

The **Brooksider**

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends,

For almost a year now, I have been your president. During this first year, I have been supported and encouraged by your hard working Board of Directors. At this time, I would like to recognize and thank four Board members who will be retiring on March 31, which is the conclusion of their terms of service. Diana Sullivan is a long time Board member who has chaired the Brent and Becky Bulb program and the hospitality committee, which provides refreshments for the annual meeting and for vendors and volunteers at the Orchid Show and Sale and the Annual Plant Sale. Karen Leete and Judy Sturtz have worn so many hats that it's hard to count them – Silent Auction, Holiday Greens Sale, and Board nominations committee, to name a few. Finally, a huge thank-you goes to immediate past president, Betsy Thomas, who has brought so many innovations to FOBG. While each is leaving the Board, they have assured us that they will continue to be involved in our activities. Thank you, Diana, Karen, Judy, and Betsy.



I hope that all of you as FOBG members have marked your calendars for March 17th or 18th. Our annual Orchid Show and Sale will be held on those dates at the Visitors' Center. The sale starts at 10am and ends at 4pm on Saturday and at 3pm on Sunday. Gloria Sherman has invited some wonderful vendors to display their wares. The repotting of orchids will again be available each day, and the Brookside Orchid Club will display some special orchids and give informal talks. I look forward to seeing you there.

Barbara

JAPANESE FLOWER ARTISTRY TO GRACE BROOKSIDE

The elegant and very beautiful art of Japanese flower arranging will be on display in the Brookside Visitors' Center on March 24 and 25. Specifically, the oldest tradition of this art – Ikenobo Ikebana – will be the focus of attention. The fourth annual Ikenobo Ikebana exhibit will showcase flower arrangements composed by members of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Chapter and the Baltimore Group of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of America.

WHAT IS IKEBANA?

Before exploring Ikenobo in more detail, let's describe Ikebana first. Ikebana is the Japanese art of arranging flowers and other plant materials. The term "ikebana" means "to make flowers live." Branches, leaves, and flowers that were removed from nature are arranged into a new form that enhances the beauty of the plant material when placed in a new environment. The most obvious aspects of Ikebana that distinguish it from Western flower arranging are its asymmetry, its use of line to create space, and its emphasis on the use of seasonal materials.

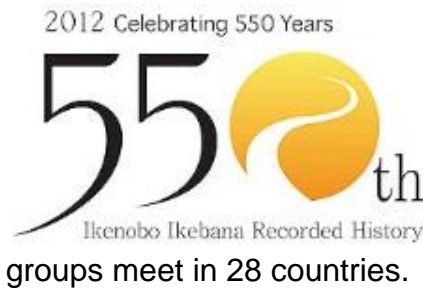


**Hosta Shoka in
ceramic vase**

WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

Experts have said that flowers are more important to the Japanese than to any other people. In fact, the Japanese regard flowers with an almost religious awe, a feeling that grows out of the Shinto religion. Going far back in time, the original basis for centuries of Ikebana is essentially the worship of nature. Historically speaking, Ikebana developed from the floral offerings made to Buddha after Buddhism was brought to Japan in the 6th century A.D. This practice was compatible with the earlier nature worship of the Japanese, which found beauty and awareness of life in leaves, branches, and grasses, as well as flowers. The symbolism and tradition of the early religious arrangements can still be felt in many arrangements made today, despite the developments and changes that have taken place over the centuries. The arranger may still feel a sense of the oneness of man with nature and must understand the form and growth habits of plants during the four seasons of the year. These arrangements can reflect the passage of time and the feeling in the heart of the arranger.

HOW DOES IKENOBO FIT IN?



The Ikenobo School, one of the oldest, is celebrating its 550th year of recorded history in 2012 and is said to be the origin of ikebana. There are hundreds of ikebana schools in Japan. Many of these were founded by students of Ikenobo Ikebana, who later branched off to form their own schools. Today, more than 100 Ikenobo chapters and study groups meet in 28 countries.

The Ikenobo School's headquarters in Kyoto, Japan are located adjacent to the Rokkakudo temple, where ikebana began. This is a long history! In the latter part of the 6th century, Prince Shotoku built the temple to enshrine Nyoirin Kannon, The Goddess of Mercy. His first ambassador to China, Ono No Imoko, retired to be a priest. He then spent more than 50 years in a little hut near the pond at the temple, creating floral arrangements to glorify the altar. He adopted the name Senmu, and all successors have had the prefix "Sen" in their names. The present headmaster, Ikenobo Sen'ei, is the 45th generation since Senmu. The headmaster is also the head priest of Rokkakudo temple.

A PRIMER ON STYLES OF IKENOBO ARRANGEMENTS

RIKKA

The custom of offering floral tributes on the altar of Buddha resulted in a vertical sacred arrangement called "tatebana." From this, the style called "Rikka" was developed, which is the source of all other Ikenobo styles. Rikka evolved into a distinct art form with definite rules for its different variations. Centuries ago, it was compared to a Chinese landscape painting and to gardens expressing nature as a whole. In 1590, Ikenobo Senno, the 11th headmaster, declared that Rikka was an art that made it possible to recreate landscapes depicting mountains, hills, waterfalls, valleys and so forth, by arranging various branches in a vase. Traditional, formal Rikka, still practiced today, calls for nine principal "yakeda," or branches. The tight bundle of stems above the water, the "misugiwa," is always clearly seen.



Rikka Shofutai

In 1954, after WWII, Gendai, or modern Rikka was developed to suit the westernization of Japanese homes. More color and a greater variety of material can be used.



Rikka Shimputai

The most recently developed Rikka style is Shimputai (“new wind”) Rikka, introduced by the current headmaster Ikenobo Sen’ei in 1999. There are no requirements as to the type or number of materials, but the tight bundle of stems above the water remains. Contrasting materials, a strong emphasis on creative expressiveness, and a feeling of movement can be seen.

SHOKA

The first written mention of the Shoka style of Ikenobo occurred in 1766. Shoka is an abbreviated form of Rikka. Traditional Shoka, “Shoka Shofutai,” became popular when ikebana was brought into homes, rather than just practiced in temples or at court. The standardized form of Shoka was formulated in 1904. The three main branches arranged in Shoka describe the shape of a half moon. The “shin” (tallest) represents man; the “soe” (second tallest) represents heaven or the horizon; and the “tai” (lowest) represents earth, with the three together suggesting the archetypal pattern of nature.

The relative lengths of the three branches are prescribed, and their tips form a triangle in space. The half moon combines with the other invisible or implied half of the moon to form a complete circle, suggesting the entire universe. Additional supporting branches of the same materials, which complete the arrangement, are called “ashirai.” The arranger aims to express the essence of each material. One, two or three materials may be used, but not more.

In all Shokas, the stems are again seen rising above the water as a single line, the “misugiwa,” as if they were one stem. There are formal and informal variations as well as special arrangements determined by the container (such as moon shape, stylized boat, etc.) or the material (such as narcissus, iris, aspidistra, hosta, etc.). All Shokas, as well as all Rikkas, are to be viewed from the front, as if they were in a “tokonoma,” or alcove, in a Japanese home or teahouse. They are not intended to be viewed in the round, as are some other types of ikebana arrangements as well as most Western arrangements.



Shoka Shofutai with one material



**Shoka
Shimputai**

Shoka Shimputai (“new wind”) was introduced by the current headmaster in 1977. It maintains the use of two main stems and one additional material, with the stems rising from the water in a line so as to appear as one. The main stems, called “shu” and “yo,” are chosen by the arranger to show both contrast (such as bright vs. dark, slim vs. heavy) and harmony. The “ashirai” or supporting branch materials finish the arrangement and may be chosen to indicate the season of the year. There are no set lengths or relative positions of the materials, and both Western and Japanese materials may be used. The taste and creative preferences of the arranger determine the result.

FREESTYLE (“JIYUKA”)

Freestyle is the most recent style of Ikenobo. It is well suited to contemporary environments, since a variety of shapes and types of containers may be used, depending on where the composition will be placed. Arrangements may be either naturalistic or abstract. Plant material may be used in unusual ways, and non-organic material may be used in abstract compositions. Freestyle offers the arranger an opportunity for creative expression.



Freestyle

CHABANA – TEA FLOWERS

An early and simple form of arrangement, known as “Nageire, (“thrown-in flowers”), had long existed alongside the more elaborate arrangements. In the period 1573-1600 it was adapted by Sen-no Rikyu and other tea masters for the tea ceremony. Arrangements are small and emphasize the beauty of one or at most two flowers in a naturalistic way. They are often arranged in hanging containers. Showy material is not used. Chabana is placed in the “tokonoma,” or alcove, in the tea house, with an appropriate or seasonal scroll.

The beauty of ikebana – and especially of Ikenobo – must be seen to be really appreciated. We invite you to visit our exhibit at Brookside on March 24 and 25. If you would like more information about Ikenobo and ikebana in general, you can find many informative and beautiful books in stores or libraries and excellent sources on the Web.

This article was prepared by Rosalie Ingenito, with contributions from Lanna Mai and Valeria Shishkin. Reiko Royston, senior professor of Ikenobo, provided the photographs, taken at her Ikenobo classes. The Washington D.C. Metropolitan Chapter and the Baltimore Group thank Valeria Shishkin for initiating and developing the organizations' ongoing relationship with Brookside Gardens.

ORCHID-MANIA!!!

Our annual ***FOBG Orchid Show and Sale*** is almost here!

Be sure the event is on your calendar:

Saturday, March 17, 10AM to 4PM

Sunday, March 18, 10AM to 3PM

Brookside Visitors' Center Auditorium

Come see displays of magnificent blooms, and be tempted by possible additions to your own collection. Learn from the experts, and get answers to all your orchid questions. Tour the vendors' array of growing supplies to keep your own orchids at the peak of health and beauty. You can even bring some orchids for repotting by a noted specialist (for a small fee). For novices, find out how easy it can be to start growing orchids at home.

Bring a fellow orchid-lover, and enjoy this stellar once-a-year event!

FLOWER FOCUS:

Better Pictures with Your Point & Shoot



These days, nearly everyone who visits Brookside brings along a compact camera. If you like to share pictures of the gardens and conservatories with family and friends, here are some tips to help you get more memorable images. And remember, you don't need a big, expensive, complicated camera to get some great shots. Excellent point & shoots average between \$200 and \$300. And your iPhone with some new apps might be all you need. Go ahead and try some of these tips. Then send us your best shots, and we'll put them on the FOBG Facebook page!

Note: All photos here were taken with point & shoot cameras.

- ◆ Shoot flowers on a cloudy-bright day or even a cloudy day. Avoid bright sunlight, which can cast unpleasant shadows and create harsh contrasts. If necessary, create your own shade by standing between your subject and the sun.
- ◆ Set your camera on “close up,” and use the “flower” icon. This keeps your subject sharp while creating a blurred background. A busy, in-focus background competes for attention with your subject.
- ◆ Move closer! Get as close to your subject as your camera will let you. Without zooming, hold the camera just a few inches from the subject. Or stand back and zoom a little. Fill the whole picture with one flower.



Fill the frame

- ◆ Get down low! Try capturing one blossom or a whole bed down at the flowers’ “eye level.”
- ◆ Keep your center of interest off-center. To make a photo more interesting and dynamic, follow the “rule of thirds.” Imagine a tic tac toe board, and place your center of interest on one of the four points where the lines intersect. Of course, the “rule of thirds” is more a suggestion than a rule. And it’s sometimes better to break the rules with your own creativity.



Centered subject is static



Off-center subject is more interesting

- ◆ Shun the breeze. Especially for close-ups, press the shutter only when your subject is totally still; otherwise the subject will blur. Alternatively, for an interesting effect, on a windy day try photographing a dense bed of flowers all moving with the breeze.
- ◆ Make your images pop by using contrasting and bold color combinations. Look for brilliant magenta against green, or yellow against purple or blue. Even try pink against orange.



Contrasting colors make vivid images

- ◆ Use your feet! Walk around your subject, and try photographing the same flower from different angles and vantage points.
- ◆ Take care with your backgrounds! Avoid stray stems, folded leaves, plant identification signs, patches of soil, intruding petals from other flowers, your own shadow, and other distractions.

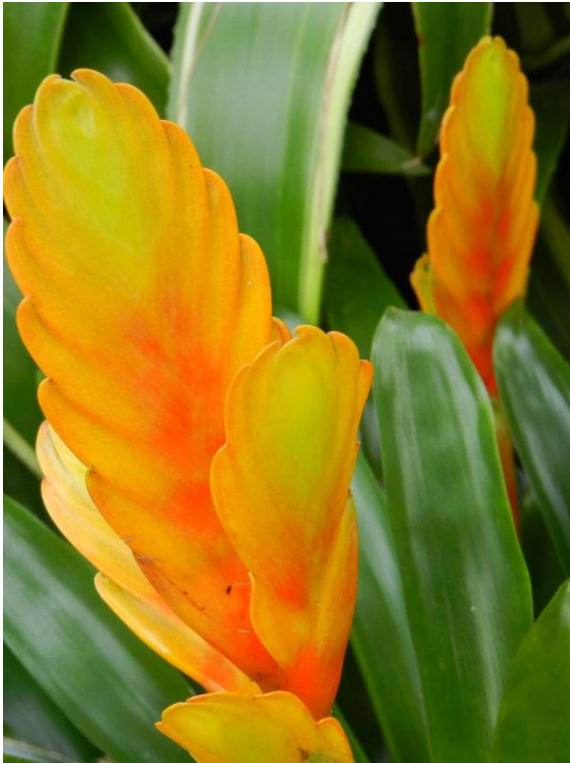


Messy background distracts

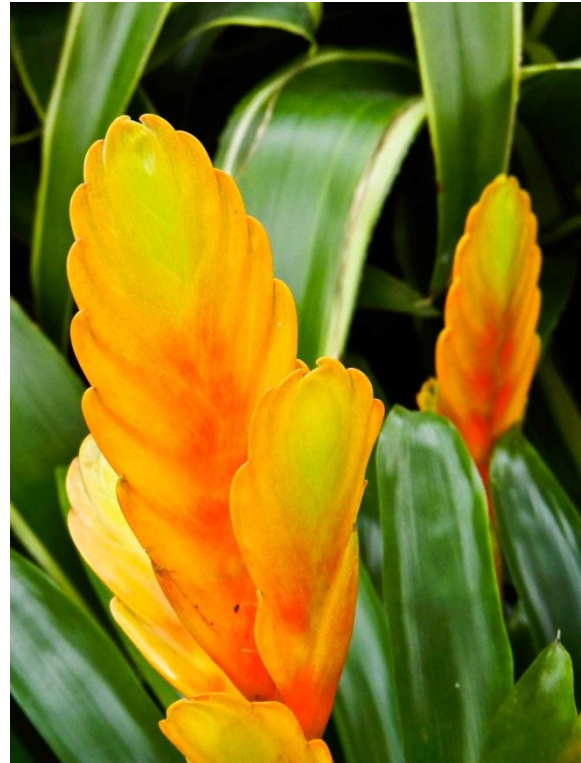


Unified background enhances subject

- ◆ **Steady that camera!** To minimize camera shake and blurry photos, use the image stabilizer function built into your camera. Keep your elbows close to your body, and exhale or hold your breath when you press the shutter button. If you're more serious, get a lightweight tripod, monopod, or a photographer's bean-bag to stabilize the camera. Important reminder: No tripods inside Brookside's conservatories!
- ◆ **Be kind to your subject!** Be sure the entire subject is in the frame, and be careful not to lop off the edge of a petal.



Don't chop off edges or corners of your subject



Space around subject lets it breathe

- ◆ **Take advantage of the best times of day to shoot.** Go out early, early in the morning for warm light. Or shoot about an hour before sunset to get long, golden light for backlit and sidelit images.
- ◆ **Shoot in the rain!** On a drizzly day, colors really sing. So take your camera and have a friend hold the umbrella. Raindrops on flowers and leaves create a magical effect, too.
- ◆ **See the beauty in the bud and in the blossom past its prime.** There are many more images to capture than the perfect rose.

- ◆ Look beyond flowers! With your camera, explore leaves, tree bark, ornamental grasses, ripples in fountain basins, reflections, and other patterns and textures in nature.



Fill your frame with just one leaf



Capture interest in plants without flowers

Ripples and reflections create mystery



- ◆ If you want to enhance your photos once you load them into the computer, try Picasa, which may come pre-installed on your computer. For more control and an easy way to organize your computer's photo files, try Photoshop Elements. It's inexpensive software that you can learn by yourself with on-line tutorials or even a class at a community college.
- ◆ Most of all, put your camera in your pocket and go out and make lots of photographs.



HOW ABOUT A GARDEN PARTY!!

Sure hope you can join FOBG at the June 9 Garden Party at Behnke's (Beltsville) – a day for all gardeners to celebrate! There will be 8+ garden clubs participating, along with plant societies, vendors, and garden-related organizations. There will also be a plant swap, Master Gardener information table, food vendors, and Behnke's plant sale. Why throw a party, you may ask. All the clubs, societies, and related organizations are contributing **raffle items** to benefit **Friends of Brookside Gardens**. Last year we raised over \$1,200!!

If you would like to volunteer or have general questions about FOBG's role in the June 9 event, please contact Barbara Waite-Jaques (waitejaques@aol.com).

We are trying to collect as many raffle items as we can. Below are listed some raffle suggestions. Anyone can contribute, and items don't have to be garden-related. Please talk to your local merchants and ask for their support of this event. When they hear "benefit Brookside Gardens," many are eager to contribute. And it's good advertising for them! We welcome additional ideas from you.

Raffle Suggestions

- Gift basket full of new garden items (garden clubs generally contribute these)
- Large plants, small shrubs in healthy, handsome (just-bought condition), and labeled
- Gift cards and certificates from local merchants (local gyms, spas, grocery stores, restaurants (slow or fast food), and specialty businesses such as Starbucks, Baskin & Robbins, etc.)
- Tickets to sporting events, shows, concerts, movies, etc.
- New garden items: whimsy, statues, tools
- Garden-related services (pruning, pond or yard maintenance, design)
- New, desirable items (not only garden-related)
- Wonderful (but just not your taste) re-gifted items

For general questions about the Garden Party, please contact Carole Galati (cagalati@rcn.com).

FOBG BOARD SEEKS NEW MEMBERS

FOBG members help support Brookside by contributing membership dues. But sometimes we need more than funding. The Board is now looking for a few new members to join its ranks, offering their ideas, expertise, and a bit of time. New Board members take office on April 1, 2012 and serve a 2-year term.

As a Board member, you would be involved in the planning and manning of our annual events: the plant sale, the orchid show and sale, the holiday greens sale, and our annual meeting, as well as special events such as the "garden party" in conjunction with Behnke's Nursery. You would also participate in creating new events, such as a silent auction, and in ongoing activities such as marketing and membership development. Our monthly meetings, on the afternoon of the 4th Thursday, always offer spirited discussion and an open exchange of ideas.

Please consider joining us and contributing your creativity and time in support of FOBG and Brookside Gardens. If you're interested or if you'd like more information, please contact Taffy Turner at 301-681-9133 or taffyt@verizon.net

Suggestions? Ideas? Let us know!

Friends of Brookside Gardens Inc. Board of Directors

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