

H&G

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Decorating
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GARDENING

Flamengo Road

A park in Rio de Janeiro sparks the imagination of Frederico Azevedo



Editors' note: This season's gardening column explores the ideas and inspiration behind the work of our region's best-known landscape designers.

HC&G: You've said that Flamengo Park, situated along the seaside of Rio de Janeiro in your native Brazil, has greatly influenced your work.

FREDERICO AZEVEDO, garden designer and founder,

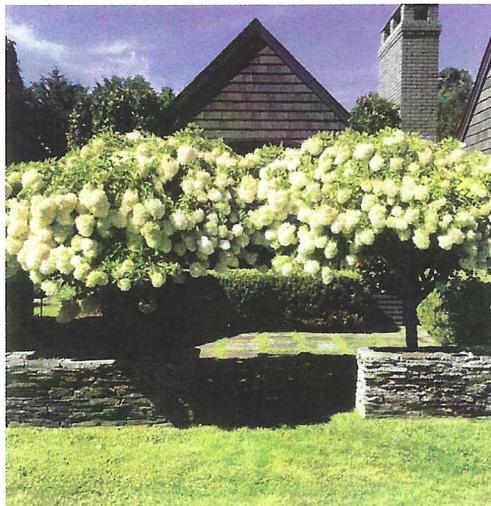
Unlimited Earth Care: Affonso Eduardo Reidy's architecture and Roberto Burle Marx's plantings are quite good, but I'm really more interested in Lora de Macedo Soares, who made this giant area of landfill, which had been neglected by the city, rise from the ashes. She was a visionary who brought Flamengo Park to life through sheer will and

determination. In addition to the seaside esplanade, the park includes the city's Museum of Modern Art, a children's theater, play and sports areas, and a maritime zone. It interconnects various parts of Rio and is innovative to the core, down to the soft lighting that inspires me daily.

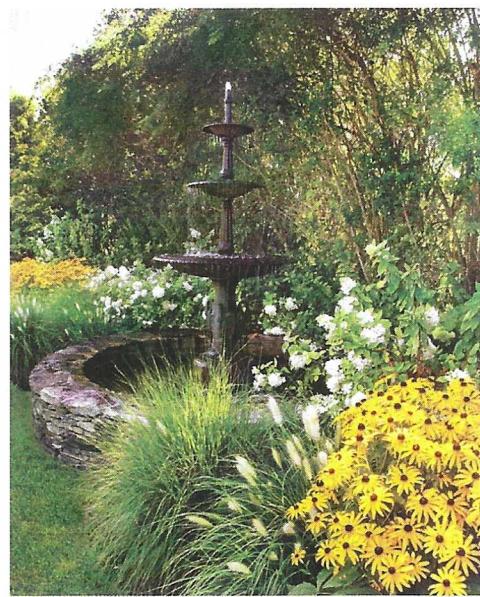
How is your garden-design practice similar?

I like to create vistas in our mostly flat landscapes. Soares had a vision for an entire city, so certainly I can make a garden! When I first visit a site, I study how people are going to interact with it on a daily basis. How can I make it more attractive, or turn it into a sustainable ecosystem? And what will encourage people to use the landscape? These are the questions I ask myself.

"I like to create vistas in the East End's mostly flat landscapes"



Floral Notes (CLOCKWISE FROM NEAR LEFT) Garden designs by Frederico Azevedo include an archway of late-season 'Tardiva' hydrangeas; rudbeckia, white hydrangeas, and grasses around a cast-iron fountain; a perennial border featuring astilbes, dahlias, alliums, foxgloves, and phlox; and a blue and white border punctuated by vitex shrubs. See *Resources*.



Do you consider yourself a "tropical" designer?

No—that wouldn't make sense in the Hamptons! Although I am fond of brightly colored plantings and organic shapes that recall the work of Roberto Burle Marx. But what's more important is layering plant materials and creating a naturally functioning environment.

What do you typically include in your plant palette?

I tend to plant from early spring to autumn, starting with bulbs like crocuses and deer-resistant alliums, followed later in the season by really strong perennials like rudbeckia, salvia, phlox, and digitalis. A selection of trees with varied blossoms comes next, such as viburnums, dogwoods, cherry trees, and tree hydrangeas, followed by crape myrtles and shrubs like lilac, rose of Sharon, buddleia, spirea, and hypericum. Then I balance out all these plants with evergreens to the north and west of a site, in order to protect the chain of blooms.

You have written a new book, *Bloom*, just out from Pointed Leaf Press. What did you learn from the process?

The book took over my life—I had no idea it would be so much work! But as with my gardens, I like to participate in everything. We started with 500 pictures, all from different eras of my career. I didn't want to do a conventional design book, going from project to project. I wanted

movement and blank space to make people pause and give them time to think. The book is similar to how I envision a project: The chapters cover topics like concept, vistas, blooms, green interest, hardscaping, stone, water, and more.

What do you hope the takeaway will be?

Landscapes are living things, and they really start to get interesting when they grow and the colors and textures begin to highlight each other. It's never-ending, but in a good way. —*Alejandro Sanzegù*