

How to Think About Color When You're Planting a Garden

Frederico Azevedo shares his expertise.



BY HADLEY KELLER JUL 19, 2019



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Bloom: The Luminous Gardens of Frederico Azevedo

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Frederico Azevedo has pretty much been [gardening](#) his whole life. "Where I grew up in Brazil, at my parents house, I started a little vegetable garden at five years old," the landscape designer, whose book [Bloom](#), comes out on July 31, tells *House Beautiful*. Since then, though, Frederico has graduated from vegetables to sweeping, blooming fields of flowers—always in kaleidoscopic hues. "Color has always been my life," the designer explains. So, we had him share with us the key color principles to consider when planting your own garden—whether it's a rolling field or just a small window box on your fire escape.

It's all about diversity

No matter the size of your garden, a wide array of flora is key. "When you create diversity of color, even different shades of the same color, you create an ecosystem," the designer says, making your garden more sustainable and nature-supporting. Different [flowers](#) attract bees and [birds](#), tying your garden into the surrounding environment.



A colorful garden by Frederico Azevedo.

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Design for four seasons

While we may not all live in climates where flowers can bloom all year long, it's important to pick flowers that bloom at different times within your garden's seasonal window. "You want flowers that will bloom in different stages," Frederico explains. "Not all in one period." That way, he explains, "it will always a surprise; there will always be something different to be discovered—and the garden never will look the same."

Plant in levels

In Frederico's gardens, perspective is key. To draw the eye in and provide visual interest, the designer layers his gardens by planting at different levels—and incorporating various colors throughout. This strategy is even more important in a small garden, where it allows for maximum planting in a minimal footprint. "Multiple levels create an elevation and a break in space,"

which makes the garden more interesting, he says.



A stone wall border adds texture and visual interest.

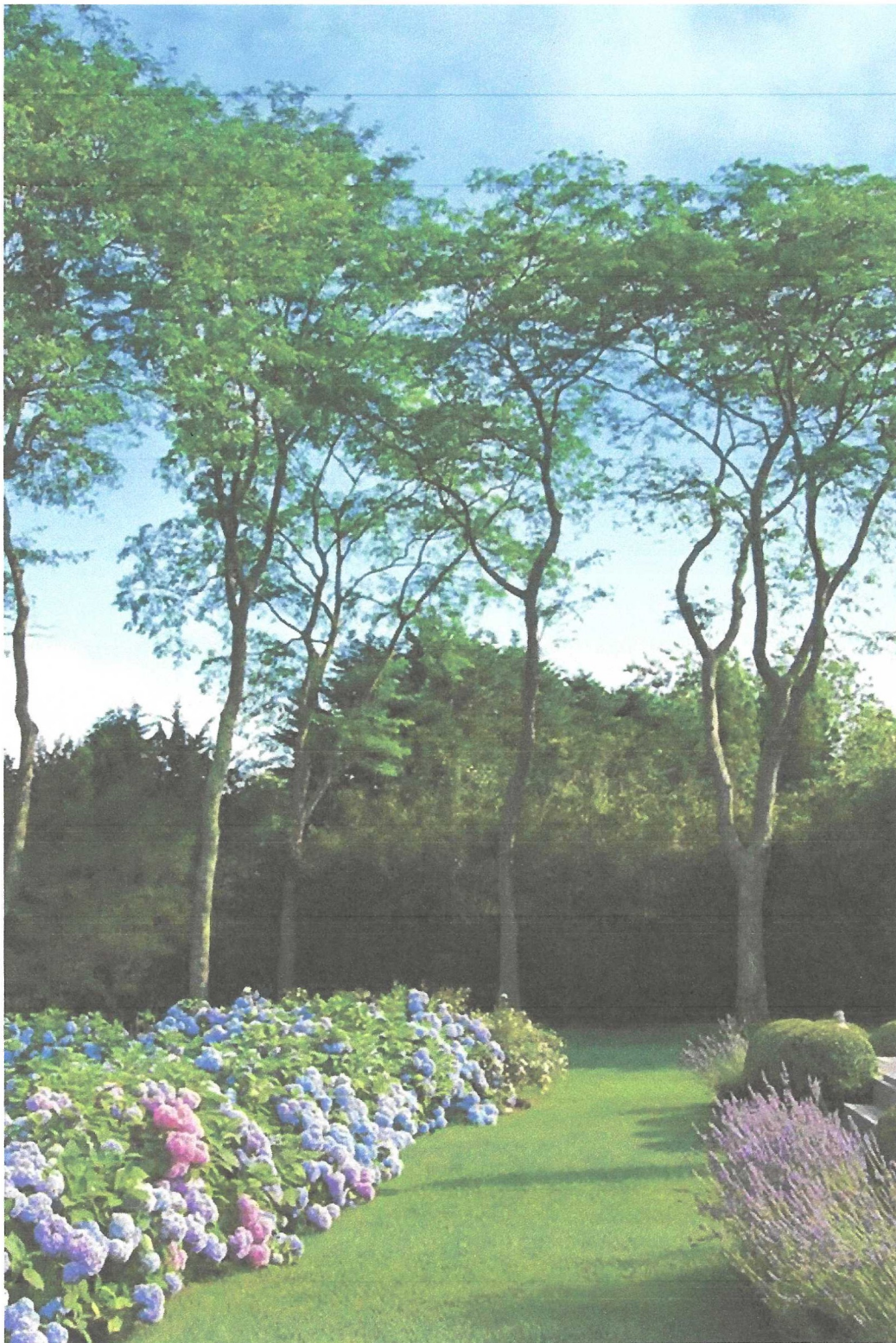
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Create borders

Borders help define the garden and draw the eye to the colors within it. As Frederico explains in *Bloom*, "in any garden, borders guide a beginning, a middle, and an end, and give the landscape dimension."

Add texture

Beyond color, texture is important in a garden; ensure that yours has diversity there, too. This can even go beyond the use of plants: "When I create stone walls, stairs, or accents like graveled walkways, I'm thinking mostly about color and texture," Frederico says.



A pathway through one of Frederico's gardens.

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Treat non-living fixtures like part of the garden

One of Frederico's many talents is nestling his gardens into their

surrounding landscapes—no matter what those surroundings contain. "If you have a pool or a pond, that blue can be part of the garden," he explains. So pick colors that complement it. Same goes for, say, a brown garden bench, or a green pergola.

Always look for inspiration

Frederico encourages garden enthusiasts to visit other gardens whenever possible—especially ones in different climates, where they may see new techniques, plants, and accents they can take home. "I travel around the world looking for art and garden accessories," he says.

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