

The Gift of Trees Patch Program



The Gift of Trees Patch Program was made possible with support from
the National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc.



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Did you know that ANA donated 83 cherry blossom trees to the Metropolitan DC community? Supporting the National Cherry Blossom Festival for the 6th year in a row, Japan's largest airline, ANA, is proud to celebrate the ultimate symbol that connects our great nations.

Welcome to the Gift of Trees

In 1912, Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo sent a gift of 3,020 cherry blossom trees to the city of Washington, DC. This patch program, developed in partnership with Girl Scout's Nation's Capital and the National Cherry Blossom Festival, commemorates the gift of the trees and the enduring friendship between the people of the United States and Japan.

The Gift of Trees Patch Program focuses on three key themes—international friendship, arts and culture, and the environment. Girl Scouting's Three Keys to Leadership—Discover, Connect, and Take Action—are incorporated through program activities.

Discover: Girls discover the history and significance of the gift of the Japanese cherry trees and how this gift has become the focal point of the nation's greatest springtime celebration.

Connect: Girls connect with others locally and globally, engaging in international friendship through cultural activities.

Take Action: Girls take action by serving their community through various projects which focus on protecting and beautifying the environment and understanding the importance of diplomacy.

National Cherry Blossom Festival, Inc.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization dedicated to promoting the beauty of nature and international friendship through year-round programs, events, and educational initiatives that enhance our environment, showcase arts and culture, and build community spirit.

General Information

Program Level

The activities in this program are appropriate for Girl Scouts of all levels. Each activity offers an option for Daisies, Brownies and Juniors (D/B/J) and an option for Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors (C/S/A). Please note a few of the activities are suitable for all levels with minor adjustments.

Patches

Girl Scouts who complete activities from all six sections will earn a Gift of Trees participation patch. Patches can be purchased at the GSCNC Shop.

National Cherry Blossom Festival

The National Cherry Blossom Festival offers many opportunities and events for visitors. Earning this patch does not require you to participate in any of those events, however, we highly encourage you to do so if you are able. To find out dates and the schedule of events, please go to the National Cherry Blossom Festival's website at www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.

Materials

Most of the activities can be completed using resources found in your home. There will be some materials that you might need to purchase if you do not already have them. We encourage you to plan a visit to Washington, D.C. to fully enjoy this patch program. If you are located outside the D.C. – metropolitan area, websites are referenced throughout the booklet for use when completing activities.

Outline of Themes

This program is divided into six different sections. Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors are required to complete *one* activity from each section. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors are required to complete *one* activity from each section plus *two* additional activities of one's choice from any section.

Section One: Philanthropists in Action

Learn about the important people who made the gift of more than 3,000 flowering cherry trees to the nation's capital possible and how the National Cherry Blossom Festival evolved.

Section Two: Honoring International Friendship

Learn how our friends in Japan celebrate the blooming of the flowering cherry trees, how to connect and strengthen friendships and promote peace and understanding between different religions, races, and nationalities.

Section Three: Cultural Connection

Learn about customs around the world and what it would be like to be a Girl Scout in Japan.

Section Four: Spring into Art

Learn how art can be used to capture the beauty of the cherry trees and the spring season.

Section Five: Discover Your Environment

Learn about the various types of cherry trees, what it takes to help them grow, and what you can do to protect the trees.

Section Six: Celebration of Spring

Learn about some of the National Cherry Blossom Festival signature events that help make it the nation's greatest springtime celebration.

Section 1: Philanthropists in Action

The gift of the flowering cherry trees to Washington, D.C. has made an enormous impact on communities and people around the world. The trees serve as a reminder of the friendship between the United States and Japan. The beautiful blossoms of these trees have come to signal the start of spring. During the blooming period, National Cherry Blossom Festival events and programs provide opportunities to highlight Japanese culture and celebrate spring. The story behind the gift of the trees also demonstrates the significant role women play in society and how they have encouraged the movement to protect and cherish the environment we live in.

Important Names to Know

Eliza Scidmore was an American writer, photographer, and world traveler, who became the first female board member of the National Geographic Society. She often visited her brother in Japan and developed an attachment to Japan, its culture, and the beautiful cherry trees which she called “the most beautiful thing in the world.” She acted on her passion and proposed the idea of planting Japanese cherry trees in the nation’s capital.

Helen Herron Taft became the First Lady of the United States of America when her husband, William Howard Taft, was inaugurated President in 1909. She became the first First Lady to accompany her husband on the ride from the Capitol building to the White House after the inauguration ceremony. Her goal in becoming First Lady was to improve the community of Washington, D.C. Helen Taft championed and promoted Eliza Scidmore’s idea to plant the flowering cherry trees. Mrs. Taft left her mark in history as a strong, trailblazing woman. She set a new progressive tone in the White House with her strong support of the suffrage movement.

Mayor Yukio Ozaki was instrumental in gifting the cherry trees to Washington, D.C. This gift symbolized the friendship between the U.S. and Japan. During his service as Mayor of Tokyo, Mayor Ozaki was a strong advocate for peace and maintained an enduring friendship with the United States. He also supported the suffrage movement in Japan, fighting for women’s right to vote.

Dr. Jokichi Takamine was a world-famous Japanese chemist. He was the first person in history to isolate the hormone adrenaline (epinephrine) and to develop taka-diastase, a digestive enzyme. He continued his legacy of science and innovation and became the founder of a pharmaceutical company known today as Daiichi Sankyo. Dr. Takamine played a pivotal role in facilitating and funding the gift of the cherry trees that adorn the Tidal Basin. Two thousand trees were delivered to Washington, D.C. as a gift of goodwill and friendship on January 6, 1910. Sadly, the shipment of trees was infested with insects and had to be burned. Dr. Takamine helped arrange for a second shipment of trees from the Yokohama Nurseries. Three thousand-twenty trees arrived in Washington, D.C. in March of 1912.

Important Names to Know (continued)

Viscountess Chinda was the wife of the Japanese ambassador. She and Mrs. Taft planted the first two cherry trees at the Tidal Basin. The ceremony of planting these trees grew into the National Cherry Blossom Festival. This special part of history is celebrated through many events and is also commemorated with a large, bronze plaque at the site of the first planting.

Also of importance is **Dr. David Fairchild**, a prominent botanist who planted the first cherry trees in D.C. You will learn more about him in the section titled *Discover Your Environment*.

Philanthropists in Action Activities



Activity 1: Ms. Scidmore became the first female board member and trustee of the National Geographic Society. Explore the National Geographic Society website.

1. **D/B/J:** Eliza Scidmore was an avid world traveler. She studied the architecture, plants and animals, and cultures of other countries on her journeys. Visit the National Geographic website located here <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/photography/> and explore the photos. Pick your favorite picture. Analyze where the image was photographed, what is happening in the picture, and what it would be like to see the object in person.
 2. **C/S/A:** Scidmore attended Oberlin College in Ohio where she studied journalism. She returned to her hometown of Washington, D.C. and found a job as a journalist, a rare career for women in the late 1800s. She did not let her gender hold her back from pursuing her interests and having a career. Pretend you are a journalist. Explore the National Geographic Society website and write an article or blog post about what you discover. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com>
- ♦ **All Levels Extension:** Visit the National Geographic Museum in Washington, D.C. Attend one of the free or ticketed events at the museum. Recall Eliza Scidmore's role as the first female board member and think about what it must have been like for a woman to pursue her passion for world travel and photography.



Activity 2: Scidmore realized her dreams through her persistence and determination. Her first proposal to send cherry trees to Washington, D.C. and plant them around the Tidal Basin was rejected. It was not until twenty-four years later that her proposal was accepted.

1. **All Levels:** Think of a dream you would like to reach or a time when you worked very hard to achieve success. Depict this dream or success story by drawing a picture, writing a poem or story, or creating a blog post.

Philanthropists in Action Activities (continued)



Activity 3: Helen Taft used her role as First Lady to fight for equal rights for women, allowing all girls and women in the United States to stand up for what they believe in and become the leaders of today and tomorrow.

1. **All Levels:** Helen Taft advocated for women's rights. An advocate is someone who supports and promotes an issue they find of importance or addresses an injustice. Think of an issue affecting the American people today. Imagine you are the First Lady or the President. What actions would you take to help resolve this issue?



Activity 4: The people involved in the gift of trees were philanthropists.

Philanthropy means using one's own resources—financial or personal—to achieve a goal (that might not otherwise be met) and for the betterment of an individual, organization, or community.

1. **D/B/J:** Think of a time when you did something kind for another person without expecting recognition or something in return. Write or discuss your thoughts with a friend, family member, an adult, or your troop.
2. **C/S/A:** Complete your own act of philanthropy by making a gift for someone or a community in need. For example, fill a backpack with school supplies and donate it to a child whose family cannot afford to buy school supplies themselves.



The Tidal Basin cherry trees by the Jefferson Memorial.
Photo by Lillian Iversen.

Philanthropists in Action Activities (continued)



Activity 5: Through the years, Japanese ambassadors, mayors, and dignitaries have taken part in many gestures of friendship to the United States. Shortly after Tokyo donated the cherry trees, the United States, in turn, gave Japan flowering dogwood trees. The tradition of gift exchange between the United States and Japan has continued. In 1954, the Japanese ambassador to the United States, Sadeo Iguchi, presented a 300-year-old Japanese lantern commemorating the one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the first Treaty of Peace, Amity, and Commerce between the United States and Japan. In 1958, a stone Japanese Pagoda sculpture was given as a gift to Washington, D.C., by the mayor of Yokohama. In 2011, many Americans sent origami cranes after the devastating earthquake and tsunami that hit Japan. All of these gifts are symbols of the friendship between Japan and the United States.

1. **D/B/J:** Amity means friendship. What are the characteristics that make a good friend? Think of ways that you can be a better friend. Then do something kind for one of your friends.
 2. **C/S/A:** Consider the role of ambassadors and their spouses. If you were the U.S. ambassador to another country, how would you promote goodwill? Research an issue, such as a natural disaster, a great need, or some other issue in another country and brainstorm a solution to improve the situation and foster goodwill between countries.
- ◆ **All Levels Extension:** Many of the gifts from Japan are located around the Tidal Basin, including the lantern, pagoda, and a bronze commemorative plaque where Viscountess Chinda and Mrs. Taft planted the first two cherry trees. Explore the Tidal Basin area and find these gifts.



Mayor Ozaki and his two daughters at the Tidal Basin.
Courtesy of the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden Archive.

Section 2: Honoring International Friendship

The term hanami means “flower viewing” in Japanese. Hanami is the traditional viewing of the cherry trees in the spring when they display beautiful flowers. For more than one thousand years, hanami has been a cherished ritual in Japan which includes picnics, parades, feasts, and festivals.

Enjoying the events of the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C. is an example of hanami. Known as the nation’s greatest springtime celebration, the National Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates spring in Washington, D.C., the gift of the cherry trees and the enduring friendship between the people of the United States and Japan.

In this section you will learn how our friends in Japan celebrate the viewing of the flowering cherry trees. At the same time, you will connect with old and new friends, strengthen these friendships, and understand the importance of peace.

Honoring International Friendship Activities



Activity 1: Friendship and Peace

When you turn on the news what do you hear? Often it feels like all we hear about and see are stories of war, hatred, violence, and crime. But peace and kindness can be found everywhere around us.

1. **D/B/J:** Choose one week and write down every peaceful act and every act of kindness you see. What happened? Who did it? How did it make you feel?
 2. **C/S/A:** The United States is a country composed of many different ethnic, racial, and religious groups. Sometimes this leads to conflicts. Think of suggestions for peaceful co-existence between two groups. Share your ideas with your troop or an adult. Share your thoughts with the President. Write a letter to the White House suggesting how peace can be achieved within the United States and worldwide. The address is: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20500.
- ◆ **C/S/A Extension:** Friends come in all shapes and sizes, from a multitude of backgrounds, and with varying beliefs and values. Being a good friend requires us to accept people for who they are and respect their differing views. Look at all the different students at your school. Some students you may have seen but never spoken to. Organize an open forum where all students can attend and share who they are and what defines them.
- Encourage students to learn about and respect the different values and belief systems of their classmates.

Honoring International Friendship Activities (continued)



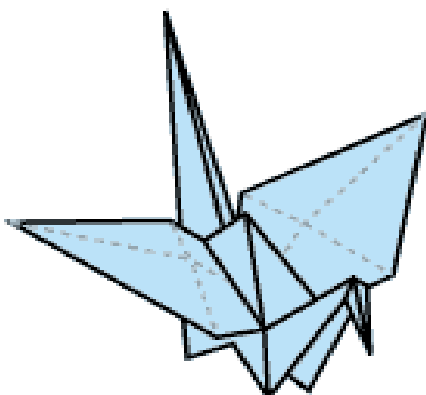
Activity 2: Friendship Making Party

Symbols for peace and friendship vary in different cultures. In Japan, a traditional gift given as a symbol of peace is the origami crane. Origami is the art of paper folding. The term origami comes from two smaller Japanese words, “ori” meaning to fold and “kami” meaning paper. According to legend, if a person folds one thousand origami cranes that person’s wish will be granted.

In American culture, girls at a young age may learn to make friendship bracelets, a bracelet made out of thread and a series of knots. Girls give these to people whom they care most about as a symbol of lasting friendship. Summer camp is a popular place where friendship bracelets are made.

In this activity, you will learn how to make an origami crane and a friendship bracelet while enjoying the company of old friends and making new friends.

1. **D/B/J:** Learn how to make a friendship bracelet and an origami crane with your troop or an adult or attend an organized Friendship Making Party and make new friends. Origami crane and friendship bracelet instructions can be found on the internet.
 2. **C/S/A:** Organize a Friendship Making Party for younger Girl Scouts. First learn how to make an origami crane and friendship bracelet. Next, teach what you’ve learned to Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and/or Juniors. Coordinate with your troop leader or an adult to invite Daisies, Brownies, and/or Juniors to a Friendship Making Party you planned.
- ◆ **All Levels Extension:** Once you have made your origami cranes and friendship bracelets, give them to a girl you do not know at school. You’ve just made a new friend!



Origami Crane

Retrieved from Origami-Fun.com

Honoring International Friendship Activities (continued)



Activity 3: Learn a Song and Share

Sakura Sakura is a traditional Japanese folk song depicting spring and the season of cherry blossoms. This song is a representation of Japan. Just like Japan, Girl Scouts have many traditional songs that represent them.

1. **D/B/J:** Learn *Make New Friends* and sing it with your friends. Let them know how much you appreciate them, old and new.
2. **C/S/A:** Learn *Sakura Sakura* in English below and teach it to younger Girl Scouts. The sheet music for this song can be downloaded online at www.free-scores.com/download-sheet-music.php?pdf=7450

SAKURA SAKURA

Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms, On Meadow-hills and mountains. As far as you can see. Is it a mist, or clouds? Fragrant in the morning sun.

Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms, Flowers in full bloom.

Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms, Across the Spring sky, As far as you can see.

Is it a mist, or clouds? Fragrant in the air. Come now,
come now, Let's look, at last!

Section 3: Cultural Connection

Japanese culture dates back thousands of years. The foods, special events, symbolic performances and traditional dress are just a few of the unique cultural characteristics of Japan. In this section, you will discover Japan's fascinating traditions and customs. As you are completing these activities, think about the differences and similarities between American and Japanese culture. What might it be like to be a Girl Scout in Japan?

Cultural Connection Activities



Activity 1: Chopstick Challenge

Eating with chopsticks is a way of life in many Asian cultures. Just as Americans have proper ways of using silverware, the Japanese have a proper way to eat with their form of silverware—chopsticks.

1. **All Levels:** Learn the proper way to hold chopsticks and how to eat with them. Search the internet for images of proper handling. Once you understand how to properly hold chopsticks, try using them.

You will need – Chopsticks, small objects (buttons, beads, erasers, small toys) and a timer

What to do – Get together with a small group of friends or your troop. Lay out some small objects on a flat surface. Get a set of chopsticks and learn how to use the chopsticks using a tripod grip. The challenge for each girl is to pick up as many items as you can by using the chopsticks during a designated time limit. Start the timer. The girl who collects the most items with chopsticks wins.

Handling Instructions:

1. Hold the upper chopstick with the index finger, the middle finger and the thumb.
2. Place the other chopstick between the bottom of the thumb and the tip of the ring finger.

- ♦ **All Levels Extension:** Cook some Ramen noodles and use your chopsticks to eat them.

Proper manners are important when using chopsticks. It is rude to perform the following acts when eating:

1. Waving chopsticks above food dishes.
2. Stabbing food with chopsticks.
3. Sucking or chewing on chopsticks.
4. Sticking chopsticks vertically into a bowl of rice.
5. Passing food directly from one's chopsticks to another's.

Cultural Connection Activities (continued)



Activity 2: Japanese Flavors: Sushi

Sushi is a traditional dish eaten in Japan and is widely popular in the United States as well. Sushi consists of cooked, vinegared rice and different fish and/or vegetables. Often the sticky, vinegared rice is rolled around the fish and covered with a wrap of seaweed. These types of sushi rolls are called maki.

1. **D/B/J:** Visit a Japanese restaurant and order a sushi roll. Many rolls such as the California roll do not contain raw fish. Watch the sushi chefs prepare the rolls at the sushi counter. Try eating your sushi with chopsticks.
 - o **Alternate Activity:** If you do not want to try sushi, this is an alternate activity to try. Make mock sushi with fun foods (using store-bought or homemade rice crispy treats for the rice, fruit leather for the seaweed, and gummy worms to resemble fish or vegetables). Practice eating with chopsticks.
2. **C/S/A:** Get a menu of a sushi restaurant near your home. Invite your friends over and have a sushi tasting party. Order several different varieties of sushi. Taste the sushi with your friends and decide which kind is your favorite.



Activity 3: Day of the Girl

Hina Matsuri is a special day in Japan dedicated to girls and their dolls. The celebration takes place on March 3rd every year and is a way for friends and family to wish good health and happiness for the girls in their lives. During this festival, Japanese girls receive beautiful hina dolls called hina-ningyo and display them on red-covered tiered shelves. Often the dolls are passed down from generation to generation and hold a special place in each girl's heart.

1. **D/B/J:** Think of a special keepsake that is important to you. Was it passed down from another woman in your life such as your mother or grandmother? Where do you keep it? Discuss with your troop, friend, parent or adult why this keepsake is important to you. Ask permission to show this keepsake to your friends.
2. **C/S/A:** Each tier of the hina-ningyo display holds a special type of doll. Research and learn about the different tiered shelves of the hina-ningyo displays and draw one on paper. Include the people most important in your life on each tier. Then tell them why they are important to you.

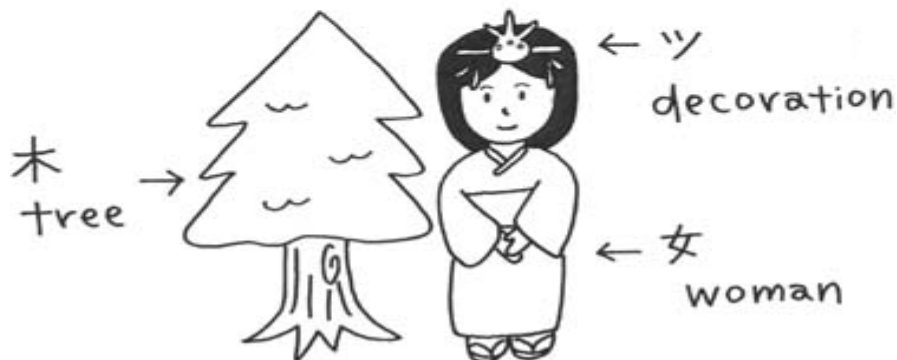
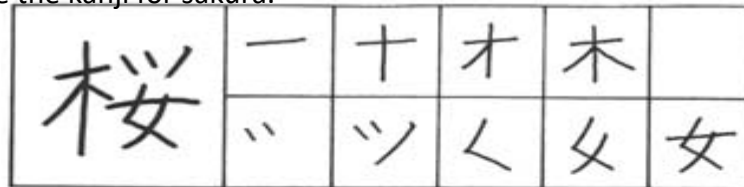
Cultural Connection Activities (continued)



Activity 4: Kanji

Kanji is one of the three Japanese alphabets. Kanji was developed by the Chinese thousands of years ago and was later adopted into the Japanese language. Originally, kanji characters began as pictures. These pictures evolved into intricate symbols. Each symbol's meaning comes from a combination of words.

The Japanese term for cherry blossom is **sakura**. The kanji of sakura is a woman adorned with a hair ornament standing next to a tree. This image represents sakura because the woman decorated with a pretty hair clip symbolizes the beauty of the cherry tree. Within the kanji for sakura, you will find the symbols for woman, decoration and tree. The image below shows the steps to write the kanji for sakura.



Retrieved from About.com, Japanese Language

1. **D/B/J:** Using the image provided above, follow the steps from left to right and draw the kanji for sakura.
2. **C/S/A:** Think about three words that represent you. Research how to draw each of these words and make your own kanji.

Section 4: Spring into Art

The beauty of the flowering cherry trees has inspired artists and people around the world to capture their spirit in various types of art forms including poetry, paintings, dances, and songs. In this section, you will learn some traditional styles of art that began in Japan and complete your own work to capture the beauty of the cherry trees and the spring season.

Spring into Art Activities



Activity 1: Write a Poem

Poems are often used to describe the daily experiences of one's life such as love, tragedy, nature, and beauty. The haiku is a traditional style of Japanese poetry composed of seventeen syllables in three lines. The first and last lines have five syllables. The middle line has seven syllables.

1. **All Levels:** Think about the beauty of the cherry blossom trees and spring. Write a haiku poem, using the 5-7-5 syllable outline. If you are unsure what a syllable is, ask your troop leader to help explain this concept.



Activity 2: Take a Picture

Photography is a great form of art that can be used to capture the spirit of the cherry trees. Washington has four distinct seasons: Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter. Each season brings in a change of weather that affects the appearance of the cherry trees. In spring, the trees exhibit beautiful flowers in shades of white and pink. In the summer, they are a lush green. In fall, the trees' leaves turn to shades of bronze, gold, and red before falling. Once winter comes, all the trees' leaves are lost and the branches create beautiful patterns.

1. **All Levels:** Find a cherry blossom tree near you. Many trees can be found around the Tidal Basin in Washington, D.C. Take a picture of the tree and note what the tree looks like in the season when the picture is taken. Go back to your tree throughout the year and see how the tree changes with each season. Take a picture once a month or once each season, always from the same location.
2. **C/S/A Extension:** Create a panoramic photo to capture a wide view of the cherry trees around the Tidal Basin.

Spring into Art Activities (continued)



Activity 3: Become a Painter

The cherry blossoms symbolize the short yet beautiful life of humans. Artists use this symbolism to capture the trees in paintings and drawings.

1. **All Levels:** Using paint, markers, crayons, or other drawing utensils, create a picture of the cherry trees and what their beauty represents to you.
2. **C/S/A:** Japanese artists draw from the imagery around them to develop beautiful works of art. Often, landmarks are incorporated into these paintings. An example of this art style is seen in the artwork titled *Boy Viewing Mount Fuji* by Katsushika Hokusai. Mount Fuji is a volcanic mountain recognized around the world. Think about a known landmark in the city where you live and create an artwork to depict its beauty and meaning.



Boy Viewing Mount Fuji by Katsushika Hokusai
 Courtesy of the Freer and Sackler Gallery, Collection Highlights: Japanese Art



Activity 4: Advocate with Art

The arts provide a platform for creative expression, cultural understanding, and the sharpening of critical thinking skills. Besides depicting landscapes and beauty, the arts serve many purposes for expression in the world. The arts inspire us to think and act. Artists comment on daily life and aspects of identity. Their creations bring messages of hope and can serve as a form of healing to strengthen communities and friendships.

1. **C/S/A:** Think of a national or global issue you care about. Draw, paint, sculpt, make a collage, write a song, or dance to express this idea and why it is important. Take action by sharing your art in a public setting, with your troop, class, online, or send it to a government official to inspire change.

Section 5: Discover Your Environment

The environment is everything around us. It includes air, water, land, and all living things. To maintain a world that supports all of these components, we must protect our environment and be conscious of how we use our resources. In this section, you will learn more about the different types of cherry trees, how plants grow, and how we can protect the earth's resources.

Discover Your Environment Activities



Activity 1: Discover the Types of Flowering Cherry Trees

The initial gift of 3,020 cherry trees in 1912 contained 12 different varieties. Today, the Yoshino and Kwanzan are the dominant varieties in the Washington, DC region.

The Yoshino is the most abundant type of tree. This type can be found encircling the Tidal Basin as well on the Washington Monument grounds. It is distinguished by its blooms of single white flowers. Sprinkled in with the Yoshino trees are the Akebono variety with light pink flowers.

The second most abundant cherry tree variety is the Kwanzan. Named after a mountain in Japan, this variety of tree can be found in East Potomac Park and displays large bunches of pink blossoms. Kwanzan trees peak two weeks after the Yoshino trees.

1. **All Levels:** Go to the National Park Service website. Review the map of the Tidal Basin with the tree variety locations found at www.nps.gov/cherry/cherry-blossom-maps.htm. Notice where the Yoshino and Kwanzan trees are located. Visit the Tidal Basin and see if you can notice the difference between the varieties of trees.
 2. **Virtual Option:** If you aren't able to see the trees in person, go online and research the two dominant trees in Washington, D.C., the Yoshino and the Kwanzan. Notice the differences between each type of tree. What color are the blooms? When do they bloom? Where can each type of tree be found?
- ◆ **All Levels Extension:** During the peak blooming of the cherry blossoms, the National Park Service offers Park Ranger programs to teach the public more about the trees. Programs include guided bike tours, lantern walks and much more! Visit the Tidal Basin Welcome Area or contact Park Rangers at the National Mall and Memorial Parks at 202-426-6841 to learn how you can participate in one of these programs.

Discover Your Environment Activities (continued)



Activity 2: Become a Botanist for a Day

Botany is the scientific study of plants. A botanist studies the environmental factors affecting plant growth such as the sun, rain, temperature, topography, and disease. If you are interested in plants and how they grow, botany can be a great career path for you.

Dr. David Fairchild was a prominent botanist and plant explorer who served as the head of the Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. He was the first to receive a shipment of the flowering cherry trees from the Yokohama Nursery Company. His task was to determine whether the trees could grow in Washington's climate. Pleased with the results, he had 300 cherry trees planted near his home in Chevy Chase, Maryland, and eventually confirmed the trees were suitable for planting along the streets and Tidal Basin.

1. D/B/J: Understanding Photosynthesis

Materials: Poster board or blank paper, colored markers, empty seed packet, styrofoam cups, potting soil, seeds, water, plastic wrap, and a sunny window. Discuss the four elements needed to grow a plant: soil, seeds, light, and water.

1. Draw a sun in the corner of the poster with many rays coming down from it.
2. Color the bottom of the poster brown to represent dirt.
3. Starting on the left side, draw a black seed in the soil. Draw more seeds every few inches, including some (green) "growth" above each seed until you have drawn a sprout that rises above the soil.
4. Extend a few of the yellow sun's rays all the way down from the sun to the sprout.
5. Add water drops or rain (blue) just above the sprout.
6. Review the steps outlined in the drawing to understand plant growth and photosynthesis—how plants use sunlight to make their food.
7. Once you understand how photosynthesis works through the drawing, plant a seed to observe how plants grow. Put soil in a cup and plant the seeds in it. Add a few tablespoons of water and cover with plastic wrap. Set in a sunny window for a few days. When the plants sprout, uncover.

2. C/S/A: Flower Blooms

The colors of a hydrangea's flowers change depending on the pH of the soil they are grown in. Go to your local home improvement store and buy hydrangea seeds and different soils. Plant seeds in four pots, each using different soils—acid soil, neutral soil, base soil, and soil from your backyard. Watch your plants grow over time and discuss what you discover.

Discover Your Environment Activities (continued)



Activity 3: Protecting the Trees

Every year, one million people attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D.C. The high volume of foot traffic on and around the trees is damaging. Most dangerous to the trees is soil compaction, which occurs when constant stress is placed on the ground. The compaction cuts off air, moisture, and nutrients to the trees, eventually killing them. According to the National Park Service, one to three percent of the cherry blossom trees are expected to die each year. Other threats to the health of the trees include visitors picking the cherry blossoms and climbing on the branches.

1. **D/B/J:** Ask an adult to explain issues facing the world today such as pollution, depletion of natural resources, and climate change. Pick an issue and think of a way to help. Present your idea to your troop, a teacher, or a family member.
 2. **C/S/A:** Develop a public service announcement (PSA) to protect the trees. Brainstorm possible ways to protect the cherry trees and inform the public about the damaging effects of soil compaction or picking the flowers off the branches. Talk to an environmental organization or a local nursery. Ask for tips and advice to protect the cherry trees. Write a script and film your PSA. Invite your friends and family to watch your PSA! (Note: Setting up a film set on National Park property requires a permit, but using a simple handheld camera or phone to film is acceptable.)
- ♦ **All Levels Extension:** In April 2019, the National Trust for Historic Preservation announced it was naming the Tidal Basin to its portfolio of National Treasures to mobilize the public and marshal new resources to “Save the Tidal Basin.” Learn more about the endangered Tidal Basin and follow along with the plan to make it sustainable for future visitors. <https://nationalmall.org/content/the-tidal-basin-an-endangered-national-treasure>.



Activity 4: Spring Clean-up

After being inside during the cold months of winter, spring is the time of year when people start to venture outside and enjoy nature. Popular springtime activities include festivals, picnics, and barbeques. Often these activities leave trash behind, harming the plants and animals.

1. **D/B/J:** Go to a popular park in your neighborhood and pick up trash that was left behind.
 2. **C/S/A:** Organize a Spring Clean-up Day with your school or other Girl Scout troops. Contact the local Parks and Recreation Department and ask where they need the most help. Organize your clean-up day at that location.
- ♦ **All Levels Extension:** Organize a group clean-up at the Tidal Basin. Contact the National Park Service’s Volunteer Project Coordinator to help plan your clean-up.

Section 6: Celebration of Spring

Known as the nation's greatest springtime celebration, the National Cherry Blossom Festival celebrates spring in Washington, D.C., the gift of the cherry trees, and the enduring friendship between the people of the United States and Japan.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival spans four weeks during March and April and is composed of more than 50 events and programs. In this section, you will learn about four of the Festival's signature events.

In this section, you will attend events at the National Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington D.C. If you are unable to visit Washington, D.C., please choose one or two of the other activities.

Celebration of Spring Activities



Activity 1: Opening Ceremony

Opening Ceremony kicks off the National Cherry Blossom Festival by honoring the anniversary of the gift of trees and lasting friendship between the US and Japan. Traditional and contemporary Japanese performances take place in a theater and are streamed online.

1. **All Levels:** Attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Opening Ceremony to learn more about Japanese culture. Share your experience with a friend. This event typically takes place on or near the first day of spring (March 20). Tickets are free but sell out in advance, so make sure to check the National Cherry Blossom Festival website to know when tickets are released. You may also watch the livestream of this event.
2. **Virtual Option:** Visit YouTube.com and search [National Cherry Blossom Festival Opening Ceremony](#). Watch at least **one** performance from a previous Opening Ceremony with a friend. Think about and discuss how Japanese performances are similar and different to American performances.



Activity 2: Blossom Kite Festival

Blossom Kite Festival celebrates the long-standing tradition of kite flying among the cherry blossom trees. Professionals and novices alike showcase their skills through a variety of competitions and demonstrations including synchronized kite ballets, kite-making competitions, and popular showdowns displaying flight patterns and complex stunts.

1. **All Levels:** Make a kite using materials you find around your home. Watch [this tutorial video](#) to learn how to make the kite, and then go fly it in your yard or neighborhood park.
- ◆ **All Levels Extension:** Attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Blossom Kite Festival on the grounds of the Washington Monument, and participate in the many kite related activities. This event typically takes place during the last weekend of March. Visit the National Cherry Blossom Festival website for more details.



Activity 3: Petalpalooza

This day-long all-ages celebration brings art, music, and play to the waterfront of Washington, DC. Petalpalooza features live music on multiple outdoor stages, interactive art installations, family-friendly hands-on activities, and more. The evening is capped by a dazzling fireworks show choreographed to music.

1. **D/B/J:** Think about the unique art that fireworks create with their many colors and sounds. Make a Shaving Cream Fireworks Painting to display your own firework art. Go to the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Blossom Kids page for [instructions](#) and a [video tutorial](#) on how to make the painting.
2. **C/S/A:** Think about the unique art that fireworks create with their many colors and sounds. Make a Fireworks Salt Art Painting to display your own firework art. Go to the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Blossom Kids page for [instructions](#) and a [video tutorial](#) on how to make the painting.

♦ **All Levels Extension:** Attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Petalpalooza.

Participate in at least **one** hands-on art activity and watch at least **one** musical performance. If your parents allow, stay until dark to watch the fireworks show. Take note of how the fireworks are choreographed to the music. Visit the National Cherry Blossom Festival website for more details.



Activity 4: Parade

The National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade is a springtime spectacle of pink pageantry and floral fanfare along ten blocks of iconic Constitution Avenue. The high-energy, vibrant tradition typically marks the finale weekend of the Festival with star-studded performances, gigantic helium balloons, incredible floats, dance groups, and more.

1. **D/B/J:** Create a mini parade float using a shoe box with the theme of springtime, pink, and/or cherry blossoms. Have your family members or friends create their own shoe box floats as well and create a parade. Learn how to make a [shoebox float here](#).
2. **C/S/A:** Bring springtime cheer to your neighborhood by decorating your porch, yard, or windows with springtime spirit. Visit the National Cherry Blossom Festival's website for more information on how to participate in the official Petal Porches program. Invite your neighbors to participate as well, and you may win a prize!

♦ **All Levels Extension:** Attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Parade and watch the springtime spectacle march down Constitution Avenue. Visit the National Cherry Blossom Festival website for more details.

Links

Cherry Blossom Cam

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/cherryblossom/cherry-blossom-cam.htm>

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital

<http://www.gscnc.org>

Girl Scouts of the USA

<http://www.girlscouts.org>

Japan Information and Culture Center

Events Page

<http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/JICC/events.html>

National Cherry Blossom Festival

<http://www.nationalcherryblossomfestival.org>

National Geographic Society

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com>

National Park Service

National Cherry Blossom Festival Facts

<http://www.nps.gov/cherry/index.htm>

Sakura Sakura Sheet Music

<http://www.free-scores.com/download-sheet-music.php?pdf=7450>

"Save the Tidal Basin"

<https://nationalmall.org/content/the-tidal-basin-an-endangered-national-treasure>.

Reference Book

Ann McClellan, *The Cherry Blossom Festival: Sakura Celebration*. Piedmont, NH: Bunker Hill Publishing, 2005.

