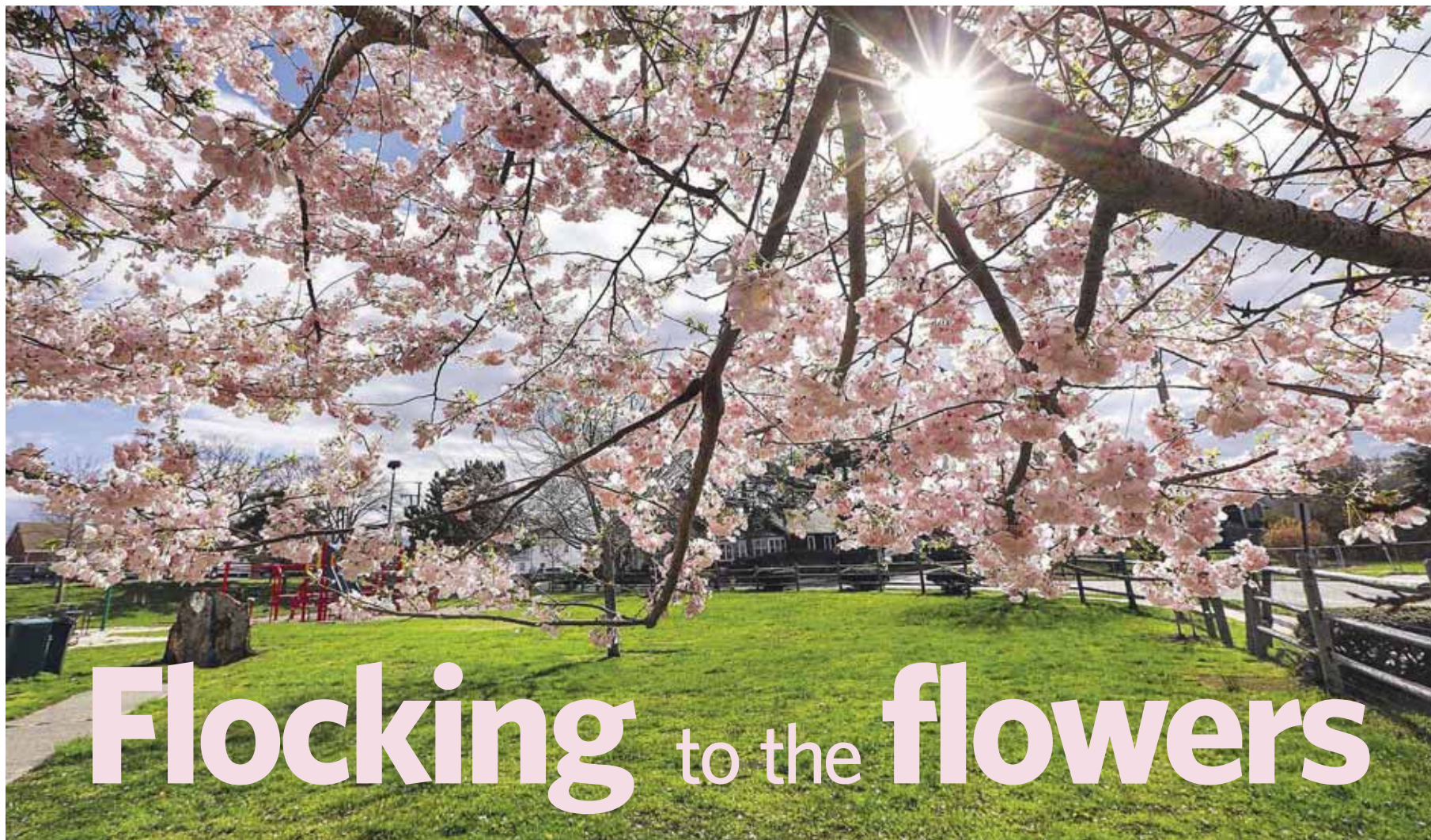



**NOW ONLINE**

 10 more things to do on Long Island this weekend  
[newsday.com/lifestyle](https://www.newsday.com/lifestyle)


# Flocking to the flowers

NEWSDAY / JOHN PARASKEVAS

Cherry trees loom over Third Street Park and Playground in Greenport. Explore the village's blooms during the Greenport Cherry Blossom Festival Petal Tour.

## It's cherry blossom festival season

BY NATALIA DE CUBA ROMERO  
 Special to Newsday

**G**reenport may get its biggest crowds in summer, but cherry blossom season is when it is at its most alluring. The already-charming seaside village becomes an enchanted garden of pink and white blossoms gracing more than 300 trees in one square mile. And as the season progresses, blushing petals float in the air like fairy dust and the roads and sidewalks are carpeted in magic.

The Greenport Cherry Blossom Festival Petal Tour celebrates this special season with a self-guided tour of the spectacle.

Think of it as an entire village turned botanical garden. Yes, it is a walkable flower show, but it also offers 29 opportunities to stop for cherry blossom-themed refreshments and shopping. Pick up the free Petal Tour map for the location and varieties of every blossoming cherry and pear tree in the village, as well as the participating vendors offering cherry

blossom-themed beverages, food and novelty items. Get the map at AgroCouncil at Greenporter Hotel, (326 Front St., 631-500-0850, [info@agrocouncil.org](mailto:info@agrocouncil.org)) or at participating merchants or download it

at [villageofgreenport.org](http://villageofgreenport.org).

There have been cherry blossom festivals in the village before — the first trees were planted in the late '80s by the late Mayor Charles W. Hubbard — but the Petal Tour began in 2019. It took a year off during the pandemic and came roaring back in 2021.

“Last year, people wanted to be outdoors,” says Deborah Pittorino, founder of Greenporter Hotel and AgroCouncil. “Being in nature comforts people. But it goes beyond trees; all the businesses are celebrating the season together as a community, and that is important.”

### NEW THIS YEAR

This year's tour has some new features. It kicked off on Saturday with the first Run for the Petals 5K. The AgroCouncil is now offering a commemorative T-shirt (\$20) available at Greenporter Hotel and at Greenport Harbor Brewery where you can also order a Blossom Beer Cocktail — a light-bodied beer infused with a cherry hue and flavor (\$7, only at the Greenport location, 234 Carpenter St., 631-477-1100).

Seven merchants are new this year, including The Weathered Barn, an artisanal lifestyle shop offering a limited-edition, handcrafted cherry blossom soy candle with a fragrance blend of pink Japanese cherry blossom, mimosa flower petals, vanilla, tonka bean and artisanal woods (\$20, 41 Front St., 631-477-6811).

Hook & Net — a fishmonger and takeout-outdoor eatery — joins the

### Sakura Matsuri at the Charles B. Wang Center

**S**akura is Japanese for cherry blossom — the unofficial flower of Japan. Hanami — or viewing parties — are conducted all over Japan for the fleeting days of spring when they bloom. Since 1999, martial arts studio Ryu Shu Kan Japanese Arts Center in Farmingville has brought the Sakura Matsuri (cherry blossom festival) to Long Island as a way for Sensei Gerard Senese and his wife, Hiroko Uruga-Senese, to introduce Japanese culture to their students. Now in its 22nd year, their Sakura Matsuri has grown to become an eagerly awaited one-day banquet of Japanese food, music, dance and traditions — and even manga cosplay — that welcomes around 500 visitors each year. This rain-or-shine festival has been hosted at Stony Brook

University's Charles B. Wang Center since 2007. The center is landscaped with around 40 Kwanzan cherry trees, arguably the most dramatic of Japan's 12 varieties. The trees frame the day's many activities: taiko drum performances that begin outside and make their way in, Koto plays, Japanese traditional dances, martial arts demonstrations, ikebana flower arranging and tea, manga and origami workshops plus much more for all ages. This festival is coproduced by the Japan Center at Stony Brook University and the Ryu Shu Kan Japanese Arts Center. Saturday, noon to 5 p.m.; Charles B. Wang Center, 100 Nicolls Rd., Stony Brook, 631-632-4400. Admission: \$30 (general), \$20 (students/seniors), \$10 (children ages 6 to 12).