



Ikebana...

is an ancient Japanese art of flower arranging. Originating in Buddhist temples of Japan, the art evolved from a few flowers in a simple vase into a wealth of different containers and thousands of styles of assembling and arranging flowers, leaves, and branches into aesthetically pleasing groupings.

The Ohara School of Ikebana - one of over 3,000 schools of ikebana - was founded in 1895 by Unshin Ohara. Ohara arrangements follow a naturalistic style with a seasonal emphasis. Simple yet sophisticated, compositions attempt to recreate and enhance- rather than alter - the natural forms of leaves, branches, stems, and flowers. Materials used focus on those plants that are currently in season.

Southeastern US Ohara Chapter objectives:

- To exchange cultural ideas;
- To study and research the flower arrangements of the Ohara School of Ikebana;
- To sponsor demonstrations, lectures, study groups and research of the Ohara School of Ikebana.

“To catch the fragile beauty of a bud, leaf or budding branch in a pleasing arrangement for only one day is to capture a phase of life.”

Martha Neese, SEO Founder
Ikebana: Seasons, Study Plans, Facts, and Fantasies, July, 1985.

For further information (seminar dates and locations, active teachers, membership application, meeting photos), please visit the SEO Website:

<http://seohara.org>

Compiled by Karen LaFleur-Stewart, April 2024

Southeastern US Ohara Chapter (SEO)



The first **50** years of
Cherishing and Nourishing
Ohara Ikebana

SEO presidents

1974 – 1976	Dorothy Merville
1976 – 1978	Ruby Peterson
1978 – 1980	Carolyn Marsh
1980 – 1982	Frances Whitmore
1982 – 1984	Norma Knight
1984 – 1986	Janelle Lovett
1986 – 1988	Eleanor Jones
1988 – 1990	Helen Klinar
1990 – 1992	Drue Devine
1992 – 1994	Judith Melton
1994 – 1996	Sandra Harper
1996 – 1998	Eleanor Jones
1998 – 2000	Judith Hansen, Interim
2000 – 2002	Judith Hansen
2002 – 2004	Sibbie Wilson
2004 – 2006	Sibbie Wilson
2006 – 2008	Sibbie Wilson
2008 – 2010	Diane Harker
2010 – 2012	Diane Harker
2012 – 2014	Cynthia Carson
2014 – 2016	Susan Thorpe
2016 – 2018	Susan Thorpe
2018 – 2020	Beth Bowers-Klaine
2020 – 2022	Beth Bowers-Klaine
2022 - 2024	Julia Van Huss



Highlights of First 50 Years of SEO

- 1895 Ohara School of Ikebana founded by naturalist, ceramicist, and designer Unshin Ohara
- 1959-1970 Martha Plowden Neese lived in Japan
Studied with Headmaster Houn Ohara
- 1971 Neese invited by Dorothy Merville to hold study groups in (Orlando, FL)
- 1972 First organizational meetings in Merville home
16 members
First President: Dorothy Merville
- 1974 **Southeastern US Chapter chartered by Headmaster Houn Ohara**
156 members
Neese began teaching at her summer home in Highlands, NC
- 1974 -2023 Twice yearly seminars in Florida, GA, AL, or Highlands, NC
- 1996 May 27 death of Martha Plowden Neese
- 1997 SEO installed, dedicated Japanese garden at Highlands Hudson Library in memory of Martha Neese
- 1992 - 2016 Grand Master Betty Fuller Taylor (student of Grand Master Mutsuo Tomita) summer resident teacher at Stone Lantern, Highlands, NC
- 2009 SEO hosted NAOTA at Clemson University
Dr. Judith Melton and Sibbie Wilson, Co-Chairs
Sensei Professor Akihiro Nishi accompanied by Ms. Wakako Ohara, aunt of current Headmaster Hiroki Ohara
- 2024 SEO Logo designed and approved
- 2024... **50th Anniversary Celebration in Charlotte, NC;**
Sensei Professor **Akihiro Nishi**, Member of Council of Professors of the Ohara School
57 current members
17 teachers, guiding 84 students



Revered sensei (teachers) who inspired SEO members.....

Grand Master Martha Neese*

Grand Master Mutsuo Tomita*

Grand Master Betty Fuller Taylor*

Professor Akira Suzuki

Grand Master Toshiko Yoshikawa

Grand Master Ingrid Luders*

Grand Master Reiko Kawamura*

Sub-Grand Master Jose Salcedo*

Professor Akihiro Nishi*

Sub-Grand Master Hiroko Mutsuyama

The sensei are listed in approximate chronological order.
Asterisk indicates multiple seminars taught.

Photographs: Arrangements composed by
Professor Akihiro Nishi
Member of Council of Professors of the
Ohara School of Ikebana