. In 1927, Fujitaro Kubota acquired his first five acres, which is now part of the Core Garden.

Mr. Kubota was a man with a dream. Entirely self-taught as a gardener, he wanted to display the beauty of the Northwest in a Japanese manner. He designed and installed gardens throughout the Seattle area. Some public areas of his work include the campus of Seattle University and the Japanese Garden at the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island.

Features of Japanese gardens include water, stone and plants. Generally Japanese gardens are two thirds evergreen and one third deciduous plants. Each stone has its own kami (character). The garden emulates the natural environment. For example, a large rock is a mountain replica. The garden touches all the senses, i.e., acoustic properties of water, sight, smell and touch. There are changing views as you walk through where scenes are revealed one after another. Finally, the garden is a place of peace and reflection (Zen), a place to find yourself in the world.

As the business prospered, his garden grew to include 20 acres. It was the family home, the business office, the design and display center, and the



nursery to grow plant materials. The Kubota family was always generous in sharing access to the garden and for many years it was a center for the social and cultural activities in the Japanese-American community.

The swampy land was drained, ponds, pools and bridges built and display gardens installed. In the early 1940's, the garden was abandoned for four years while the Kubota family suffered internment at Camp Minidoka in Idaho during World War II. Mr. Kubota, with his sons, Tak and Tom, and the family rebuilt the business after World War II and at that time began extensive plantings of nursery stock. Many of these nursery areas are still in the garden.

In 1962 Mr. Kubota placed over 400 tons of stone to create the Mountainside with waterfalls, reflecting pond, carved stones and the plants that he had worked with throughout his life.

In 1972 the Japanese Government awarded Fujitaro Kubota with a rare honor, the Fifth Class order of the Sacred Treasure "for his achievements in his adopted country, for introducing and building respect for Japanese gardening in this area."

Mr. Kubota died in 1973 at the age of 93. He had always hoped that the garden would one day be available to the public, both to enhance the quality of life in Seattle and to increase American understanding and appreciation of Japanese culture.

After Fujitaro's death, his son Tom helped realize his father's dream. Tom was an advocate and leader in the establishment of Kubota Garden as a public garden. When the 20-acre property became a target for condominium developers, community groups encouraged the Seattle Landmarks Preservation Board to designate the 4 ½ acre core area of the garden as a historical landmark. In 1982 the American-Japanese garden created by Fujitaro Kubota was declared a Historical Landmark of the City of Seattle.



In 1987 the City of Seattle acquired the garden from the Kubota family. It is now maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation and by volunteers.

The Kubota Garden Foundation is a non-profit 501(c3) organization established in 1989 "to support, enhance and perpetuate Kubota Garden within the spirit and vision of Fujitaro Kubota and his son, Tom Kubota." The Foundation recruits volunteers, implements programs and raises funds to support Kubota Garden. Volunteers provide tours, help with garden maintenance, manage the nursery, conduct plant sales and serve on the board and committees. Many of the Garden features were supported with Foundation funds and volunteers, including the Entry Gate and Ornamental Wall, Terrace Overlook ishigaki wall and platform, Tom Kubota Stroll Garden and drinking fountain.



*Fujitaro Kubota*



*Tom Kubota*





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## TOURING THE GARDEN

Please use the attached map to find these important locations:



### 1. The Japanese Garden

Constructed in the 1930's, this is the most typically "Japanese" part of the garden. Note the predominant use of greenery, the small scale, the dobayashi bridge, and the pruned pines.

The pond is fed by a spring (you can follow the path up the hillside to where the spring comes out of the ground) and the water flows under Renton Avenue and eventually reaches Lake Washington. The pond itself was dug out by hand with shovels and wheelbarrows and then lined with rocks. The excess dirt was used to make the hillside larger. Rumor has it a koi (fish) about 15 inches long lives in this pond.



## 2. The Mountainside

Fujitaro Kubota designed this part of the garden in 1963. He was 83 years old at the time of construction so he supervised the placing of plants, stones, and waterfalls. The hill had been logged off and all the plant material was selected and placed by Mr. Kubota.

The water is pumped to the top from Mapes Creek.

The Memorial Stone is a traditional feature of Japanese gardens noting the completion of an important project. The purpose of a “mountainside” in a Japanese garden is to help visitors to feel close to nature, to feel removed from civilization, and to forget their daily cares for awhile.



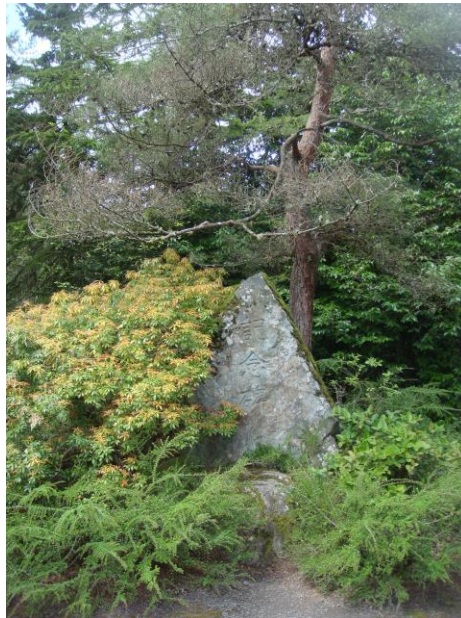
### **3. The Tom Kubota Stroll Garden**

This area, constructed in the late 1990's was designed by Tom Kubota, Fujitaro's son, and funded by the Kubota Garden Foundation with assistance from the Seattle Parks Department and a matching grant from the Department of Neighborhoods.

Tom Kubota wanted a place in the garden which would be accessible to all visitors, where older or mobility-limited visitors could walk easily, have benches or stones to sit on, and where they could enjoy the peace and beauty of the garden.

The pond is spring fed and shy koi live there.

The curbs are a reminder of the days when this portion of land was part of the nursery at the garden and customers would drive in to do business. The curbs also helped with parking when the Kubota family invited friends, neighbors, and community groups to social gatherings at the garden.



#### 4. Three Carved Stones

Kubota Garden contains three stones carved with Japanese characters:

- **Memorial Stone**
- **Yo Sa Koi Stone** at the lookout
- **Prayer Stone**

They are all located on the Mountainside. Ayame Tsutakawa, a member of the Kubota Garden Foundation Board of Directors, translated the stones.

#### **Memorial Stone**

**The face:**

*The Memorial Stone*

**The back:**

*Fujitaro Kubota was born in 1879 in Kochi Prefecture on the island of Shikoku, Japan. He immigrated to America in 1907 and established his home. In 1927 he acquired this land in*





*order to make a large garden. With his own hands he cleared the land, dug several ponds, and cut the trees to build the garden. Mr. Kubota studied landscaping, suffered hard work and put great effort into this project. The garden was finally completed in 1962 and in that year this memorial stone was erected. It was the eighty-third year of Fujitaro Kubota.*

*This text was written by Rev. Fumio Matsui*

*The stone was carved by Mr. Okada of Japan*

### **Stone at the Lookout**

*Yo Sa Koi Toge*

*1962*

The Japanese word *Toge* means “crest” as in the crest or top of a hill, this stone is placed at the very top of the Mountainside. Fujitaro Kubota came to America from Kochi and the song *Yo Sa Koi* is a very famous folk song from that area of Japan.

All the verses are comical satires, fun-loving drinking songs. Friends would sing this song when they were having a good time together. Mr. Kubota was a hard-working man with a great sense of humor who enjoyed good times. At 83 years he was probably very happy to have built the Mountainside and was reminiscing about his hometown and named the crest *Yo Sa Koi Toge*

### **Prayer Stone**

*Through Ikigami Kanko Daijin,*

*To Tenchi Kane no Kami,*

*Pray with a single heart.*

*The divine favor depends*

*Upon one's own heart.*

*On this very day, pray.*



Fujitaro Kubota was a very religious man. He supported and helped to build the Konko Kyo Church of Seattle where he was a Director General for many years. This prayer is from the *Konko Kyo Prayer Book* and is called “The Divine Reminder.”



## 5. Fera Fera Forest

This area original was a nursery planting of Threadleaf Cypress. Notice how the trees are planted in rows. The gardeners decided to prune the branches so we can weave our way through the grove. It’s lovely and cool in the summer, a tranquil refuge.



## 6. Terrace Overlook

This area was envisioned by the Kubota family as a place to look across the Spring Pond down into the garden with peek-a-boo views back toward the Entry Gate, as well as provide a stage for informal events and entertainment. Twenty-five stone masons built the ishigaki (dry-laid) stone wall in August 2014 during a two-week workshop led by a father and son team, Suminori and Junji Awata, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> generation stone masons from Japan

The Awatas taught the masons how to select the stones, ‘read’ the stones to determine where they would split and to place and pound small 2-inch chisels that split the stone revealing a beautiful rock face. The stones were set into place by hand without use of mortar.

You can see chisel marks on some of the stones. Notice the large stone on the face of the wall. This is the ‘heart stone’, selected by the Awatas to represent the main stone in the project. Suminori Awata said, “Stones and gardens have always had a close relationship. I hope that visitors can touch and feel the stones and Japanese tradition. It will be great if they can discover how alive the stones are. They can be warm or cold in any condition.”





Park Department staff built the timber structure and volunteer masons laid the paver stones. Artist Gerard Tsutakawa designed and built the fence. Take a moment to rest, look at the view, and listen to the sounds. You may see koi fish and turtles in the pond. Notice the Grand Fir, the tallest tree overlooking the Terrace. This is the oldest tree in the garden (about 225 years old) and one of the few trees in the garden when it was purchased by Fujitaro Kubota in 1927.

Turn around and look at the other end of the Terrace. Notice the Black Locust/freesia trees with their bright lemon green leaves against the darker evergreen trees. This space can be rented for weddings or other events.



## 7. The Bell

In Japan you often enter the garden via a temple, so you ring the bell to let the Gods know you are in the garden. The bell's penetrating and pervasive tone carries over considerable distances, which led to their use as signals, timekeepers and alarms. This bell was crafted of bronze in Thailand and donated to Kubota Garden as a remembrance. In modern times, bells have become symbols of world peace. You may ring the bell by tapping with your knuckle.



## 8. The Stone Garden

Stones set the feeling and are a major element in Japanese gardens, like a skeleton to hold up the whole. These stones are unique in their size and quality. This garden was recreated by Parks Department gardeners from a garden Fujitaro Kubota created in Southeast Seattle for a family home on Renton Avenue South (just up the street). The stones and small water feature were recreated exactly as it was in Fujitaro Kubota's vision. The entry stones were donated by the Kubota Garden Foundation. The entry gate was reclaimed from the Japanese Garden at the Washington Park Arboretum.



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## SAMPLE LESSON

Look around you. You are standing in what was once a man's dream. What do you think that dream was?

Take all reasonable answers, but lead them to conclude that Kubota Garden was Fujitaro Kubota's dream which was to display the beauty of the Northwest in a Japanese garden. He created a garden that he wanted everyone to enjoy.

Take out the map. Fujitaro Kubota was born on the island of Shikoku in Japan in 1879. Point out Japan. Do you know where your ancestors (great grandfather, grandmother, etc.) are from?

In 1907 he immigrated from Japan to San Francisco. What do you think "immigrate" means? Then he came to Seattle.

In 1927 he bought five acres of swampy land. This land is very close to where you are standing now. What is swampy land? What would you have to do if you wanted to grow plants on this land? The land was drained and ponds, pool, and bridges were built and a display garden planted.

If the children are a little older (perhaps 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and older), it might be important to mention that the Garden was abandoned for four years in the early 1940's during WWII when the Kubota family along with all the Japanese-Americans on the West Coast were interned in camps. The Kubota family was interned at Camp Minidoka in Idaho.

When they returned to Seattle and Kubota Garden, they had to do extensive rebuilding.

Can you see any bridges, ponds, waterfalls, carved stones, bell, pruned trees, a Mountainside? (You can name other points of interest here too!).

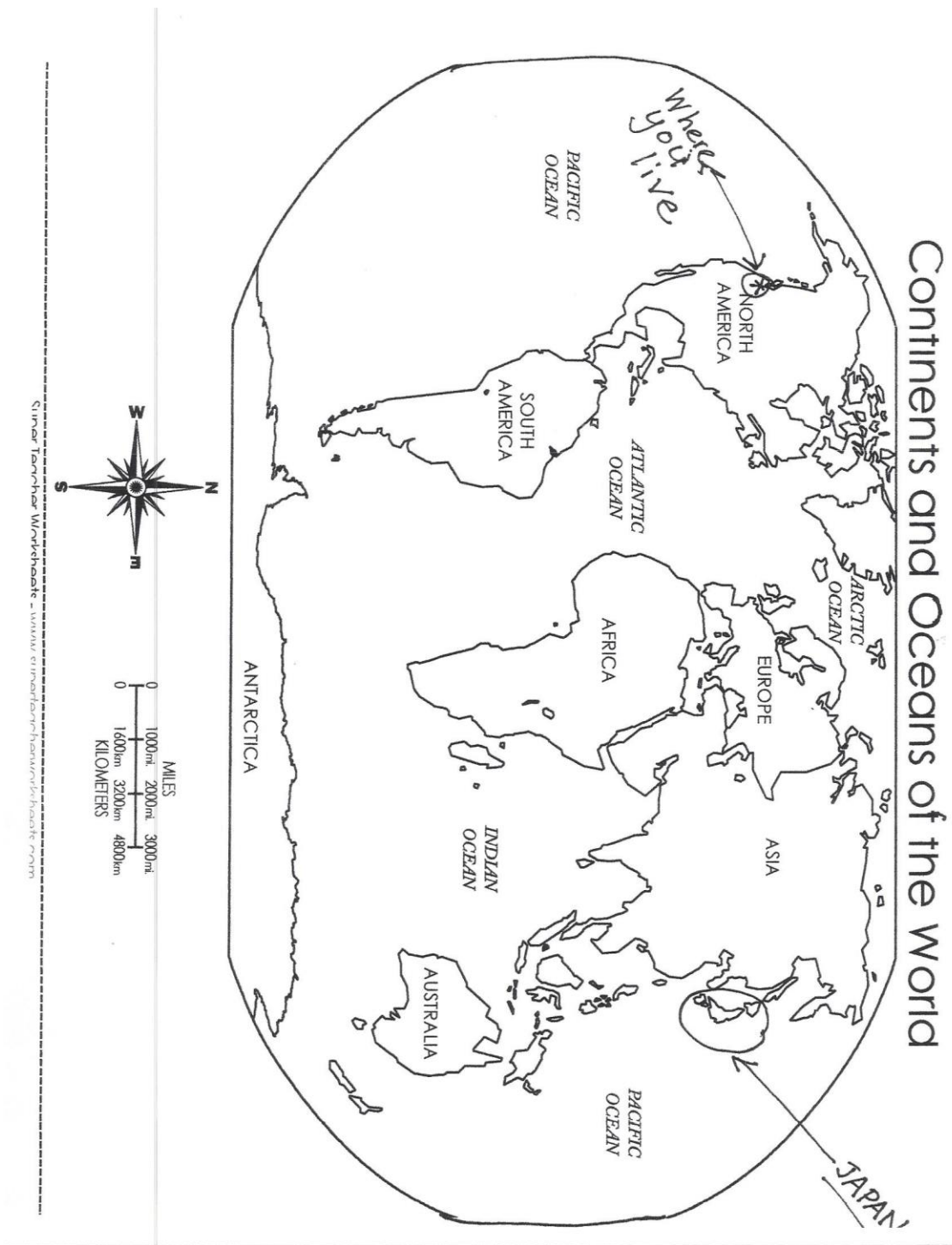


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As the years passed, Mr. Kubota and his workers created all these special features in the garden.

Mr. Kubota died in 1973 at the age of 93. After he passed away, his son, Tom Kubota helped to realize his father's dream. Finally, in 1987 the City of Seattle bought the garden from the Kubota family and now it is maintained by the Department of Parks and Recreation and Kubota Garden is now a garden everyone can enjoy.

How is this garden the same as other gardens and parks? How is it different? What makes it special for you?



# Continents and Oceans of the World



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## SOME SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

You may wish to do some of the suggested activities as you tour the garden. Others, when you return to the classroom.

Access to pencils, paper and a clipboard is recommended if students need to do writing or drawing.

Most of the activities are for lower elementary level students. An asterisk \* denotes an activity that might be more appropriate for upper grade students.

### Using Your Senses

1. Feel a Red Pine and then a Black Pine. How are they the same? How are they different?
2. As you tour the garden, using your “Can You Find” paper, circle or check the things you see.

*Teachers: Use one or both papers depending on grade level. The papers may also be used as an Identification Hunt. Adult supervision would be advisable to verify sightings. In order to protect the garden, nothing should be picked or removed.*

3. Find a plant that is red. Find a plant this is yellow. Find a blue one. Draw each one.
4. Everyone be silent. What are all the sounds you can hear?  
Are the sounds from inside or outside of the garden?

### Writing

1. What is your favorite part of the garden? Why?  
Describe the plants, trees, and other vegetation, the colors you see, the sounds you hear, etc.
2. Make up a postcard to send to a friend on which you have drawn your favorite part of the garden on one side and describe it for your friend on the other. Remember to leave room for the address.





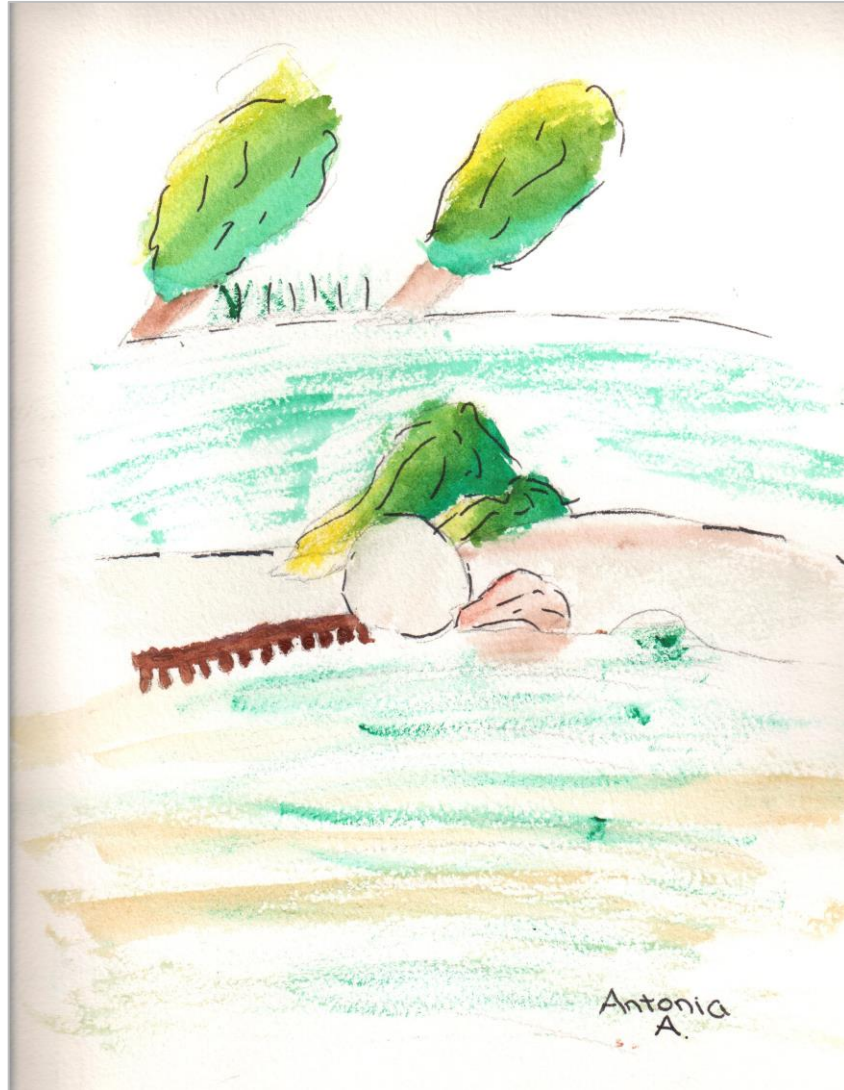
3. Choose your favorite part of the garden and describe it for a visually impaired person who could not see it.
4. \*Choose an interesting spot and try writing a cinquian or a Haiku (3-5-3 Haiku pattern).

### **Science Related**

1. Find some examples of recycling in the garden (for example, wood chips, compost, log path edges and plant supports, benches)
2. Find the spot where the creek is wild on one side and developed on the other. Which do you prefer? Why?
3. Find examples of Evergreen trees. Find examples of deciduous trees. What is the difference?
4. Find at least two compound leaves and two simple leaves. What is the difference? Draw them.
5. Kubota Garden is home to many animals including birds! Do you see any? Make a list. Draw them, if you have time.

### **Social Studies**

1. Draw a map of your favorite part of the garden.
2. Fujitaro Kubota was from Japan. Locate Japan on the world map (attached). Locate where some of your ancestors came from.
3. \*When Fujitaro Kubota came to the Pacific Northwest in 1907, what was happening in Japan at that time?  
What was happening in the United States in 1907?
4. \*Kubota Garden was abandoned for four years in the early 1940's when the Kubota family and all Japanese-Americans were sent to internment camps. Research more about this topic. Could this ever happen again? Why or why not?



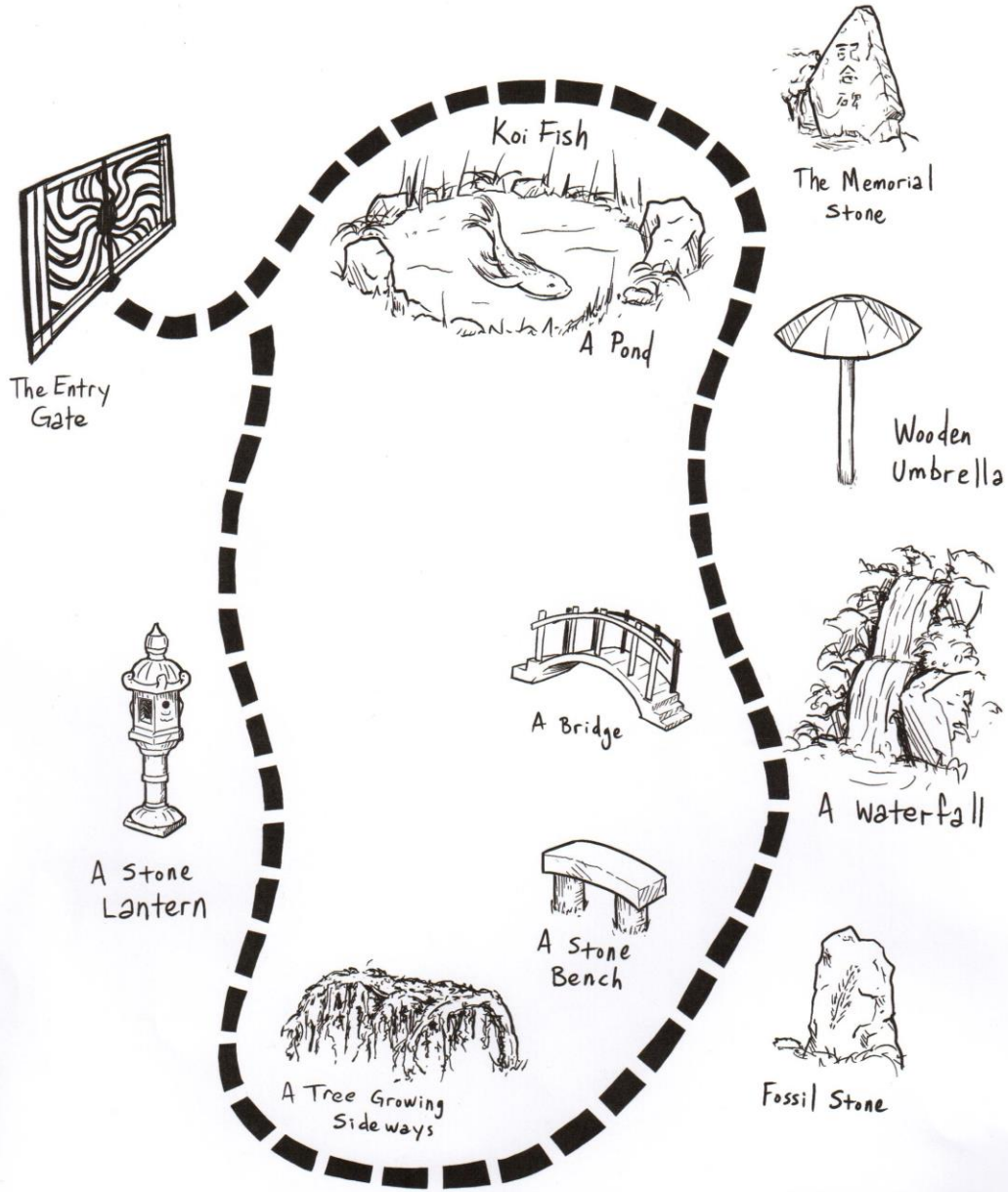
### **Art and Music**

1. Draw a picture of your favorite part of the garden.
2. Make a sun print of your favorite leaves (please use only fallen leaves). Kits are available at Learning World.



## Pre- and Post-Trip Activities

1. What is the difference between a garden, a playground, and a park? (In a garden, you look, listen, feel, smell, touch, enjoy and even protect it!). How is Kubota Garden different from your favorite park? What can you do on the playground that you can't do in a garden?
2. If you could add one thing to Kubota Garden, what would it be?
3. Design a garden that could be shared by both children and senior citizens. Draw it and tell how people would enjoy it.
4. Look at a book about Japanese gardens. Can you tell the difference between a Japanese garden and a Japanese-American garden (Kubota Garden)?
5. Mr. Kubota came from the island of Shikoku in Japan. Find it on a map.
  - How is it similar to Seattle? (Situated on the shores of the Pacific Ocean, rather isolated from the rest of Japan, is mountainous, has a mild moist climate, etc.)
  - Where are you or your ancestors from? Trace your roots or a family member's roots to the Pacific Northwest.



**KUBOTA GARDEN**  
Can you find it?



## Can You Find at Kubota Garden?

- Stone with a fossil
- Bamboo leaf
- Stone with Japanese writing
- Bird feather or any evidence of animals (think of sounds)
- Stone lantern
- Waterfall
- Stepping stones on land and four stepping stones over water
- Pruned pine
- Flat bridge
- Forest
- Tree growing sideways (Weeping Blue Atlas Cedar)
- Litter (You may pick that up. Thank you!)
- Blue tree
- Round red bridge (Moon Bridge)
- A snag – a tree with a dead top
- Bridge made of earth and twigs
- Trees growing in a row
- An all-season creek (Mapes Creek)
- Tree with very sharp needles (Japanese Black Pine)
- Wooden umbrella



## EVALUATION

1. What did your students especially enjoy about their visit?

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2. What did you, as an educator, enjoy?

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3. Was there anything that might have improved your visit?

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4. Did you use the Educational Guide? Yes No

5. What part of the guide was useful for you and your group?

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6. Do you have any recommendations or additions?

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7. Other comments:

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Please mail this to: Kubota Garden Foundation, 10915 - 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, Seattle, 98178. Thank you very much!



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## **ADDENDUM 1: RESOURCES**

### **YouTube Video: Kubota Garden**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WU2yXIkXYoA>

### **Kubota Garden**

9817 – 55<sup>th</sup> Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98118

### **Kubota Garden Foundation**

10915 – 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue South, Seattle, WA 98178

206-725-5060; [info@kubotagarden.org](mailto:info@kubotagarden.org); [www.kubotagarden.org](http://www.kubotagarden.org)

### **Kubota Gardens Landscaping**

(Founded by Fujitaro Kubota in 1927)

<http://kubotagardens.com>

## **Japanese American Internment during World War II**

### ***Densho: The Japanese American Legacy Project***

<http://www.densho.org>

1416 S. Jackson Street, Seattle, WA 98144, 206-320-0095

### ***National Archives***

<http://www.archives.gov/research/alic/reference/military/japanese-internment.html#.V6AUW51KIWM>





## Books

Author Yoshiko Uchida has written many books for children about the internment experience. Here is a list of books with lesson plans. <https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=987>

### ***The Bracelet***

by Yoshiko Uchida, Joanna Yardley (Illustrator)

Hardcover, 32 pages

Published October 14th 1993 by Philomel Books (first published 1993)

ISBN 039922503X (ISBN13: 9780399225031)

Edition Language English

### ***The Journal of Ben Uchida: Citizen 13559 Mirror Lake Internment Camp (My Name Is America)***

by Barry Denenberg

Hardcover: 157 pages

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.; 1st edition (September 1, 1999)

ISBN 0590485318 (ISBN13: 9780590485319)

Edition Language English

### ***Baseball Saved Us***

by Ken Mochizuki (Author), Dom Lee (Illustrator)

Paperback: 30 pages

Publisher: Lee & Low Books; Reprint edition (March 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1880000199 (ISBN-13: 978-1880000199)



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## **ADDENDUM 2: THE JEWEL OF RAINIER BEACH**