



NORTH AMERICAN OHARA TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

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SEPT
2024

AUTUMN EDITION

Welcome to the September edition of the newsletter. As the summer days wane, the garden's bounty is growing and soon it will be time to pick the sun-ripened produce bursting with flavor. Bon Appetit!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

GREETINGS FROM RUSS...



Dear NAOTA Members,

As the vibrant days of summer begin to shift into the crispness of fall, I find myself reflecting on the beautiful cycles of nature that we experience through ikebana. This season of transition is not only a time of harvest in our gardens but also a chance to deepen our artistry as we work with the unique materials fall provides.

We also have the much-anticipated San Diego conference on the horizon. In just a few short weeks, we'll gather to learn, grow, and connect as a community. The energy around this event is palpable, and I'm thrilled that so many of you are joining us. What an exciting opportunity to learn from Headmaster and Hirota Satoshi Sensei. I'm deeply grateful to the Sakura and La Jolla Chapters, as well as the Chair and Co-Chairs, for their dedication in organizing what is sure to be a memorable and enriching experience.

Looking even further ahead, we are already preparing for the next conference, hosted by the Oregon Chapter in September 2025. As always, I encourage any chapters interested in hosting future events to reach out. It's no small task, but the rewards of bringing our community together are immense.

As we prepare to embrace the changes of the season, I hope that your ikebana continues to bring joy to you and those around you. Whether in the garden or at the upcoming San Diego conference, I look forward to seeing the beautiful works you create.

Warm regards,
Russell Bowers

THE TRADITIONAL METHOD

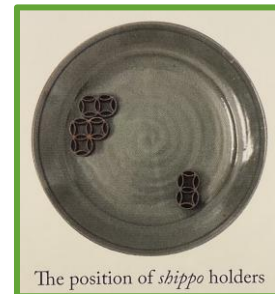
QUINCE

CHU-KEI (MIDDLE 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).

Quince is used in ikebana throughout the year, but in the *Yoshiki-hon-I* (Traditional Method) it is arranged in spring and autumn in the *Chu-kei*. The arranging method in both seasons is the same, capturing the dense growth of a bush in the *hito-kabu-zashi* (one-clump method). Depending on the shape of branches, quince is arranged in either the *Keisha-kei* (Slanting Style) or the *Chokuritsu-kei* (Upright Style). When quince with fruits is arranged, branches are somewhat larger than the spring ones and are better suited to the *Keisha-kei* in terms of a good balance between branches and fruits.

Both examples are composed in the *Keisha-kei* in which branches are placed with movement to the front and the rear, creating depth with substantial space among them. When the fruits are large as in the examples, up to three fruits in total are appropriate for five branches.

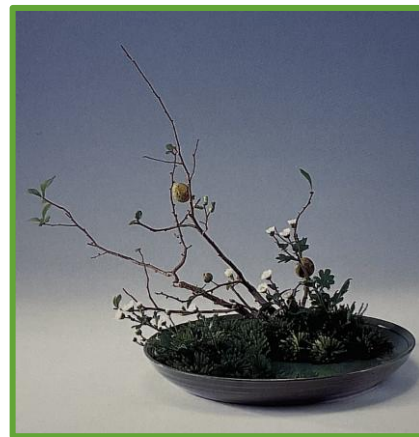


The position of *shippo* holders



In the first example, small chrysanthemum is used as the accompanying material. Here the *Chukan-shi* chrysanthemum is taller than the one in the usual *Chu-kei* in order to balance with the fruit-bearing branches; if chrysanthemum is arranged in a standard length, the work will result in not only being monotonous in style but also in the reduction of the beauty of the flower. Thus, even with the same chrysanthemum as the accompanying material, it is treated differently depending on the character of the main material. It is important to understand this subtle change in the use of chrysanthemum.

Small chrysanthemum in the *Chu-kei* is not the depiction of small chrysanthemum growing in nature. It is rather the depiction of a medium size chrysanthemum being viewed not from far nor near, but from an intermediary distance. Therefore, an actual medium-sized chrysanthemum is not being used here; this is an important point of the combination in the *Yoshiki-hon-i*.



The second example uses gentian instead of small chrysanthemum as the accompanying material. In this work, the *Chukan-shi* gentian is also treated almost like the one in the *Kin-kei* (Near-View Depiction) in the same idea explained in the first example. Both small chrysanthemum in the first example and gentian in the second example are arranged harmoniously with the fruit-bearing, large branches.



MEET THE ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR



FROM THE DESK OF... SATOSHI HIROTA

We look forward to meeting Hirota Sensei and learning from him this autumn at the NAOTA conference in San Diego. Since many of us have not had the pleasure to meet him yet, he was kind enough to share some of his Ikebana experiences with us.



At what age did you start practicing Ikebana?

My mother practiced the Ohara School, so I did a little bit of practice as a child. However, it was just child's play at that time. I began formal training in my late twenties.

Do you have a favorite Ikebana style? If so, which style and why?

I believe each style has its own merits, but if I had to choose, I like the Rimpa style. One reason is its emphasis on flowers, which makes it very vibrant, but I also find it interesting to design it in a painterly manner.

Like many Ikebana enthusiasts who love plant materials, do you also enjoy gardening as a hobby?

Unfortunately, I don't have a garden at home, so I enjoy potted plants on a somewhat spacious balcony. I often use materials that are also used in Ohara School Ikebana.

What is one of your favorite plant materials and why?

It is very difficult to narrow it down to just one, but if I had to choose, I like maple (momiji). The color changes during the seasons of green leaves and autumn leaves are very beautiful. I find both the view of the growing trees and the materials for Ikebana very lovely.

Do you have any tips for demonstrators to ensure a smooth and successful demonstration?

The thing I pay the most attention to is ensuring that the viewers enjoy it. Rather than just showing how to arrange flowers, I engage in conversation with the audience and sometimes even involve them in the creation process.

What is the most challenging aspect of teaching Ikebana to students?

There are many different types of students. Of course, their ages vary, but so do their jobs, family situations, and attitudes towards Ikebana. I believe it is important for them to enjoy and continue their practice, so I try to adapt to each person's pace.

What is your most memorable moment in Ikebana and why?

I have countless memories related to Ikebana. There are many memorable works, but more than that, meeting so many people has left a strong impression on me. If it weren't for practicing Ikebana in the Ohara School, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to connect with people from abroad like this. Visiting various countries in Europe, India, Taiwan, and now, for the first time, America is among those memorable experiences.

Do you have any hobbies or interests outside of Ikebana? Do you participate in any sports?

I am quite the indoor type. I have hardly ever played sports. When I get the chance, I enjoy watching musicals and plays. I spend a lot of time at home watching anime streaming online.

Is there anything else you would like to share with us?

Since I cannot speak English, I believe I may cause some inconvenience to everyone. I apologize for that. However, as this is my first trip to America, I am really looking forward to it. I am also very much looking forward to meeting all of you.

A GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING



THE LEGACY OF SUMAKO IWAYA

ELLEN WESTON

Have you heard about the organization that is totally dedicated to financially supporting, promoting and investing globally in ikebana? It is the **Ikebana Iwaya Fund (IIF)** established in 2014 now celebrating 10 years of helping ikebana grow.



Founder Sumako Iwaya

Sumako Iwaya was already a lover of nature before she met John Solenberger in Japan through their work at the Dupont Corporation. Marrying and creating a home in the Delaware Valley, they transformed their steep, unique property into an award-winning garden collaborating with the premier Longwood Garden in Philadelphia who utilized it for education and training. Sumako's love of garden design and art expanded when she was introduced to ikebana by studying with Sogetsu teacher, Midori Tanimune. Subsequently, Sumako became a member of I.I. Philadelphia Chapter #71, and in her capacity as Chair of the Ways and Means, she saw how fundraising was a key component to providing excellent programming for I.I. chapters.

Spark for Nonprofit

While on holiday, Sumako learned about a joint relationship between a New Zealand wildlife organization and a U.S. not-for-profit organization which made it possible for people to make donations to the New Zealand group and also benefit from a U.S. tax deduction. She and her husband, John, saw how this could be applied to ikebana in the U.S. and agreed to commit a portion of their finances to making a similar "giving" structure for ikebana. They established a nonprofit to support Ikebana International Chapters in 2009.

Creating an Endowment Fund

After Sumako passed away in 2013, John decided to further ensure her legacy by establishing an endowment component within the original (2009) nonprofit and renamed it Ikebana Iwaya Fund (IIF) in 2014. With this endowment, IIF supplements the

public donations it receives to disburse as grants. The investments of the endowment generate dividends which will continue to support ikebana activities in perpetuity. The IIF is a publicly supported nonprofit whereby at least one third of its donations must come from public donations.

How the Fund Works

A donor has the option to make a direct donation to IIF or designate it to an organization of their choice. This can be any organization such as an I.I. Chapter or ikebana study group. Designated donations may also be made as *In Memoriam*. The IIF forwards the funds to the specified entity, while the donor receives a tax-deductible receipt.

How the Fund Grows

For every donation dollar that the IIF receives, the independent Estate of Sumako Iwaya adds the equivalent amount into the endowment. As the endowment grows, more dividends will be available to fund ikebana activities. Over the 10 years since the initial nest egg investment in the IIF, dividends have grown significantly. It is these dividends which have become Sumako's living legacy.

Applying for a Grant

You do not need to be a donor to qualify for a grant. The grant application, found online (Ikebana Iwaya Grants), has been created so that it can provide relevant information. As part of the evaluation process a board member is assigned to review the application and ensure its success.

More opportunities on a range of grant opportunities may be found at www.ikebanaiwayafund.org.

Inaugural Innovation Challenge Grant Recipient

I would like to give special recognition to NAOTA's own, Joe Rotella, for being the 2024 inaugural recipient of the \$5000 Innovation Challenge Grant.

Joe's project partners with the Ohio Dept. of Health, the Asian American Community Services (AACCS), the Yokoso Center (Japan Marketplace, Columbus, Ohio), Kelton House Museum and Garden, and the Columbus Museum of Art.



At present, his target populations include seniors and trauma survivors.



His engagement opportunities provide monthly lessons following the Ohara Curriculum, transportation for seniors, language interpreters, healing adjunct for trauma survivors, exhibition opportunities and monthly ikebana arrangements provided to local businesses.

Please congratulate Joe and consider thinking of your own Innovation Challenge Grant to make your ikebana dream a reality. The deadline for the Innovation Challenge Grant is December 31, 2024.

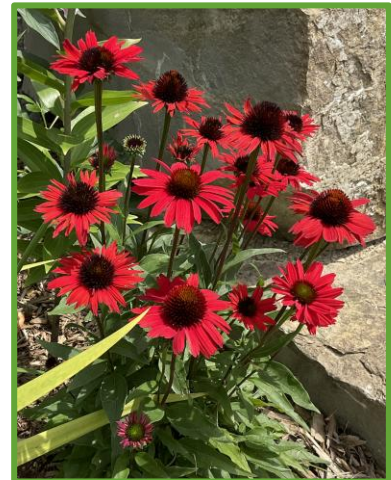
LET'S GET DIGGING

ECHINACEA.

WRITTEN BY CAROL LEGROS

In this issue of *Let's Get Digging*, we are going to look at the Echinacea, or Coneflower. This perennial is easy to care for, and requires little maintenance throughout the growing season.

The purple coneflower is the one that most of us are familiar with, although it is a pink color not purple as the name suggests. This relative of the daisy comes in a variety of colors including white, yellow, orange, red, green, and some in a two-tone color, such as the Green Twister coneflower. Bees and butterflies love these flowers as do the hummingbirds.



These perennials thrive in well drained soil and full sun, but they'll do fine in a part sun part shade location as well. These beauties are popular in North America and are good for Zone 3 through 9, and thankfully are draught tolerant, which is great for some of the hot humid and dry (no rain) weeks we get here in southern Ontario.

The only regular activity I do is cut the spent flowers so that it encourages new blooms throughout summer and into autumn. Every few years, if it's getting too large, I split it from the roots and start new patches or share. Try it out in your garden, they do not disappoint!





Continuing with the ikebana tools theme for my 2024 columns, this fall brings us a discussion about kenzan. Kenzan are a newer type of hanadome or flower stay compared to shippou, which we covered in the summer issue. Some call them pin frogs. They are believed to have been invented during the Meiji era (1868-1912) around the late 19th or early 20th century.

For a cultural connection, the two kanji, or characters, shown above are ken 剣 sword and zan 山 mountain. So kenzan translates to sword mountain. Just like kendo means way of the sword.

Our standard workhorse kenzan are typically made up of a heavy lead or stainless steel base plate with brass needles protruding from them. So the meaning sword mountain seems to be an apt description for them. And since swords are sharp, you will experience pricking your fingers on the kenzan at some points during your ikebana endeavors, if you haven't already! One way to avoid this is to hold the flower material stems about 2 inches from the bottom. If you hold too low when the material suddenly goes into the kenzan you are at risk of piercing your fingers. If you hold the stem too high you risk breaking the stem below your hold point during insertion.

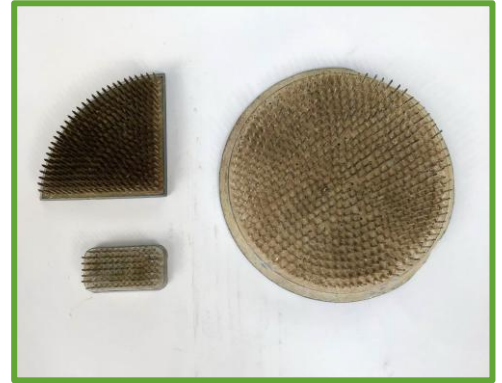
Other types of *kenzan* include all stainless steel, those with a green acrylic resin coating, painted black brass plate with stainless needles and plastic with suction cups (seen at right).



A final type called *otoshi* (seen at left) have spikes inserted into a metal or brass cup which is also called a cup kenzan. The cup holds the water. *Otoshi* are useful in low flat baskets and other non water tight containers and when not using a container such as in *morimono* style.

Various Kenzan Characteristics

1. Size - A wide variety of sizes from miniature to very large plate sized *kenzan* exist which make them quite versatile in a multitude of containers. Some are sold by a size # such as Size 7 or Size 9. This corresponds fairly well to the number of centimeters long but isn't exact. For example, I like the Size 9 rectangular *kenzan* (below right) and 9 cm = 3.5 inches long. Two of these fit well in our standard 12 inch round *suiban* and are large enough to hold most materials and not so large to conceal easily.



2. Shape - Shapes include triangular, rectangular, round, oval and fan shaped, also known as *kanade kenzan*, as they are used for and fit elegantly along the perimeter of *madoka* for our *Hana Kanade* style. Often we will attempt to match the shape of the *kenzan* to the container for a harmonious combination. The triangular one in Japanese is called *ichou*, which means *ginkgo* and is a similar shape to the *ginkgo* leaves (left) but without the notch.

3. Number of Spikes - Some older style *kenzan* have fewer spikes with more distance between each spike. These can be more difficult to use with thin stemmed materials not holding well. Our newer modern *kenzan* have a fairly dense array of spikes and these allow one to angle flowers and branches precisely and with great stability. The size 9 I use have 404 spikes, which seems about perfect.



4. Height of the Spikes - The *kenzan* may be short needled with 1/2 inch high spikes (near left) or long needled with 3/4 inch or longer needles (far left). Short needled are meant primarily to hold flowers and long needled are meant to hold branches. *Kenzan* that have even longer needles of an inch or more are called *grass kenzan*. They have tightly packed spikes to hold the thinner stems of grasses and reeds.

5. Rubber belts - Just like with *shippou*, belts are nice to prevent slippage while arranging and to protect our containers from scratches.



Placement in Containers

Where and how to place the kenzan depends on the style you are doing and the materials used. Rectangular may be used vertically, horizontally and diagonally. There are specific positions on the kenzan where the main materials are inserted depending on the style to help form an asymmetrical triangle. By paying attention to these details of form and technique you will find your arrangements will improve.

Advantages of Kenzan

1. To hold floral materials securely at various angles and spread out on a flat plane.
2. They are reusable thus sustainable and long lasting. I have some that are decades old and still going strong.
3. The variety in size and shape allows for usage in many types of containers.
4. Black or green colored ones disappear in dark colored containers.

Disadvantages of Kenzan

Other than occasional blood loss the spikes do block some water uptake channels in your material stems. With some of the older ones there is a small chance of lead exposure. Therefore you should avoid touching your mouth while arranging and remember to wash your hands well after handling them, prior to preparing food or eating.

Various Techniques in Kenzan

1. Angle Cuts - For hard stemmed branches cut at a 45 degree angle so the point goes down into the spikes and the bark catches on the spikes with the softer lighter colored inner portion of the stem facing up. It will drink water well this way too.
2. Props/Supports - Short stem pieces about 1-2 inches long placed vertically around heavy stems (sunflowers, gladiolas) to help materials stand up better.

3. Pillows and Chairs - Use a short stem piece horizontally, aka a pillow, to support soft stemmed materials when inclining them strongly or a short angle cut stem piece vertically, aka a chair, to support stems not as deeply inclined.
4. Criss Cross Cuts - Split thick branch stems once (to make two pieces) or split twice perpendicular to each other in a cross pattern (to make four pieces) since several smaller stems are easier to insert on the *kenzan* than one large stem.
5. Shoes and Boots - Thicker 1/2 - 1 inch piece of soft centered or hollow stems (mum, gerbera, dahlia, etc) inserted at the bottom of thin stems to assist holding them up.

NAOSHI 直し A *naoshi* is a useful tool for maintaining the *kenzan*. The verb *naosu* in Japanese means to fix. The *naoshi* has three functions.

1. *Kenzan* straightener - Place the hole over a bent *kenzan* spike and move the tool vertically to return the spike to straight up and down. (see *right*)



2. *Kenzan* debris cleaner - Unscrew and turn over and screw back into place to reveal a spike which can pick out embedded floral debris and clean between the parallel lines of spikes. (see *left*)

3. Hole maker - The pointed spike from #2 can be used to make holes in short stem pieces (shoes) to place over thinner stems or when preparing to insert bamboo skewers in flower stems for *heika*. (see *below*)

Please take care when handling your *kenzan* to avoid injury and when not in use I recommend storing them in their boxes or upside down. Perhaps a tetanus booster isn't a bad idea either!



Bibliography

Conversation with Chat GPT4o August 29, 2024

ANNOUNCEMENTS



IN MEMORIAM

On July 11, 2024, Susan Flanagan passed away at age 86 after a long battle with cancer.

Susan was first a microbiologist with the State of Alabama and later a pharmaceutical sales representative. At the end of two successful careers, she retired and devoted herself to her lifelong passion for flowers.

Ikebana International and NAOTA both benefited from her strong support and tireless commitment. The 2017 NAOTA conference in Houston TX owes its success to Susan's boundless energy and meticulous management.

Her memory is a precious treasure in the hearts of her many ikebana friends.

Link to the Obituary:

https://memorials.atxcremation.com/susan-flanagan/5468068/index.php?_ga=2.259545282.995018779.1722525292-478945111.1720636431&_gac=1.125494904.1720636431.CjwKCAjw4ri0BhAvEiwA8oo6F-Y25dkDcTpRGKkT-w7ur8Hh5HxybGOhPXPnWoRvtC4fEfGE_yjClxoCJpQQAvD_BwE#details



UPCOMING EVENTS – 22ND NAOTA CONFERENCE

The Ohara School of Ikebana Oregon Chapter will be hosting the 22nd NAOTA Conference and Professor Hirokazu Yokohigashi from Japan with Grand Master Ingrid Luders assisting him on September 8-12, 2025 in Portland. We will be following NAOTA's traditional format with a reception and registration on Monday evening, workshops from Tuesday through Thursday and the Professor's demonstration on Friday with a Sayonara Banquet that evening. So please save that week on your calendars and plan to travel to Portland in 2025!

For further details, please refer to the NAOTA website, or contact Carolyn Alter directly at: bcalter@mac.com



HOW DO WE REACH YOU?

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** so that you may continue to receive correspondence from NAOTA without disruption.

If you are having trouble receiving emails from Saskia, please check your “spam” or “junk” email folders as it is possible your email service provider may have blocked it for some reason. If you find it in your spam or junk folder, please move it to your Inbox.



SUBMIT MATERIAL FOR THE NEWSLETTER

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. 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