



Boston Snow Facts

SPRING 2015

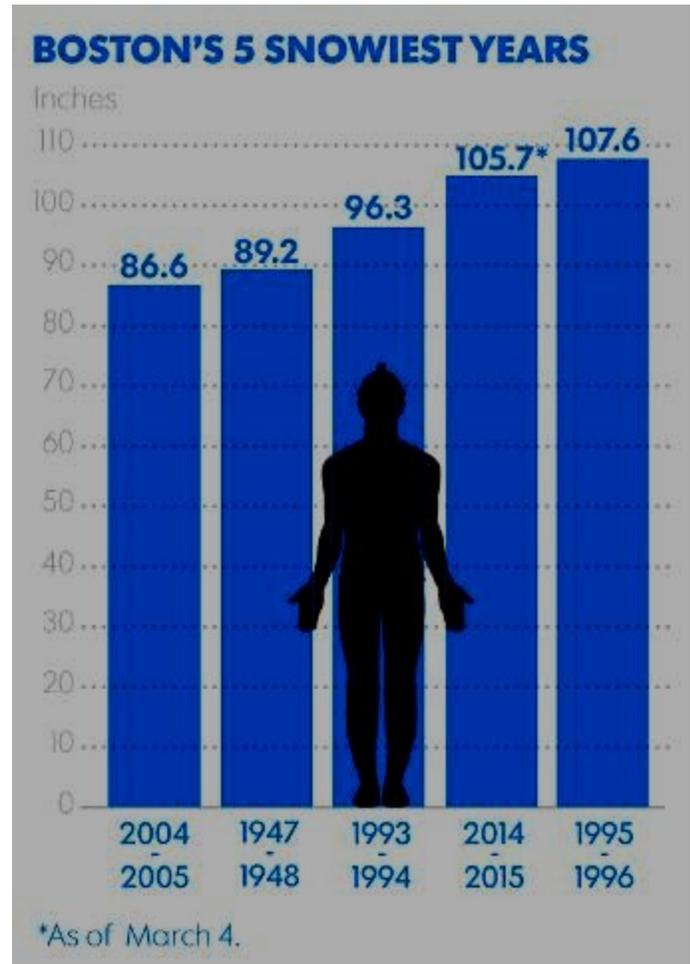
February was the snowiest month ever recorded in Boston, with 64.8 inches. This winter has also featured the city's sixth-biggest and seventh-biggest snowstorms of all time.

At one point in early February, enough snow had been plowed in the Boston area to fill the Patriots' football stadium (Gillette Stadium) about 90 times. That's more than 25 million tons of snow.

Boston recorded 28 straight days with lows 20 degrees or colder from Jan. 25 through Feb. 21, a record stretch. Last month was the city's second-coldest February on record.

Schools have closed for eight days this winter — the most since records began — and kids will now have to go to school until June 30.

There will be plenty of water for your Spring flowers this year. Unfortunately, there is not a lot you can do to spare them from flooding if the thaw is too rapid.



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IKEBANA: The Art of Japanese Flower Arranging *or The Appreciation of Harmony With Nature*

By Barbara Hopcroft



Ikebana is the art of Japanese flower arranging. Going back over 1,200 years, it has its origins in the decorating of Zen Buddhist shrines by priests and complements the Buddhist principle of clear and awake mind. It is a disciplined art form where nature and humanity are brought together. Its spiritual origins emphasize space in an arrangement, as opposed to the full bouquet effect of traditional western flower arrangements.

Ikebana emphasizes the qualities of stems, leaves and branches as well as flowers, with an emphasis on the shape, line and form of each item used in the arrangement as well as the arrangement as a whole. A basic arrangement form is that of a triangle, often comprised of branches or twigs with a minimum of other plant material. It is meant to be a contemplative type of flower arranging, with the arranger appreciating nature and the variety and beauty of individual pieces of plant material in the present.

Over nine schools of Ikebana have evolved, still practiced by Buddhist priests and practitioners as well as the general public. The flower arranging custom of Japan, Ikebana has spread to many other countries where people learn a particular school of Ikebana from a person who usually has studied with a master, often in Japan. Practice in a particular school ranges from a simple form to more complex free-style designs and someone may spend months or years before gaining a certificate of achievement in a particular Ikebana school. This type of teaching/learning organization keeps the integrity of the Ikebana practice intact from place to place and person to person.

I find that utilizing space and form in the arrangement of plant materials provides a contemplative, harmonious discipline that is very satisfying. One original Buddhist interpretation is that the three basic points (the triangle) represents heaven (sky), earth (ground) and man. This interplay of man's place in the universe and the balance of heaven, earth, nature and man provides a great amount of contemplative material, both in the plant matter one chooses in the design as well as the philosophy of man's place on earth.

Sogetsu is popular in the West as it incorporates aspects of traditional Ikebana with more modern aspects of flower arranging. Several members of the Acton, Norwood and Wollaston garden clubs study with Joanne Caccavale of Weymouth, a certified teacher of the Sogetsu School of Ikebana. Barbara Hopcroft, Nancy Costa, Donna Lane and Julie Stenson are first year Ikebanists in the Sogetsu school and a sample of their stunning work is shown to the left. There are many opportunities to take classes locally and a Sogetsu organization in MA meets monthly. For information on the MA Chapter, go to <http://www.ikebanaboston.org>.

Field Trips to Lift the Spirits

By Nancy Costa

“Gardens and flowers have a way of bringing people together, drawing them from their homes.” Clare Ansberry, *The Women of Troy Hill: the Back-Fence Virtues of Faith and Friendship*



We are fortunate to have so many exciting, local garden and floral events in March and April. Check out the following opportunities:

Boston Flower & Garden Show. March 11 - 15. *Come see the NEGC Structures exhibit.*

The Boston Flower & Garden Show, Seaport World Trade Center, 200 Seaport Boulevard, on Wednesday, March 11 through Sunday, March 15, 2015 with the theme “Season of Enchantment.” Our gardens are places of magical metamorphosis. They’re the stage on which Mother Nature reveals her most wow-worthy wonders; where a talented designer can cast a spell over a dull patch transforming it into a colorful and lively oasis. And it’s where a little toil mixed with a few tiny seeds can conjure a breathtaking bounty for our vases and plates. Join us for this celebration of multi-hued magic as our garden designers, floral arrangers, photographers and amateur horticulturalists explore the mystical joys of the spring landscape. Top garden writers, industry experts and creative local chefs will share ideas and inspiration. The diverse and lively garden marketplace offers a treasure trove of plants and hundreds of the newest gardening products to kick off our own spring transformations. For more information: <http://www.bostonflowershow.com>

Art in Bloom, Norwood Evening Garden Club. April 11 & 12, George H. Morse House. 11th annual Art in Bloom exhibits garden club members’ floral interpretations of 27 students’ artwork from Norwood and Walpole High Schools. Exhibition times are Saturday, 10 a.m.–5:00 p.m. and Sunday, 1:00 p.m.–5:00 p.m.

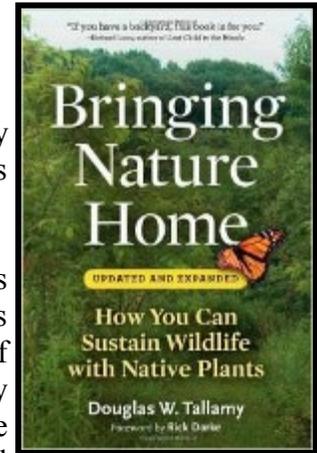
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Art in Bloom. April 25 - April 27, 10:00 a.m. - 4:45 p.m. Join us for this exuberant spring festival of fine art and floral design, with offerings of guided tours, workshops, and high tea among MFA treasures. Garden clubs and professional designers from across New England create floral arrangements inspired by the MFA’s works of art. For more information: <http://www.mfa.org/programs/special-event/art-bloom>

Norwood Evening Garden Club Field Trip to MFA’s Art in Bloom, Saturday. April 25. Carpool to Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Meet at First Baptist Church lot at 9:15 a.m. Arrive at MFA at 10:00 a.m. and depart MFA at 3:00 p.m. \$25 adult admission at MFA, \$23 seniors (65+), or check out free or reduced museum passes at your local library. Sign-up clipboard at the March NEGC meeting. See Nancy Costa for more information.

Horticulture

By Anne Heller

For those of you who have not discovered *Bringing Nature Home* by Douglas W. Tallamy, I am recommending this wonderful book, which is about why and how to sustain wildlife with native plants.



Dr. Tallamy is an entomologist who discovered many years ago on his newly purchased property that there were a multitude of invasive plants there. He and his wife decided to make a project of removing as many of them as possible. They also replaced them with native plants. What they soon discovered was an increase in the number of native bugs on the property. This led him to conclude that native bugs are better nourished when they feed on native plants with which they have evolved over hundreds of thousands of years. In fact, there will be many more native bugs if there are more native plants. We have lost a great many native plants over the past 400 years mainly through habitat destruction, the spread of invasive plants, and the overuse of pesticides.

Tallamy says that insects are the most important herbivores in our suburban ecosystems because they pass on the energy from plants to other animals which pass that energy on up the food chain. Without bugs, the food chain will collapse. He says, "We humans have disrupted natural habitats in so many ways and in so many places that the future of our nation's biodiversity is dim unless we start to share the places in which we live --our cities and...our suburbs--with the plants and animals that evolved here." He goes on to add, "We may witness extinction on a scale that exceeds what occurred when a meteor struck the Yucatan Peninsula at the end of the Cretaceous Period. "

Last summer and fall when I walked through the Arnold Arboretum, I noticed lots of trees and shrubs with leaves that showed signs of insect bites. After reading Tallamy's book, for the first time I was able to rejoice that bugs were being fed, rather than despair at signs of "imperfection." They meant that insects had been able to get nourishment and live to provide food for baby birds. Tallamy explains that although adult birds can obtain nourishment from berries and fruit of alien plants, baby birds require the protein that comes from bugs.

Something else I learned from Tallamy and want to share with you concerns the monarch butterfly, which in its adult form can obtain nourishment from the alien butterfly bush, buddleja. However, it must have some form of native butterfly weed, *Asclepias*, on which to lay its eggs. Tallamy says that there is hope if we all start in our own small ways to increase the native plants on our properties. I hope as you begin reading those catalogues that are flooding our mailboxes lately, you'll consider adding a few natives to your gardens.

Say It with Flowers

By Rita Russo

Award-winning floral designer Thelma Shoneman instructed and entertained us at our February meeting with a delightful array of designs that appeared to be completely effortless as she assembled them. She gave a constant stream of helpful suggestions and hints that she assured us we could do ourselves and get the same effect. Designing seemed to be as natural as breathing to her, as



she moved from one arrangement to the next, each one a unique delight, completely different from all of the others. Members were transfixed as she took Deco Beads (hydrogel granules) soaked in water, and layered orchids in a clear vase between them.

When she added more water, they balls became invisible, and the blossoms appeared to be suspended in the water. It was



magical. She also did some fun things with Glu Dashes, which have endless possible uses in floral arranging.



After the terrible winter we have had, a good dose of spring was exactly what we needed. Thelma most certainly provided it.



Garden Therapy

Committee Chair Kathleen Pellegrini extends her thanks to Vija, Susan M., Joy, Barbara B. and Terry for their help in creating 28 festive arrangements with the residents of the Ellis Nursing Home. A special thanks to Vija who picked, cut and sprayed all of the pine cones, cut greens from her yard, and more. They were even able to make extra arrangements for patients too ill to come to Garden Therapy. Drawing on her expertise as a florist, Vija made this big project run smoothly. Thanks to Donna Lane for making Christmas stickers for the arrangements instructing family and friends on how to keep the arrangements fresh for a month or longer.

Thank you, Ladies, for bringing a lot of Christmas Cheer to folks who could really use it! You make us all proud.

