



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 8, 2025

### **11<sup>th</sup> Annual Japanese Moon Viewing Festival at Cheekwood** *A Celebration of Japanese Art, Culture, Gardens and More*

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Japanese art, gardens and culture will shine during an enchanting afternoon and moonlit evening at Cheekwood Estate & Gardens. Cheekwood’s annual Japanese Moon Viewing Festival, or *Otsukimi*, takes place near the date of the Harvest Moon and is held in partnership with the Consulate-General of Japan and Japan-America Society of Tennessee.

Guests can immerse themselves in Japanese traditions and the splendor of the Cheekwood gardens while enjoying tea ceremony demonstrations, watching musical performances and a kimono fashion show and partaking in a variety of art activities.

The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival will be held Sunday, October 5 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. This is the third of four multicultural festivals celebrated throughout the year at Cheekwood. Tickets are on sale now at [cheekwood.org](http://cheekwood.org).

“The celebration of the Harvest Moon is a time of reflection and appreciation,” said Jonathan Contrades, the Cultural Programs Coordinator for the Consulate-General of Japan in Nashville. “The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival at Cheekwood is an extraordinarily unique event in our region with cultural performances and demonstrations that are hard to find anywhere else. We hope everyone will enjoy the event.”

### **Schedule of Events**

#### **Main Stage | Arboretum Lawn**

5 p.m. - Tea Ceremony

5:30 p.m. - Performance by Nashville Taiko

6 p.m. - Welcome Ceremony and Kimono Fashion Show

7 p.m. - Tea Ceremony + Kendama Demonstration

7:30 p.m. - Performance by Shamisen Knoxville

8 p.m. - Tea Ceremony

8:30 p.m. - Closing Ceremony with reading of the Japanese folktale “Rabbit in the Moon”

## **Tea Ceremony**

**5 p.m., 7 p.m. & 8 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn**

This popular event takes center stage three times throughout the festival. The Japanese tea ceremony is steeped in history and is a way of preparing, presenting and ultimately drinking green tea. Guests will watch the tea master prepare the tea and then get to sample the final product. At 7 p.m., the ceremony will be followed by a **kendama demonstration**. A kendama is a fun and challenging wooden skill toy that originated in Japan over a century ago and is now played around the world.

## **Nashville Taiko**

**5:30 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn**

Tennessee's first ever taiko group takes the stage for a performance packed with percussive power, dynamic music and graceful choreography. In Japanese, the term "taiko" refers to any kind of drum. Nashville Taiko combines ancient Japanese tradition with modern innovation to create an entertaining mix of music, theater and precision.

## **Shamisen Knoxville**

**7:30 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn**

Go on a musical journey through Japan with Shamisen Knoxville as your guide. Shamisen is a traditional Japanese 3-string instrument that has been an integral part of Japanese music since the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The group consists of students from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville and people from across the community. They travel throughout the Southeast to spread the joy of playing the banjo-like instrument.

## **Kimono Fashion Show**

**6 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn**

The kimono, literally meaning "thing to wear," is a traditional Japanese article of clothing and the national dress of Japan. See a variety of colors and styles on display during a fashion show and gain an understanding and appreciation of the history of this beautiful garment.

## **Kamishibai**

**4:30 p.m. & 5:30 p.m. | Sigourney Cheek Literary Garden**

Kamishibai, literally means "paper theater" in Japanese. It is a form of storytelling that combines a set of standard-size, beautifully illustrated paper cards paired with a scripted performance by a narrator. Guests can see the magical performances come to life during two shows.

## **Mochi Pounding**

**4 p.m. & 5 p.m. | Beer Garden**

Mochi is a Japanese rice cake that is created through an elaborate process that includes steaming the rice, pounding it into paste, and molding it into the desired shape. Watch as the tasty snack is created before your eyes and then sample it for yourself.

## **Bilingual Tours of Blevins Japanese Garden (Shōmu-en)**

**4:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. & 6:30 p.m.**

Guests are encouraged to take time to nurture their spirit with a visit to Cheekwood's Blevins Japanese Garden (Shōmu-en). Throughout the festival, three bilingual tours will be offered in Japanese and English. Each tour starts at the garden entrance. The garden takes visitors on a meditative journey and transcends cultures by connecting Eastern garden design with native Tennessee landscape. The garden was created by David Harris Engel, and the name "Shōmu-en," translates to "pine-mist forest." The history of the garden began in 1977, and it was transformed into what we know it as today in 1990.

## **Haiku Contest**

The public is invited to participate in a haiku contest in honor of Cheekwood's Japanese Moon Viewing Festival. A traditional Japanese haiku is a three-line poem with 17 syllables, written in a 5/7/5 syllable count. Often focusing on images from nature, haiku emphasizes simplicity, intensity, and directness of expression. Contest entries must be received by 5 p.m. on Monday, September 22, and can be submitted at <https://cheekwood.org/japanese-moon-viewing/haiku-contest-application/>. Winners will be announced during the welcome ceremony at 6 p.m.

## **Ikebana Display and Demonstration**

**4 p.m. - 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard**

Ikebana is the centuries-old Japanese art of arranging flowers. The practice, which translates to "making flowers come alive," uses carefully selected blossoms, greenery and other flora to convey a specific feeling or emotion to an observer. Ikebana remains a cherished tradition in Japan and is passed down from generation to generation as a way of connecting with nature and expressing creativity. Catch a demonstration from 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The display will be available for guests to enjoy throughout the festival.

## **Nashville Bonsai Society Display**

**4 p.m. - 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Great Hall**

Step indoors and out of the moonlight to view meticulously manicured bonsai trees provided by the Nashville Bonsai Society. Bonsai history is rich, rooted in tradition and technique, and the practice is complex.

### **Art Activities**

**4 p.m. – 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard**

#### **Japanese Calligraphy**

Learn about traditional Japanese calligraphy and writing by choosing a phrase from our list to take home with you as a souvenir.

#### **Write Your Own Kanji**

Kanji refers to the Chinese characters adopted into the Japanese writing system. The complex characters represent words and ideas. Learn about the beauty of these characters and create your own imaginative symbol using brush and ink on paper.

#### **Japanese Luna Moth**

The Japanese Luna Moth is native to Japan, Korea, China, and India. Like the moon, the Luna Moth is often associated with spirit and transformation and symbolizes fragility and courage despite change. Make your own “pop-up” Luna Moth using provided supplies.

#### **Rabbit in the Moon Banner**

Celebrate the Japanese Moon Viewing at Cheekwood by making a banner commemorating the festival and the classic Japanese folktale.

### **Vendors**

**4 p.m. – 9 p.m. | Lot B**

Enjoy Asian food and drinks from local food trucks and chefs as well as displays by local organizations including the Japan-America Society of Tennessee and Sister Cities Nashville.

### **Ticket Information**

The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival is free for Cheekwood members. For not-yet members, tickets for adults cost \$23, and \$16 for youth (3-17). Children two and under are free. Reserving a timed-entry ticket in advance is required for all guests. During busy seasons and events, Cheekwood may reach parking capacity. If parking capacity is reached, walk-up tickets will only be available for those utilizing rideshare services. Tickets are on sale now and can be reserved at <https://cheekwood.org/calendar-events/japanese-moon-viewing/>

*Japanese Moon Viewing is sponsored by HCA and supported by Nissan Foundation, Asurion, and Mitsui.*

## **About Cheekwood Estate & Gardens**

With its intact and picturesque vistas, Cheekwood is distinguished as one of the leading Country Place Era estates in the nation. Formerly the family home of Mabel and Leslie Cheek, the 1930s estate, with its 30,000-square-foot Mansion and 55-acres of gardens, today serves the public as a botanical garden, arboretum, and art museum with furnished period rooms and galleries devoted to American art from the 18th to mid-20th centuries. The property includes 13 distinct gardens including the Blevins Japanese Garden and the Bracken Foundation Children's Garden, as well as a 1.5-mile woodland trail featuring outdoor monumental sculpture. Each year, Cheekwood hosts seasonal festivals including Cheekwood in Bloom, Summertime at Cheekwood, Cheekwood Harvest and Holiday LIGHTS. Cheekwood is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and nationally as a Level II Arboretum. It is a three-time voted USA Today Top 10 Botanical Garden, in 2024 and 2025 received a Tripadvisor Travelers' Choice Award, and in 2021 was named by Fodors as one of the 12 Most Beautiful Gardens in the American South. Cheekwood is located eight miles southwest of downtown Nashville at 1200 Forrest Park Drive. It is open Tuesday through Sunday, 9 a.m. – 5 p.m., with extended days and hours of operation depending on the season. Visit [cheekwood.org](https://cheekwood.org) for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

###

## **Images for Media**

<https://show.pics.io/press-images/collection/663944ec34093454e5b4cc90>

## **Media Contact**

Emily Luxen

Cheekwood Director of External Relations

[eluxen@cheekwood.org](mailto:eluxen@cheekwood.org)

(629) 666-9986