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## Frederico Azevedo's "Bloom" Explores the East End's Floral Beauty



Landscape designer, writer and lecturer Frederico Azevedo is the founder of Unlimited Earth Care, Inc., providing high quality landscape design and maintenance to the Hamptons since 1993. Azevedo recently released his first book, *Bloom: The Luminous Gardens of Frederico Azevedo*, published by Pointed Leaf Press.

### WHAT WAS THE INSPIRATION FOR "BLOOM?"

I started writing *Bloom* last year, which was the 25th anniversary of Unlimited Earth Care, so the timing was right. I'm at a point in my career where I have a large body of work that really represents me as a designer, so I wanted to share that, but the book was also an opportunity for me to discuss garden design as an artform.

### HOW DID YOU CHOOSE WHICH GARDENS TO SHOWCASE IN THE BOOK?

I'm proud of every project, so the gardens I chose for

the book were more about the eight elements I divided my discussion into: Vista, Bloom, Green, Border, Tree, Stone, Water and More. These are all essential components of my work.

### YOU TALK ABOUT HOW YOU "LURE THE EYE THROUGH THE FLOW OF THE DESIGN." CAN YOU ELABORATE ON THIS?

A garden has a narrative, and it's important to space the plot points and provide different moods. I often use flowers as a light, and carefully place gradually diffusing and brightening hues to build suspense. Wielding a large palette of greens is also important for guiding the eye, and the atmosphere of a green garden can be very intense when arranged according to form and hue. It's an impression of the natural, composed with the intentions of a designer.

### HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE RIGHT COLORS FOR YOUR VARIOUS PROJECTS?

It's all about color. I always begin with the site, and sometimes there are preexisting natural elements like a waterfront, or architectural elements like a traditional or modern structure. I explore sustainable, native or well-adapted plants and flowers, and I gradually build up an atmosphere from there. Flowers are the main show, but I design for every season, so I also think about which greens I'm using, and how I'm layering them to create depth or carve out borders. I create a palette for each season that accents the unique features of the landscape.

### WHAT DRAWS YOU TO FLOWERS AS A MAJOR DESIGN FEATURE FOR YOUR GARDENS?

Flowers bring light to the garden, and I really use them as a tool in my designs. I can use vibrant blooms to create centerpieces, or softer pastels for a diffused light to soften sharp edges. I'm drawn to their versatility and inherent allure. And of course, flowers invite visitors like bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, important for

the environment, but also an added beauty. When the flowers are thriving and butterflies are visiting, you know the garden is going to thrive.

Our ecosystems are increasingly fragile, so I cater to the needs of the natural visitors as I construct a design. There's no need to compromise aesthetic and design for the environment. In fact, working sustainably and choosing plants consciously brings forward a unique mood, it feels *almost* real; as if nature had somehow gently cleared a path to the water, or placed a cluster of flowers in perfect view of the house.

#### WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR MOST MEMORABLE PROJECTS?

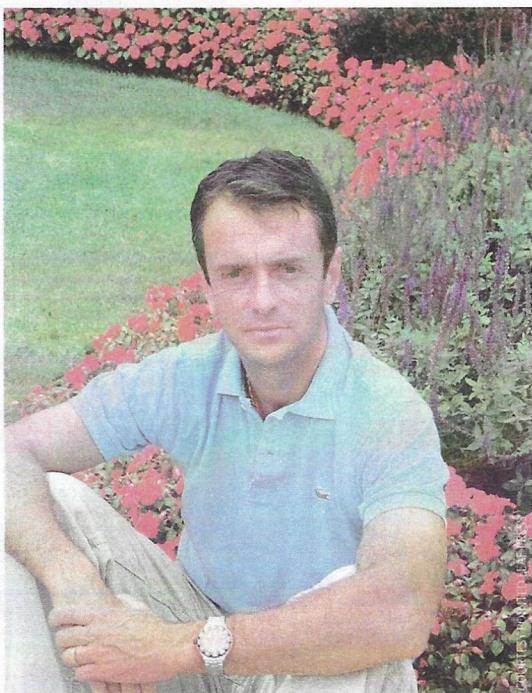
Each project is memorable, it's a small environment that I'm trusting to thrive. I do everything I can for it, but often when I present a finished project it's actually only the beginning. So, even when I've "finished" a garden, visiting for maintenance and watching it grow into my vision for it, that's always memorable.

#### HOW DOES HAVING GROWN UP IN BRAZIL INSPIRE YOUR WORK?

Brazil has a tradition of landscape design that's associated with grand public spaces and parks, so when I was growing up, I was really inspired by these incredible feats of public beautification that were happening around me. I also had a vegetable garden as a child that I loved. It was the site of my first design experiments, and I was so proud to bring my bounty into the kitchen for my mother to cook with.

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accessories, and there are new materials being developed every year. I discuss this in the last chapter of my book, *More*. Choosing accessories is the last step in the design process, and it's fun because it's a chance for me to continue collaborating with my clients, who often become my friends.

#### WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT LIVING AND WORKING IN THE HAMPTONS?

The Hamptons is an amazing place to live, and as a garden designer it means I'll never get bored. There is such a wide range of diverse environments for me to create in: the shore, the woods, farmland—it's a challenge every time to work with such beautiful and sensitive landscapes that shift through every season. I love it.

#### WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THOSE LOOKING TO BEAUTIFY THEIR GARDEN?

My advice is to choose plants that are native or well-adapted to your area, not only is it better for the environment because they require less maintenance, but they're really going to thrive. If you're putting a garden together yourself, keep it simple and sustainable—finding the right garden accessory and planters can add interest and make things easier for you. Come into Unlimited Earth Care's garden concept store in Bridgehampton and talk to me.

BY LEE MEYER

Meet Frederico Azevedo and get a signed copy of *Bloom: The Luminous Gardens of Frederico Azevedo* on Saturday, June 22 at Unlimited Earth Care, 2249 Scuttle Hole Road, Bridgehampton from 4:30–7:30 p.m. Visit [unlimitedearthcare.com](http://unlimitedearthcare.com) for more information.

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