

The Gift of Trees Patch Program



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



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 Scouts will discover and experience these themes throughout the program.

We encourage you to plan a visit to Washington, D.C. to fully enjoy the activities in this patch program. If you are located outside the District of Columbia area, websites are referenced throughout the booklet and on the last page for use when completing activities. You might even want to explore your local area for cherry trees!

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.

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 or attend the festival, 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

Program Level

The activities in this program are appropriate for Girl Scouts of all levels, DBJCSA. Some activities are noted for specific levels but can be adjusted by an adult if desired.

Required Activities:

This program is divided into six different sections. Complete **one** activity from each section. Girl Scouts who complete the required activities will earn the Gift of Trees patch. Patches can be purchased at the GSCNC Shop. 202-274-3312

Section One: *Philanthropists in Action*

Section Two: *Honoring International Friendship*

Section Three: *Cultural Connection*

Section Four: *Spring into Art*

Section Five: *Discover Your Environment*

Section Six: *Celebration of Spring*

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 and 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.



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

- **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.
- **C/S/A:** Eliza 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: Eliza 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.

- **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.



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.

- **All Levels:** Helen Taft was an advocate 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: 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 these gifts are symbols of the friendship between Japan and the United States.

- **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.
- **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.



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.

- **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?
- **C/S/A:** 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.

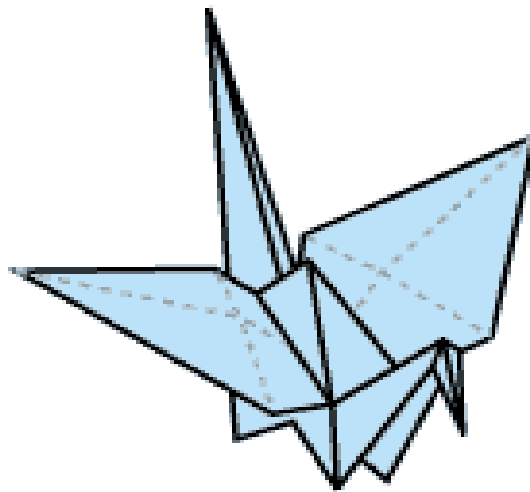


Activity 2: Friendship Making Party

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 folding paper. 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, people at a young age may learn to make friendship bracelets, a bracelet made out of thread and a series of knots. Many 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.

- **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 online.
- **C/S/A:** Organize a Friendship Making Party for younger Girl Scouts. First learn how to make an origami crane and friendship bracelet, you can find lots of ways to do so online. 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 someone you do not know at school. You’ve just made a new friend!



Origami Crane
Retrieved from Origami-Fun.com



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.

- **D/B/J:** Learn *Make New Friends* or another friendship song if you already know this one and sing it with your friends. Let them know how much you appreciate them, old and new.
- **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,
In fields, mountains and villages
As far as the eye can see.
Is it mist, or clouds?
Fragrant in the rising sun.
Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms,
Flowers in full bloom.

Cherry blossoms, cherry blossoms,
Across the spring sky,
As far as the eye can see.
Is it mist, or clouds?
Fragrant in the air.
Come now, come now,
Let's go and see them.

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?



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.

- **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.
 - **Handling Instructions:**
 - Hold the upper chopstick with the index finger, the middle finger and the thumb.
 - 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.



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.

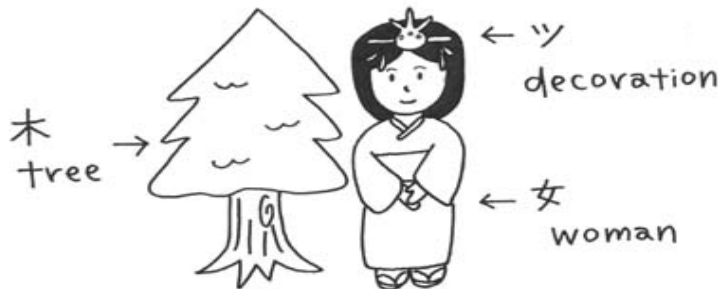
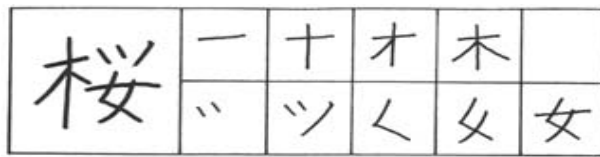
- **D/B/J:** Visit a Japanese restaurant and order a sushi roll. Many rolls such as the California roll do not contain raw fish. Watch the sushi chefs prepare the rolls at the sushi counter. Try eating your sushi with chopsticks.
 - **Alternate Activity:** If you do not want to try sushi, this is an alternative 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.
- **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: 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

- **D/B/J:** Using the image provided above, follow the steps from left to right and draw the kanji for sakura.
- **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.



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.

- **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.

- **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.
- **C/S/A:** Create a panoramic photo to capture a wide view of the cherry trees around the Tidal Basin.



Activity 3: 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.

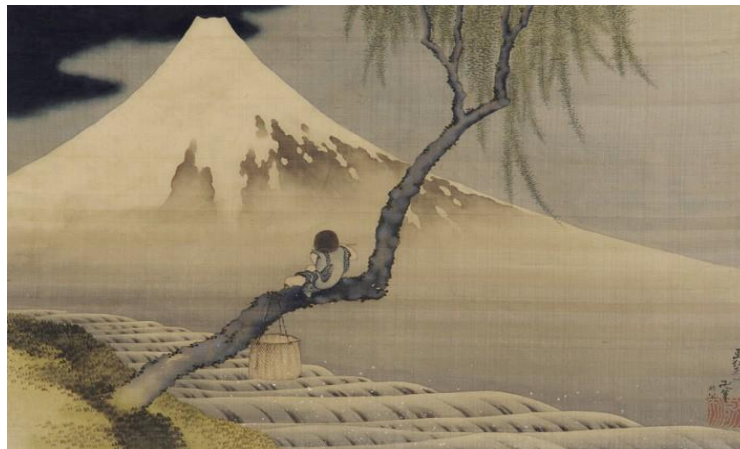
- **C/S/A:** Think of a national or global issue you care about. Draw, paint, sculpt, make a collage, write a song, or dance to express this idea and why it is important. Take action by sharing your art in a public setting, with your troop, class, online, or send it to a government official to inspire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



Activity 4: 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.

- **All Levels:** Using paint, markers, crayons, or other drawing utensils, create a picture of the cherry trees and what their beauty represents to you.
- **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.



Courtesy of the Freer and Sackler Gallery, Collection Highlights: Japanese Art

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 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.



Activity 1: Discover the Types of Flowering Cherry Trees

The initial gift of 3,020 cherry trees in 1912 contained 12 different varieties. Today, 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.

- **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.
- **Virtual Option:** If you can't 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.



Activity 2: 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 barbecues. Often these activities leave trash behind, harming the plants and animals.

- **D/B/J:** Go to a popular park in your neighborhood and pick up trash that was left behind.
- **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.



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.

- **All Levels:** 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.)

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.



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.

- **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
- **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

The 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.

- ◆ **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 and participate in some of the many kite related activities.



Activity 3: Petalpalooza

This day-long all-ages celebration brings art, music, and play to the waterfront of Washington, D.C. 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 firework show choreographed to music.

- **All Levels:** 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.
- ◆ **All Levels Extension:** Make a shaving cream fireworks painting ([instructions](#)) or a salt art painting ([instructions](#))



Activity 4: Parade

The National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade is a springtime spectacle of pink pageantry and floral fanfare along ten blocks of the 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.

- **All Levels:** 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 Porch Parade*. Invite your neighbors to participate as well, and you may get a special visit from the Petal Procession.
- ◆ **All Levels Extension:** Attend the National Cherry Blossom Festival's Parade and watch the springtime spectacle march down Constitution Avenue.

Links for more information:

Cherry Blossom Cam

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

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital

<https://www.gscnc.org/>

Girl Scouts of the USA

<https://www.girlscouts.org/>

Japan Information and Culture Center Events

<https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/index.html>

National Cherry Blossom Festival

<https://nationalcherryblossomfestival.org/>

National Geographic Society

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/>

National Park Service/National Cherry Blossom Festival Facts

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/cherryblossom/index.htm>

Sakura Sakura Sheet Music

<https://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>

