

# IKEBANA

From Page E1

several years of devotion. Barbour, who is a Professor in Ikenobo Ikebana, started her studies with a teacher in Atlanta from 1986-1991; she has studied with Suzuki since 2009.

"We are so fortunate to have such a talented teacher in this area," said Barbour of Suzuki. "Ikebana used to be passed down verbally from teacher to student so we learn to have a special relationship of respect for our teacher."

There are three main styles in Ikenobo Ikebana school: Free Style, Shoka and Rikka. "Rikka is, for me, the most interesting and varied style," said Barbour. "I never feel bored, as there is so much to learn."

Ikenobo Ikebana stresses the natural beauty of plants, and the study is not just about the study of the arrangement of plant material and flowers but stresses the importance of empty space in an overall arrangement, according to Barbour.

"Our arrangements recognize the inner beauty of plants and we strive to include



**Ikebana instructor Emiko Suzuki prunes a branch for a desired effect during a demonstration of the traditional Japanese art of flower arranging at the March meeting of the Blue Ridge Chapter of the Ikenobo Ikebana Society of America.** [PHOTO BY BETH DE BONA/SPECIAL TO THE TIMES-NEWS]

the beauty of the particular season," she added.

There are over 40 chapters in the U.S. and Canada of the international Ikenobo Ikebana Society. The Blue Ridge Chapter boasts about 50 members, drawing from all over western North Carolina and upstate South Carolina.

Ikebana student Dede Walton worked with a just-budding maple branch she found in the parking lot where she works as the anchor for her arrangement at the workshop.

"This is an undertaking kind of like doing art," said Walton, a Hendersonville resident who first studied Ikebana for three years in

south Florida, starting in 1987. "An artist may not be satisfied with their work right away."

Walton believes studying Ikebana is "really good for the spirit," adding that she now sees landscape in a different way. After all, Ikebana is a kind of reflection of natural landscapes.

"You really have to take your time and appreciate the qualities of the container and the emotion you're trying to evoke," she said.

Students of Ikebana learn about the composition of elements but also develop an appreciation for Japanese culture and traditions, according to Barbour. Arrangements

can be either simple and elegant or complex in nature.

"As a student, you will learn how to appreciate and really 'see' nature as you learn how different plants grow and develop," Barbour said. "You will learn and enjoy peace and serenity as you 'lose yourself' in this beautiful Japanese art of flower arranging."

At the March meeting, Suzuki recommended that the around 25 students present follow her around when she did the individual critiques. "It's a good way to learn," she said.

In introducing Suzuki, the Chapter's vice president, Laura Felt, expressed her admiration for her, noting that Suzuki has completed 30 years of training, but only after five years of simply playing with flowers. "Emiko's creativity in doing Free Style is just incredible," said Felt.

As Suzuki deftly added a curve to a length of pussy willow, she explained that manipulating stems is completely permissible, to give the desired look. She also uses hand cream on green leaves to keep them moist.

"Before you start making the arrangement it's a good idea to make an arrangement

in your hand," said Suzuki.

## Upcoming opportunities

There are several upcoming Ikebana-related events in the area. At Thursday's April Blue Ridge Chapter meeting, Suzanne Dillingham will teach a workshop in the Free Style, using bottles.

On Saturday, as part of the Fine Art + Flora weekend at the Greenville County Museum of Art, Laura Felt will give a free Ikebana demonstration from 1:30-3 p.m. Several arrangements created by members of the Blue Ridge Chapter will be on display. To register, visit [gma.org](http://gma.org).

For those wanting to immerse themselves in the discipline in the birthplace of Ikebana, Suzuki is leading a two-week tour of Japan in spring 2019 for chapter members. The trip will include sightseeing as well as a visit to the Kyoto headquarters of the school of Ikenobo Ikebana, where an annual exhibit and display of about 1,000 Ikebana takes place over a four-day period in April.

To learn more about the Ikenobo Ikebana Blue Ridge Chapter, visit [blueridgeikebana.com](http://blueridgeikebana.com) or call 828-696-4103.