



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2024

10th 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 American Society of Tennessee.

During this special 10th annual event, guests can immerse themselves in Japanese traditions and the splendor of the Cheekwood gardens while enjoying tea ceremonies, watching musical performances and partaking in a variety of art activities.

The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival will be held Sunday, September 15 from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. Nashville Mayor Freddie O’Connell will attend the event.

“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 Performance by Choir SAKURA

7 p.m. – Tea Ceremony and 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.

Musical Performances

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.

Choir SAKURA

6 p.m. | Arboretum Lawn

Choir SAKURA was founded in 2008 to perform traditional Japanese songs and educate children who live in middle Tennessee about the music. The group sings seasonal songs, and popular Japanese songs from movies and anime. The choir has attended international festivals and Japanese events throughout Tennessee.

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 16th 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.

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. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard

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

Calling all word wizards! Show off your creativity by participating in a haiku contest. A traditional Japanese haiku is a three-line poem with seventeen 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 8, and can be submitted at <https://cheekwood.org/calendar-events/japanese-moon-viewing/>. Winners will be announced during the welcome ceremony at 6 p.m.

Ikebana Display
4 p.m. - 8 p.m. | Frist Learning Center Courtyard Classroom

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.

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.

Design Your Own Kimono Coloring Sheet

The kimono, literally meaning "thing to wear," is a traditional Japanese garment and the national dress of Japan. Design your own kimono using one of our templates or your own imagination.

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 the spirit and transformation and symbolizes fragility and courage despite change. Make your own “pop-up” Luna Moth using provided supplies.

Rabbit in the Moon

Celebrate the 10th annual Japanese Moon Viewing at Cheekwood by making a banner commemorating the festival and the classic Japanese folktale.

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. The Nashville Bonsai Society will also provide pruning demonstrations, offer beginner bonsai workshops, and host kids’ activities.

Ticket Information

The Japanese Moon Viewing Festival is free for Cheekwood members. For not-yet members, tickets for adults cost \$22, and \$15 for youth (3-17). Children two and under are free. Tickets are on sale now and can be reserved at

<https://cheekwood.org/calendar-events/japanese-moon-viewing/>

Japanese Moon Viewing is sponsored by Nissan and supported by 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 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 for current hours and to purchase advance tickets required for admission.

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Images for Media

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

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