

Crabapple Love by Jeanne Holy

2010 may be the year of the tiger according to the Chinese lunar calendar, but if Mother Nature has her own calendar, surely it is the year of the crabapple. I have several crabapple trees in my back garden and one in the front. There is a cornucopia of apples on the ground for all the bees and squirrels to feast on. Down the street, some trees are so laden with apples that from a distance they appear to be late October trees, displaying their fall colors.

Practicing and teaching Ikenobo ikebana over the years has given me access to a language that only your eyes can hear and your heart understand. This year the crabapple is serenading me with its siren song ~ *I am not pine nor plum nor bamboo ~ just a crabapple.*

I am mesmerized by its beauty and humility, but mostly by its vigor and abundance. It is *ALIVE*. I know this moment will not last so what's an ikebana girl to do? Take the day and play with crabapple of course!

But times are tight and flowers are a luxury. All of my ikebana materials for the day were cut from my garden, or those nearby (*neighbors beware!*) This time of year you may also have patio plants that are at season's end. Take good advantage, and use them for ikebana.

These two ikebana were inspired by the feeling I had when I shot the cover photograph. I enjoyed the mass and color of the cascading branches against the blue sky in the naturalistic free style. The sanshu-ike is about the autumn breeze and late afternoon sky.



Freestyle: crabapple, hibiscus, oleander, butterfly bush



shoka sanshu-ike: blue mist spirea, silver shadow miscanthus, crabapple



A close up of the crabapple felt like happy hour, so I decided an ikebana cocktail was in order! For a quick freestyle try adding crabapples to a clear glass. They are beautiful under water and practical for anchoring other materials.



shimputai rikka(below): oleander, crabapple, micanthus, ornamental onion, toad lily, pink summersweet, chrysanthemum, variegated pine



freestyle: crabapple, oleander, micanthus, lirope muscari, sweet flag



freestyle: Japanese anemone, crabapple, micanthus, sedum, chrysanthemum



This back lit photo (left) gave me a feeling of being underwater. My pet goldfish (above) appear to enjoy swimming amongst the anemone and crabapple in their underwater freestyle garden.