



# NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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SEPT  
2022



## AUTUMN EDITION

Welcome to the fall edition of the newsletter. Our gardens are winding down for the season as the days grow shorter and harvest time, cooler temperatures and colorful foliage is on the horizon. Happy Autumn.

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



GREETINGS FROM RUSS...



Dear NAOTA Members,

As we approach the end of summer 2022 with this newsletter, I'm filled with exuberance regarding our upcoming conference in Toronto. We are just weeks away from this highly anticipated event. I can't wait to get back into our annual conference routine. And look so forward to seeing many of you there.

Headmaster and Professor Nishi will be stopping in Cleveland Ohio prior to our conference to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Northern Ohio chapter with a demonstration and workshop. I would highly recommend participation in this event. If you're interested reach out to Emily at [eavrose@aol.com](mailto:eavrose@aol.com).

Significantly, this year is our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Our organization was founded on January 18, 2002 under the leadership of our founding president, Ingrid Luders. Her thoughtful and continual guidance over the decades has helped create the strong organization we all enjoy today.

To close out this quarter's message, the Website committee are working on a revamped layout. We are looking forward to the updates. Included will be a section where chapters can announce significant anniversaries and mention upcoming Ohara workshops and demonstrations. All submissions should be sent in aligned with the newsletter submission cutoff dates at the end of this newsletter. Please allow for some time for the website committee to post your information and event.

Wishing you the best,

Russell Bowers  
(Massachusetts Chapter)

# THE TRADITIONAL METHOD



## FALLEN MAPLE-LEAF ARRANGEMENT FOR AUTUMN

-- KIN-KEI (NEAR VIEW)

*This Traditional Method discussion below is republished from the book entitled “The Traditional Ikebana of the Ohara School” by Houn Ohara. English Translation 2019, with permission from The Ohara School of Ikebana Headquarters. Note that this arrangement is a Landscape moribana (Shakei).*

Long called the Fallen Maple-leaf Landscape, this work is rich in seasonal feeling and poetic sentiment, and is well-known for the special techniques used in its creation. It captures the atmosphere of autumn highlands by suggesting a dynamic process in which crimson maple leaves that have fallen deep in the mountains and flowed down at the mercy of the waters, now appear floating before the viewer in an image that has strong literary connotations. No branches of maple are used, but only a few crimson leaves are set floating on the water’s surface. To evoke all these associations while working in accordance with established rules is the aim of this truly exceptional work of *Moribana*.



Photo #1

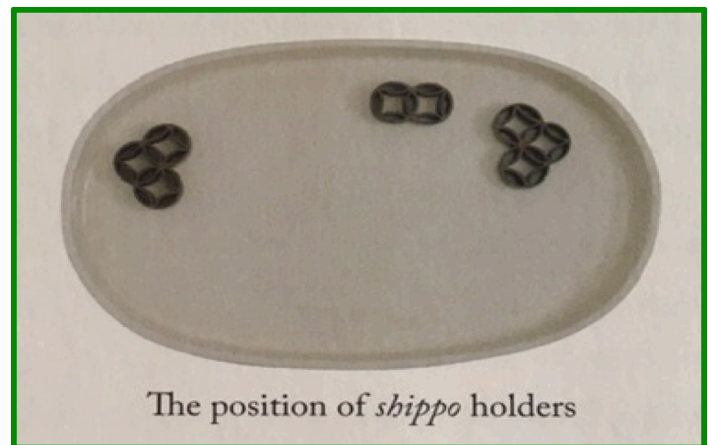
Lichen-covered  
azalea, patrinia,  
gentian, club moss,  
maples leaves

*Chokuritsu-kei*

The greatest highlight of the work is the water's surface shown in the front area of the container where fall-colored maple leaves float. The area for the materials to be inserted in is about half of the container in the rear. In most works, materials are arranged with a strong sense of depth, but in this work of fallen maple-leaves, the *Shu-shi* (Subject), the *Fuku-shi* (Secondary) and the *Chukan-shi* (Fillers) are lined up, while the maple leaves scattered on the water are considered as the *Kyaku-shi* (Object) group.

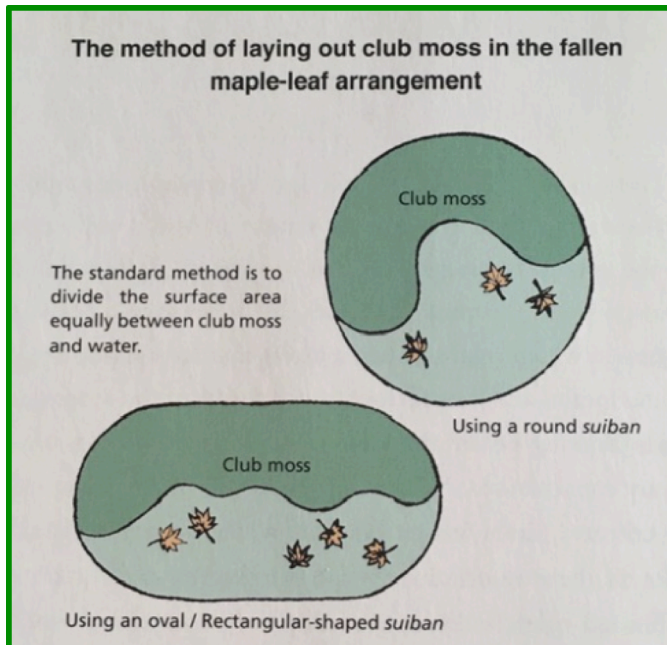
The work depicts autumn plants growing on the opposite bank of a stream. Here, lichened azalea, patrinia, and gentian are all placed somewhat lower than the typical *Kin-kei*; this is done in order to establish a close link between the plants on the bank in the rear and the maple leaves on the water in the front. If the connection between these two areas is inadequate, pictorial beauty, which is the aim of the work, will not be achieved. Moreover, the materials in the rear are arranged not to depict plants growing at one's feet, but to set up an environment of a mountain valley in autumn where maple leaves are flowing down the stream. Thus, these materials making up the backdrop should not be too high.

To begin, first arrange the azalea in the *Keisha-kei* (Slanting Style) as the *Shu-shi*, *Fuku-shi*, *Chukan-shi*, and *Kyaku-shi* branches spreading out to the left and the right. Next, insert the patrinia as the *Shu-shi* in the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style), while the azalea, which was the *Shu-shi* in the *Keisha-kei*, now becomes the *Fuku-shi*, thus making the final composition in the *Chokuritsu-kei*. However, it is permissible to complete the entire composition in the *Keisha-kei* depending on how the patrinia is treated and the appearance of the azalea.



The *Chukan-shi* azalea branches, positioned continuously from the left to the right not only avoid splitting the composition into two separate groups, but unify the background scenery to be seen as one bank. One gentian is arranged low on the *Shu-shi* side, and two in differing lengths are placed on the *Kyaku-shi* side.

Since the main point of this work is the display of the maple leaves on the water, the laying out of club moss becomes critical in the Fallen Maple-leaf Arrangement. The edge of the club moss should not appear a monotonous, straight line running from left to right. As show in the diagrams, club moss is laid out with delicate curves along the water's edge.



There are three maple leaves used in the example, but depending on the size of the leaves, five may also be used. In either case, arrange the leaves pointing in different directions and in an interesting, varied pattern.

In the example (*photo #1*) the maple leaf on the far right is considered as the *Kyaku-shi*, although patrinia, azalea, and gentian are arranged low as the *Shu-shi*, the *Fuku-shi*, the *Chukan-shi*, and the *Kyaku-shi* in the rear.

The example (*on the right*), using the same combination of materials, is a variation of the example (*in photo #1*) ; it shows the water flowing vertically in the composition. While the example (*photo #1*) depicts the viewing of the opposite bank, the example (*on the right*) depicts a stream in front of one's eyes.



The Ohara School takes special pride in the works in the *Yoshiki-hon-I*, a form of expression which can be found in no other school. Among these works, the Fallen Maple-leaf Arrangement, rich in poetic sentiment, is especially unique.

# MEET THE SUB GRAND MASTER



**FROM THE DESK OF... MITSUKO MARUYAMA**

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I began my Ikebana studies at the age of 22 years old, here in Northern California. One day, I was looking at Ikebana displays when one particular arrangement caught my eye. It was Suiyo Fujimoto Sensei's Landscape arrangement in Traditional Method using Irises. It looked just like the pond that I remembered when I was a child in Japan. I fell in love with the arrangement. That's when I decided to join her Ikebana class. And the rest, as they say, is history.



***Do you have a favorite arrangement style? If so, which one and why?***

I like all the arrangement styles so it is difficult to choose just one. If I had to choose, then my choices are Realistic Landscape arrangement and Rimpa-cho arrangement. Both styles express and distinguish the seasons beautifully in a Suiban.

***As most ikebana practitioners love floral materials, do you also enjoy gardening as a hobby ?***

I am fortunate to have many kind neighbors and friends who offer plants & flowers from their gardens. Gardening is not my specialty, but I keep the garden materials watered and pull out the weeds.

***What is one of your favorite floral materials and why?***

I have many favorite flowers but if I had to pick one, then it would be Lilies. Lilies have many varieties in colors and sizes that are versatile to many Ohara arrangement styles.

***Do you have any tips for demonstrators, to ensure a smooth and successful demo?***

This is my routine when I plan for the demonstrations. I visualize in my mind the arrangement that is to be, then arrange the flowers from the front. When complete, I check it and study the arrangement from the backside. After that, I stand in front of a large mirror then put together my arrangement from the back. Seeing myself in a mirror as I arrange and practice helps me gain my confidence to demonstrate.

***What is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching Ikebana to students?***

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching Ikebana is conveying to students that they need to understand and study the growth environment of plants and floral materials in each of the seasons. Living in the San Francisco Bay Area where weather is mild all year round makes the changes in seasons subtle to see.

***What is one of your most memorable ikebana moments and why?***

My most memorable Ikebana moment was my first Flower Show in 1971. Under Fujimoto Sensei's leadership, I was impressed with all of the students and their family members who got together all day to set up the 4 exhibition rooms and display about 100 arrangements. I saw and felt first hand, the collaboration and the passion from everyone involved to make the Exhibition a success. We were there with a common goal... Love of Ikebana. This is my motto I continue to share and teach.

# LET'S GET DIGGING

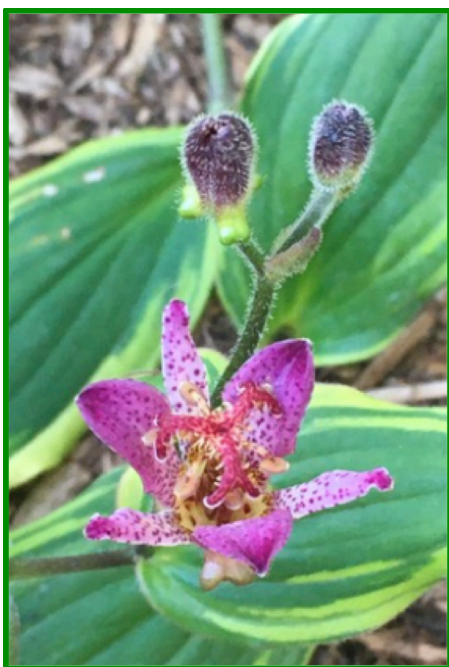


## JAPANESE TOAD LILY

WRITTEN BY CAROL LEGROS

In this issue of *Let's Get Digging*, the featured perennial is one that many may not be familiar with, but is a beautiful material used in our traditional arrangements... the Japanese Toad Lily or *Tricyrtis Hirta* ... a member of the lily family Liliaceae.

This shade-loving perennial is easy to grow in partial or full shade, depending on the growing zone and climate in your area. My toad lilies (zone 4/5) receive only a bit of early morning sun up until around 9am and after that they are in shade for the remainder of the day. The flowers begin to bloom in late summer and continue into September and October, gracing us with beautiful delicate petite flowers – perhaps 1” at most – that form a “spray” of buds up the tall stems that reach as high as 36”. The dark leaves are also interesting, some having a lighter edge/border, reminiscent of variegated Solomon seal foliage colors.



If they love their spot in the garden they will multiply easily with their creeping rhizomes, providing a beautiful mass of foliage and flowers. As long as you keep the soil moist, they will flourish. Use some mulch to retain moisture, keep the soil cool, and help them over-winter in harsh winter climates. They will not disappoint!

# CAROLYN'S CONTAINER CORNER



## HANAKAGO

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN ALTER

For the fall container corner, I would like to visit *Hanakago*. *Hanakago* is the Japanese word for flower basket. Historically baskets have been woven for millenia and were utilitarian items. Then, in the 16th century, the famous tea master, Sen no Rikyu, was walking along the Katsura River and saw a fisherman's creel and decided to use it for *chabana*, tea flowers. After that *hanakago* have been used for *chabana* and *ikebana*. They were most commonly used in the 19th century and with decreasing frequency in the 20th century as ceramic vessels and glass vases became more popular along with the *kenzan*. *Hanakago* are perfect for fall arrangements and are typically used from spring through fall.

*Hanakago* are made primarily from bamboo that is split into strips of varying widths and thicknesses and then woven into a wide variety of shapes. Other materials might include reeds, rattan for handle wrapping and decorative knotting and tree roots or vines like akebia and wisteria attached as a handle or incorporated into the body of the basket. This vine handled basket was my sensei's basket which I acquired for \$15 when she retired.

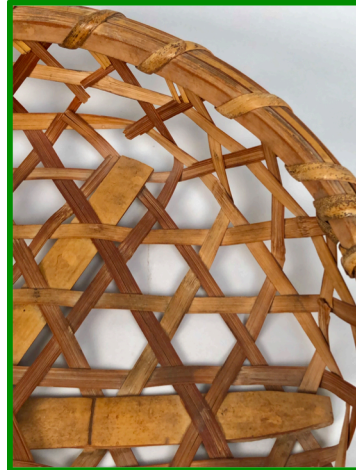
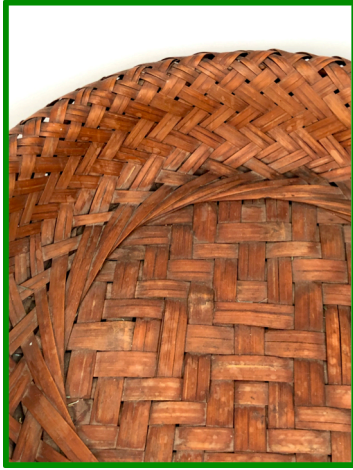
Varying colors of bamboo are employed from light yellowish to brown, dark burgundy and even black. The bamboo may be dyed from plum to add rich color. In the summer, the lighter colored baskets look nice with lush green materials. In the fall, the deep brown baskets impart an earthiness and are beautifully complemented by using berried and vine type materials.

Cultural note: Bamboo used in the ceiling construction of farmhouses was exposed over time to cooking fumes/soot which naturally turned the bamboo a darker color. Then pieces which were salvaged were used either whole or split for plaiting.



Basket construction runs a spectrum from informal to formal based on the tightness

and intricacy of the weave or plaiting. The most basic is twill plaiting where one strip is passed over and under one or more other strips. Hexagonal plaiting and chrysanthemum plaiting are also common methods of fabrication.



Baskets made with very thin strips that are woven tightly and in a regular symmetrical pattern are more formal. Those with wider more loose irregular plaiting have an informality and carefree feel. The formal baskets look great with high status materials like peonies, lilies and pine. The informal baskets look nice with carefree feeling flowers like bellflowers, anemones, and grasses.



*Hanakago* are more difficult to use than ceramic vases and containers. They must incorporate some type of liner to hold water. Some baskets have copper liners specifically made for them. Or a piece of wide bamboo with a long segment between nodes may also be used to hold the water.



I have found many baskets at bazaars and sales and typically they come without a liner. I have used plastic water bottles with the top removed, clear glass cylinders or bamboo in varying widths to slide inside.

For flatter bottomed baskets I have used kenzan set in plant pot plastic liners. Another method is an *otoshi*, or cup kenzan that may simply be placed inside the basket.

When arranging in a basket with a handle, try not to block the handle. When using materials that are taller than the handle, try to have them “cut” or cross the handle at its one third point and not directly in the middle. Also try to insert the majority of the materials in front of the handle. You can also use the handle to act like a “frame” by cutting some of the materials shorter than it. Use less materials in baskets since they are light.

In general, many classical Japanese materials work very well in *hanakago*. Look at the colors of the bamboo closely to find a complimentary or a matching colored material. In the deep brown baskets, I find that Dianthus pinks or *nadeshiko*, red or orange cockscombs or *keito* are effective. In a basket with more orange toned strips, blue or purple *kikyō*, Chinese bell flowers or monkshood, *torikabuto* contrast well. My all time favorite material for baskets though is *Miscanthus sinensis* or *susuki*. It is light and airy. The arch of the blade and flower echo the handle’s curve which allows us to feel the wind lending a softness to the arrangement. Perhaps grasses work so effectively in baskets because bamboo in itself is a grass.

I also highly recommend Bamboo Baskets Japanese Art and Culture Interwoven with the Beauty of Ikebana by Maggie Oster ©1995.

To see more samples of *hanakago* with matching ikebana styles and suitable materials, please refer to the Ohara School publication, Kikyo No. 313.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## OFFICIAL OHARA SCHOOL LOGOS

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In 2020, we received a selection of official Ohara School logos from Headquarters for our use. Please contact Russ at [russell.bowers@bostonikebana.com](mailto:russell.bowers@bostonikebana.com) who will be happy to send them to you.



## HOW DO WE REACH YOU?

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We collect your contact information whenever you renew your membership, so that we may contact you throughout the year, whether by email or postal mail, with news or information on the NAOTA organization, as well as regular newsletters.

If you have recently moved, or had reason to change your email address or phone number, please do not wait until renewal time to let us know there is a change. At any time throughout the year, **send your updated contact information to Saskia Eller at: [saskiaeller@outlook.com](mailto:saskiaeller@outlook.com)** so that you may continue to receive correspondence from NAOTA without disruption.



## SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER

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If you have any articles or information you would like to share with all the NAOTA members, please submit to the newsletter editor Carol Legros at [carol\\_legros@hotmail.com](mailto:carol_legros@hotmail.com). Please respect the deadlines for submission, if you want to be sure that the material is published in the upcoming newsletter. If you miss the deadline, it will be held and put in the following newsletter.

<u>Newsletter</u>	<u>Deadline</u>
March	Feb 1
June	May 1
September	August 1
December	November 1