

The Seasons in Bloom

Grades 2, 3, 4, 5

LEARNING TARGET

Through classroom and museum experiences, students will be able to accurately identify and describe various plants related to the four seasons as represented in a variety of East Asian art.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Students will:

- Investigate the native plants of East Asia through a comparison of those represented in a variety of screens, fans, scrolls, album pages, ceramics, and other works.
- Differentiate between various representations of the same plant through close-looking activities and an examination of the materials used to make art.
- Design their own work of art that incorporates a seasonal botanical theme.

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

- Pre-Visit: Lotus Flower Graphic Organizer
- Visit: Four Seasons Calendar
- Post-Visit: Engineering Design Guide

FORMS

- Media: Ceramics (porcelain, stoneware), Textiles (silk), and Painting (watercolor, ink), Other (stone, wood, metal, lacquer)
- Classifications: screen, fan, hanging scroll, hand scroll, ceramics, textiles
- Symbols: floral motifs (peony, plum, chrysanthemum, bamboo, lotus, pine, wisteria)

STEAM THEMES

- Botanical identification
- Seasons and climate zones
- Material comparisons (paper vs. silk, porcelain vs. stoneware)

CCSS ALIGNMENT

CCSS English Language Arts: Text Types and Purposes

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.2: Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.2: Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include

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illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.2.A: Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.2.A: Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS English Language Arts: Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.K.8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.8: With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.2.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.4.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.5.7: Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING SKILLS ALIGNMENT

Creativity and Innovation

- Elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate original ideas to improve and maximize creative efforts.

Communication

- Communicate effectively in diverse environments (including multilingual and multicultural).

Critical thinking and problem solving

- Interpret information and draw conclusions based on the best analysis.

MICHIGAN SOCIAL STUDIES STANDARDS

K-2 PLACES AND REGIONS: Understand how regions are created from common physical and human characteristics.

- P1 READING AND COMMUNICATION – READ AND COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY
P1.3 Express social science ideas or information in written, spoken, and graphic forms including tables, line graphs, bar graphs, and maps.
- P2 INQUIRY, RESEARCH, AND ANALYSIS
P2.4 Know how to find relevant evidence from a variety of sources.
- G1 ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY
1 – G5.0.2 Describe ways in which the physical environment in a place or region affects people's lives.

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- G2 PLACES AND REGIONS
2 – G2.0.1 Compare the physical and human characteristics of the local community with those of another community.

MICHIGAN SCIENCE STANDARDS

- K, 1, 2 Engineering Design: ETS1-2 Develop a simple sketch, drawing, or physical model to illustrate how the shape of an object helps it function as needed to solve a given problem.
- 3-5 Engineering Design: ETS1-2 Generate and compare multiple possible solutions to a problem based on how well each is likely to meet the criteria and constraints of the problem.

MICHIGAN ART STANDARDS

ANALYZE

- Standard 3: Analyze, describe, and evaluate works of art.

ANALYZE IN CONTEXT

- Standard 4: Understand, analyze, and describe the arts in their historical, social, and cultural contexts.

ANALYZE AND MAKE CONNECTIONS

- Standard 5: Recognize, analyze, and describe connections among the arts; between the arts and other disciplines; between the arts and everyday life.

SOURCES

- Common Core Standards: <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/>
- 21st Century Standards: <http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/A-Guide-to-Four-Cs.pdf>
- Michigan Social Studies Standards:
https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/Final_Social_Studies_Standards_Document_65596_8_7.pdf
- Michigan Science Standards: https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/K-12_Science_Performance_Expectations_v5_496901_7.pdf
- Michigan Arts Standards: <https://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,4615,7-140-28753---,00.html>
- https://www.michigan.gov/documents/mde/VPAA_Standards_Accessible_Final_599577_7.pdf

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PRE-VISIT ACTIVITIES

DAY 1:

SLIDES 1-5: Introduce the three East Asian countries of China, Korea, and Japan. Introduce various formats of art that will be part of this investigation of plants:

- Describe the relative locations of China, Korea, and Japan using a world map. Visually compare the physical geography and climate zones of these three countries. Compare the size of each country to Michigan (96,716 square miles, 10 million people)
 - China = 3.705 million square miles, 1.4 billion people
 - Korea = 38,691 square miles combined, 51 million people in South Korea, 25 million people in North Korea
 - Japan = 145,914 square miles, 127 million people
- Describe how regions are created by common physical and/or geographical characteristics.
 - Explain that in this unit, students will be discovering similarities and differences between the characteristics of these three regions.

SLIDE 6: Present various formats of East Asian art that incorporate plant imagery.

- Describe the function of these various formats of art: storytelling, decoration, tableware, clothing, etc.
 - Paper or Silk Paintings: hanging scrolls, hand scrolls, album pages, fans, and screens
 - Three-Dimensional Works of Art: boxes, incense burner, basket, and ceramics such as dishes, bowls, jars, tea pots
 - Textiles: robes

SLIDES 7-8: Give students examples of each kind of work using “The Seasons in Bloom Artwork” class handouts. Ask them to classify these examples by location and medium, using the “**Lotus Flower**” graphic organizer to group artwork with common characteristics.

- Ask students to describe the ways in which the physical environment and resources of a place might impact art, from the types of art produced to the subject matter or decorations seen on that art.

SLIDE 9: Discuss the functions of the artwork. Are the works being used for storytelling, decoration, tableware, clothing? What might be some of the other purposes for these pieces?

SLIDE 10: Using the information gathered on the students’ “**Lotus Flower**” graphic organizers, complete the classification charts by tallying the number of example works from each country found on “**The Seasons in Bloom Artworks**” handout and by classifying the types of works.

SLIDE 11: Compare what students see in these selected objects to the art they see and objects they use in their own communities.

- Resources: <http://nctasia.org/art-resources/> and <http://nctasia.org/learning-and-teaching-east-asian-art/>

DAY 2:

SLIDES 12-16: Explain that artists often use objects as symbols to represent other ideas, and East Asian art is especially well known for its use of symbols. For example, there are four plants that relate to the

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four seasons: plum blossom (spring), orchid (summer), chrysanthemum (fall), and bamboo (winter). These four plants are referred to as “the four gracious plants” or sometimes as “the four gentlemen.”

- Show students examples of each symbol in different media:
 - Using a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional works, place photographs of the pieces side-by-side and ask students to compare the images. How are the representations of the symbol similar? In what ways do they differ?
 - Students may be interested in watching a short YouTube video showing how the four gracious plants are traditionally painted. See the following resource:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xVwOkf37230>
- Describe some of the uses for each plant: plum blossoms grow into fruit, orchids are colorful and fragrant delicate flowering plants, most varieties of chrysanthemum originated in East Asia and are very hardy, and bamboo is one of the fastest growing plants in the world, being used as both a food source and a strong building material.
 - Explain that each plant also represents certain characteristics or qualities. Each of the four represents integrity and resilience, but individually they also represent other qualities.
 - The plum blossom--which blooms in early spring when the cold of winter still lingers--represents inner beauty through its humble display of elegance under challenging circumstances.
 - The orchid represents humility and nobility with its fragile state of beauty.
 - The chrysanthemum represents longevity.
 - Bamboo represents open mindedness, tolerance, flexibility and strength.
- Ask students to make a link to their own lives: What plants do they recognize around their own homes or school? In what season do they appear? How would they describe those plants? What qualities might they associate with those plants and why?
 - If students were to represent one of those plants in a work of art, what format would they choose and how would they show the plant?

SLIDES 17-19: There are many other symbolic flowers used in East Asian art. In Buddhism, the lotus flower represents purity of the spirit, mind, and body because it grows in mucky waters but emerges pristine.

- Compare photographs of the lotus plant and blossoms with ways that the flower is represented in art, using the *Lotus Pond Screen* or *Incense Burner with Design of Sanskrit Characters and Lotus Flowers* as examples.

SLIDES 20-21: Ask students to imagine interviewing the artist who created one of these pieces, using *Flowers and Insects* by Tsubaki Chinzan (Japanese, 1801–1854) as a class example. What questions might they ask in order to gain a better understanding of the work?

- Select one piece from “**The Seasons in Bloom Artwork**” pages. Students should write two questions they might ask the artist on a card and keep these questions with a photo of the artwork.

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- Have students exchange their cards and photos with a partner. Give students a few minutes to examine the new object and read the questions that their partner provided. Ask students to take on the role of the artist and attempt to verbally answer the questions.

DAY 3:

Provide additional information on the four gracious plants. Explore how and why scientists, past and present, investigate the plants of East Asia:

- See the following resources:
 - <https://www.arboretum.harvard.edu/library/image-collection/botanical-and-cultural-images-of-eastern-asia/>
 - <http://www.mobot.org/MOBOT/Research/asiaprojects.shtml>
<https://atlantabg.org/the-international-plant-exploration-program/>

SLIDE 22: Asian literature is full of botanical imagery. From the world's first novel, *The Tale of Genji*, to a contemporary children's book, *Grass Sandals: The Travels of Basho*, many books and poems are filled with plants and flowers that are used to represent various qualities or sentiments.

- See the following resource:
 - <https://www.eagle.pitt.edu/catalog/listing?page=6&keys=children%27s%20book&rating=>
- See the following resources:
 - <https://www.christies.com/features/Nature-in-Asian-art-7220-1.aspx>
 - <https://www.christies.com/features/A-guide-to-the-symbolism-of-Chinese-ceramic-decoration-9163-3.aspx>

SLIDE 23: Have students complete a detailed comparison of the four gracious plants by selecting two (or more) objects from “**The Seasons in Bloom Artworks**” to analyze. Ask students to compose an explanatory text focusing on the image--plum blossom, orchid, chrysanthemum, or bamboo. Depending on the grade level or skill ability, the written comparison could include background research on the plant and/or hand-drawn illustrations.

- Ask students to consider the uniqueness of the representations they are comparing, the materials used to make the works of art, and the choice of additional decorations or designs besides the plum blossom, orchid, chrysanthemum, and bamboo.
- Ask students to comment on the emotion or feelings that these representations evoke. What evidence leads them to draw that conclusion--the size of the image, the brush stroke, the color, the texture, the detail, etc.?

VISIT ACTIVITIES

DAY 4:

Guided Tour Explanation & Rationale

For the most beneficial experience, before the day of the field trip, it is important that the students can:

- differentiate between various formats of art and be able to identify a variety of materials used to make art
- identify various graphics used to represent plum blossoms, orchids, chrysanthemums, bamboo, and lotus flower
- understand the uses for and symbolism of various plants

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DIA Guided Experience (1 hour)

When booking a guided experience at the Detroit Institute of Arts, please specify that you wish to see objects that align with this specific lesson plan. A suggested list of objects is located below. Gallery Teachers will select objects that are located in areas of the museum that provide opportunities for comparisons across various cultures, places, and time.

- Chinese Art: *Mustard Seed Garden* album pages
Lotus Leaf Bowl
- Korean Art: Gallery space dedicated to the four gracious plants
Jar with Designs of Plum and Bamboo
- Japanese and Buddhist Art: examples based on recommendations from the Focus Works section of this lesson plan and what is on rotation at the time of the visit

Contemporary Connections

- Examples based on recommendations from the Focus Works list

Self-Guided Experience (45 Minutes)

- Students spend time in the DIA's Asian Galleries, focusing on the above-listed key works based on recommendations from a list at the beginning of this lesson.
- Ask students to compare key works from at least two of the four galleries. Make sure they examine the works as well as take a look at the museum labels to help with the identification of plants.
- SLIDE 24: Students should team together and use the “**Four Seasons Calendar**” graphic organizer to record the botanical symbols found on the works they examine.
- Recommend that students move through the galleries in a clockwise direction so that they pass by each display case.
- For some of the works, suggest that students create a quick sketch to note the placement of the symbols within the composition. For more complicated pieces, ask students to focus on just one section of the work if completing a sketch.
- As time allows, students may explore other pieces in the Asian galleries to make additional notes about other related works of art.

Items of Note:

- The DIA's collection of Asian works spans more than 4000 years and includes over 7000 objects. Only a portion of this collection is on display. Because of the fragility of works on paper and textiles, such pieces (or sections of larger works) are on display for rotation in the galleries, remaining on display for four or six months at a time.

POST-VISIT ACTIVITIES

Design Time: Students will re-engineer a work of art, using one of the other four gracious plants in the design.

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DAY 5:

SLIDES 25-27: With guidance, recall information from the field trip. Gather student responses to answer the following questions:

- What countries were represented in the artwork you saw during your visit?
- What formats of artwork did you see?
- What materials were used to make these artworks?
- What types of decorations did you see on the artwork?

Using the visual evidence gathered, have students conduct a short research project to find out more about one particular artwork they saw, using the DIA's website or printed cards from the Tool Boxes to search the collection.

- Ask students to select a piece that is decorated with the image of one of the four gracious plants. They may use additional resources such as the ones provided in the pre-visit lesson to assist them in discovering more about the plant specimen they are analyzing.
 - When, where, and how was the object made? Refer to any of the details listed below the image on the website, demonstrating to students how to read a label.
 - Does the form of the piece work for its function? How might you change the form or materials used to make this object? How would that alter what it might be used for?
 - What does the plant symbolize? How does the way it is used in this artwork help to evoke that meaning? Do you like the image(s) or would you change it in some way--color, size, placement, etc.?
 - What might be different about the work if it featured one of the other gracious plants? Would that change the object's color, size, shape, function, etc.?

DAYS 6-7:

SLIDE 28: Challenge students to re-engineer the piece using the “**Engineering Design Guide**,” featuring an illustration of one of the other gracious plants. Have students complete the “**Engineering Design Guide**” to draw, label, and explain their new object.

SLIDES 29-30: When students are finished, put them in groups and allow them to give feedback on the designs, providing two cheers and a check for each work. Cheers should be provided for unique ideas and creative details, while checks give students the opportunity to provide constructive feedback and suggestions that might improve the design of the object. Share the “**Engineering Design Guide Rubric**” to outline ways in which students can further develop and enhance their ideas.

- If students need to redesign their work, provide additional time/design guides for alterations. If students finish their work, they can write a poem about their piece.
 - See http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/japan_600ce_waka.htm for guidance.

MINI PROJECT: (This can be done in conjunction with the art teacher if desired).

Have students create their work of art as a 2D or 3D form, using materials appropriate for the object (paper, clay, wood, etc.) Create a mini-museum display by including the students' written labels along with the object.

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Credit Lines

Attributed to Qian Xuan (Chinese, 1235-1305), [Early Autumn](#), scroll late 13th - 14th century. Ink, watercolor, and gold on paper; 12 1/4 inches × 34 feet 10 1/4 inches. 29.1

Chinese. [Covered Basket](#) (Chrysanthemum), 1735-95. Silver filigree and cloison; 7 1/4 × 7 3/4 inches. 73.193

Chinese. [Dragonfly and Plants, from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting](#), 18th Century. Woodblock print, Ink and color ink on paper; 10 1/2 × 12 7/8 inches. 37.81

Chinese. [Large Deep Plate with incised Peony and Wave Design](#), 14th-15th century. Stoneware with celadon glaze; 2 3/8 × 13 inches. 73.321

Chinese. [Lotus Leaf](#) (possibly a brush washer), late 17th or early 18th century. Glazed porcelain; 1 1/4 × 3 3/4 × 3 1/8 inches. 2010.166

Chinese. [Shallow Dish with Design of Boys Playing Among Lotus](#), ca. 1200. Porcelain with "shadow blue" glaze; 7 1/2 × 1 3/4 inches. 1991.169

Chinese. [Tea Pot](#), 19th century. Stoneware; 3 1/4 inches. 2014.24.

Chinese. [Tray with Design of Cranes and Chrysanthemums](#), 1300-50. Lacquer on wood; 1 1/2 × 11 1/2 inches. 80.25

Heo Hyeong (Korean, 1862-1938), [Hundred Paintings Screen](#), ca. 1900. Ink and watercolor on silk; 40 1/2 × 12 3/4 inches. 2015.32

Japanese. [Noh Theater Robe, Karaori Type](#) (Chrysanthemum), 18th Century. Metallic and silk brocade, silk. 1984.23

Japanese. [Blue and White Wisteria on a Bamboo Trellis](#), early 17th century. Ink and color paint on gold leaf covered paper; 67 1/4 × 148 1/4 inches. 1984.18.1

Japanese. [Document Box \(Chrysanthemum\)](#), early 17th Century. Lacquer and gold maki-e on wood; 7 inches × 17 1/2 inches × 11 inches. 81.1

Japanese. [Incense Burner with Design of Sanskrit Characters and Lotus Flowers](#), 1185-1334. Gilt bronze; 11 in. 27.555

Japanese. [Noh Theater Mask Box](#), 17th century. Lacquer on wood with *maki-e* (sprinkled gold powder) and metal fittings; 10 5/8 × 13 7/8 × 9 5/8 inches. 1983.38

Japanese. [Peonies](#), 17th Century. Ink, color paint, and gold on paper, 67 1/2 × 150 3/8 × 7/8 inches. 2007.119.1

Japanese. [Set of Miniature Painting Albums](#), between 18th and 19th century. Albums: ink and watercolor on paper box: wood, ink; 2013.72

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Jeong Taekyu (Korean), [Plum Blossoms](#), 19th century. Ink on paper; 61 × 40 1/4 × 1 1/2 inches. 2000.89

Kim Eung-won (Korean, 1855-1921), [Orchids 3](#), late 19th to early 20th century. Ink on paper; 13 1/4 × 17 1/2 inches. 2016.29

Kim Gyujin (Korean, 1868-1933). [Bamboo](#), late 19th to early 20th century. Ink on silk; 51 × 15 1/2 inches. 2016.30

Kim Gyujin (Korean, 1868-1933). [Ten-Panel Screen with Plants and Verses](#), 1896. Ink on toned paper; 73 1/2 × 164 1/2 inches. 2019.45

Korean. [Deep Bowl with Chrysanthemum Decoration](#), between 15th and 16th century. Stoneware with white slip decoration and light green glaze; 3 1/4 × 7 3/8 inches. 74.90

Korean, [Embroidered Screen with Design of Longevity Symbols](#), 18th century. Silk embroidery on silk; 73 × 171 inches. 1985.14

Korean, [Lotus Pond Screen](#), 19th Century. Ink and watercolor on paper; 61 1/4 × 115 3/8 inches. 2016.1

Korean [Jar with Designs of Plum and Bamboo](#), 19th or early 20th century. Porcelain with underglaze cobalt. 5 1/4 × 5 1/2 inches. 1998.11

Richard Milgrim (American born 1955). [Tea Bowl with Plum Blossom Motif](#), 2004. stoneware with red iron slip, latex resist, and feldspar glaze; 3 3/4 × 4 1/2 inches. 2005.71

Ryukyuan (Japanese). [Box with Design of Phoenixes and Lotus Blossoms](#), early 17th Century. Lacquered wood with mother-of-pearl inlay and metal; 3 1/4 × 17 1/2 × 5 1/8 inches. 1983.5

Sakai Hoitsu (Japanese, 1761-1828), Suzuki Kiitsu (Japanese, 1796–1858), Kameda Bosai (Japanese, 1752–1826). [Bamboo and Plum Tree](#), 19th century. Ink on paper; 71 1/4 × 13 inches. 2013.43

Tsubaki Chinzan (Japanese, 1801–1854). [Flowers and Insects](#), early to mid-19th century. Ink and color paint on silk; 16 3/8 × 111 inches. 82.31

Utagawa Hiroshige I (Japanese, 1797-1858), [New Year's Greeting: Bird and Chrysanthemums](#), 1810s-1858. Woodblock print, Ink on paper. F69.92

Chinese. [Blossoms of Iris, Camellia, and Prune, from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting](#), 18th Century. Ink on paper; 10 1/4 × 12 1/2 inches. 37.80

Wang Shi (Chinese, 1649 – 1734; designer). [Magnolia Blossoms, from the Mustard Seed Garden Manual of Painting](#), 18th Century. Ink on paper; 10 1/8 × 12 1/4 inches. 37.78

Yamamoto Baiitsu, (Japanese, 1783-1856). [Bush Clover and Quails](#), early 19th century. ink and watercolor on silk; 52 1/4 × 22 3/8 inches. 82.43