

Morikami Museum and Gardens

As a visitor, I was surprised to discover a century-old connection between Japan and South Florida. It is here that a group of young Japanese farmers created a community intended to revolutionize agriculture in Florida.

In 1904, Jo Sakai, a recent graduate of New York University, returned to his homeland of Miyazu, Japan, to organize a group of pioneering farmers and lead them to what is now northern Boca Raton. With the help of the Model Land Company, a subsidiary of Henry Flagler's East Coast Railroad, they formed a farming colony they named Yamato, an ancient name for Japan.

The members of the Wellington Garden Club that attended the Around & About on Thursday, September 16 were amazed at the contemplative nature of the gardens. To our amazement, we discovered that they had shaped native trees such as seagrape and firebush into bonsai specimens that were stunning. The walking trails were easy to navigate and we saw herons, turtles, fish, and non-native lizards in the gardens.

The exhibit, ***Painting Enlightenment: Experiencing Wisdom and Compassion through Art and Science***, features works by a Japanese scientist and artist Iwasaki Tsuneo (1917-2002). The paintings create a contemplative journey and meditations on the interconnectedness of the universe. He forms the images by using characters from the sacred Buddhist text, the Heart Sutra.

Maria Wolfe