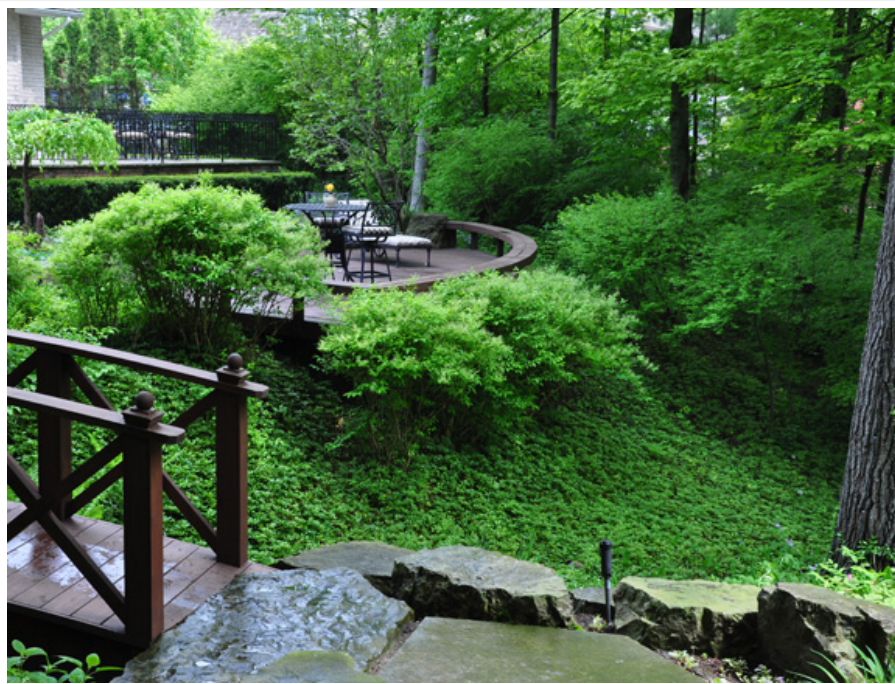


Three Dogs in a Garden

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Monday, June 11, 2012

Part 2 Gardens with an Uneven Terrain



Today, I am going to show you two properties where each of the designers had the challenge of creating a beautiful garden on two steeply sloping ravines. In the first garden, the ravine literally cuts the property in two on the diagonal.



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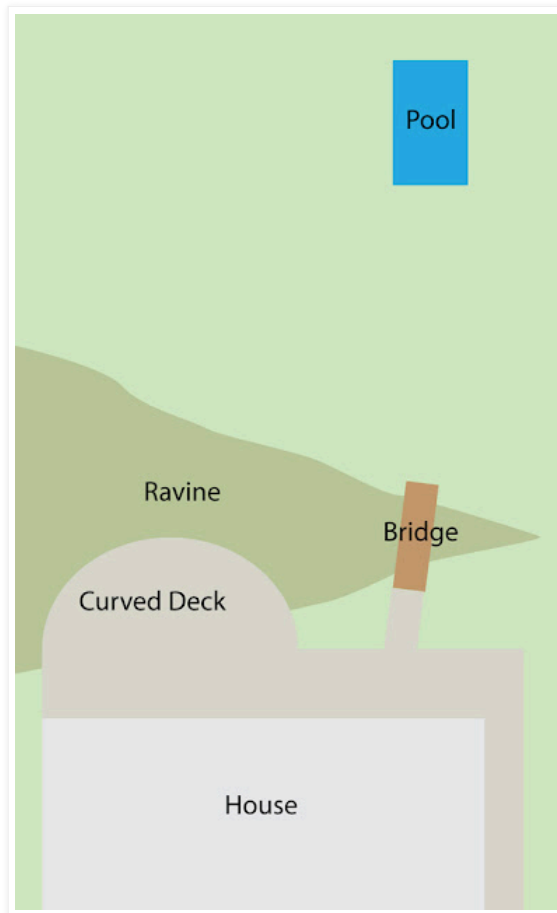
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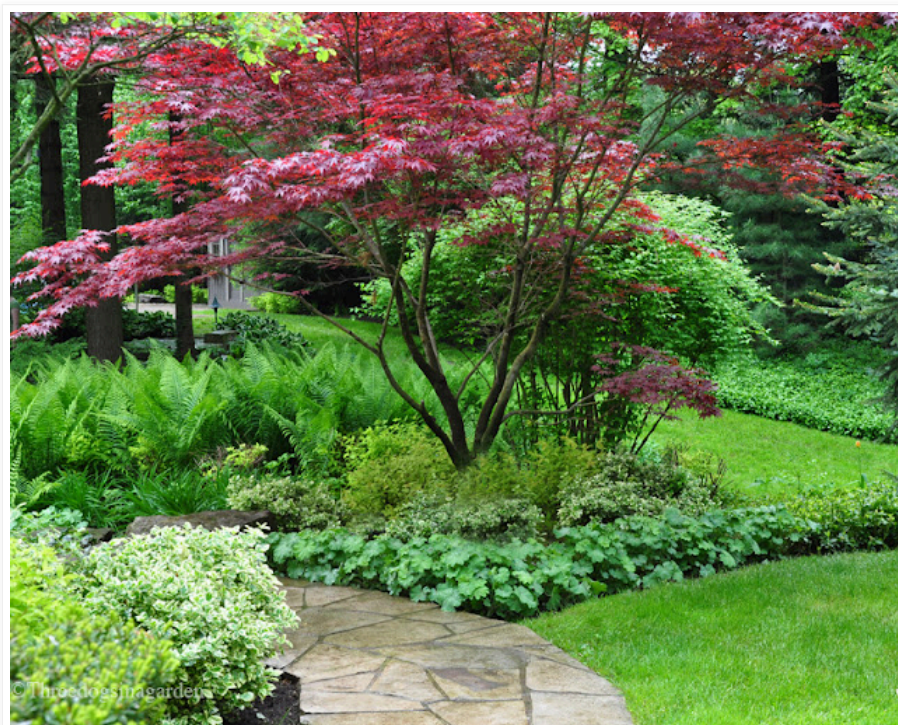
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As you can see from this first image, the property falls off dramatically just off the back deck. The task was then to link the back garden with the other side of the ravine.



This is a very quick, not-to-scale plan of the garden just to give you a clearer idea of the problem the designer faced.



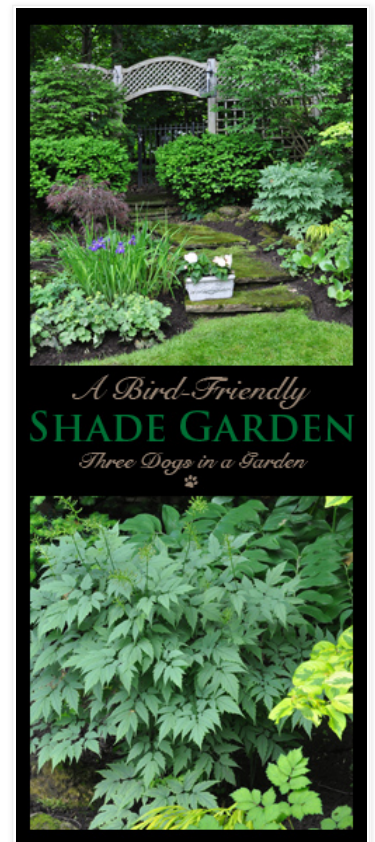
A pathway leads you to the edge of the ravine. From this angle, the native Ostrich ferns in the middle foreground somewhat conceal the significant slope of the land.



Trends for 2021



A Bird-Friendly Shade Garden



Beginner Series:
Overcoming that Dreaded
Fear of Failure

In the far distance, you can see the other half of the property. The plantings here include a Japanese Maple, euonymus, heuchera, Siberian iris, and rhododendrons.



As we round the corner, a bridge presents itself.



8 strategies for Gardening Success

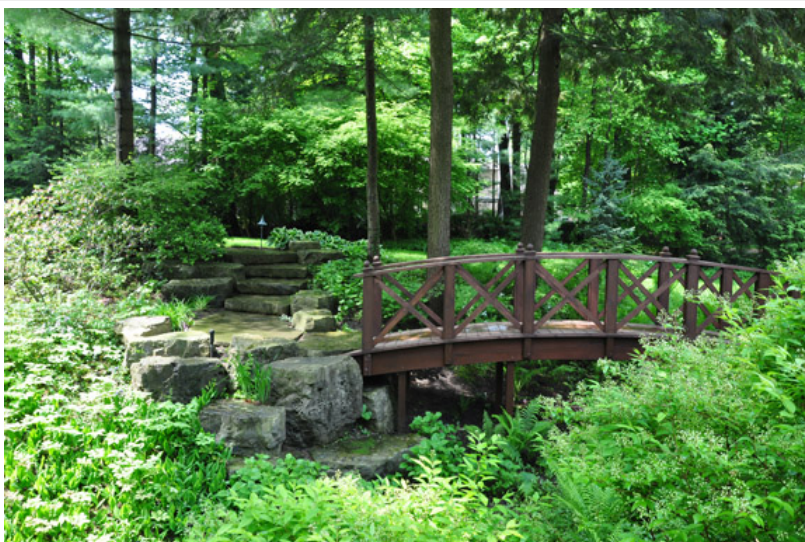
Lily Beetles



10+ Ways to Dress up the Side of a Garage (or Wall)



Looking back the way we came.



This view best shows the bridge crossing the ravine.



The Beautiful Garden of
Liz Primeau



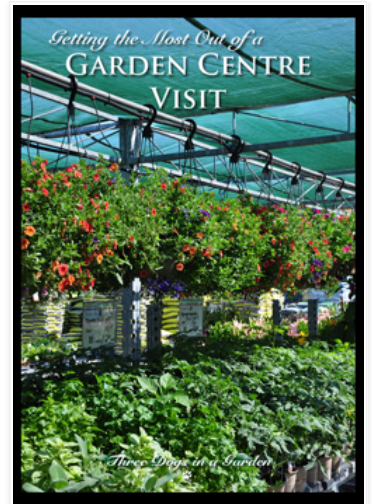
Beginner Series



A set of curved steps leads you up to level ground again and over to an inground pool.



Garden #2



Getting the Most Out of a Garden Centre Visit

Brunnera macrophylla for Part-Shade to Full Shade



10+ Plants for Mid-Summer Color

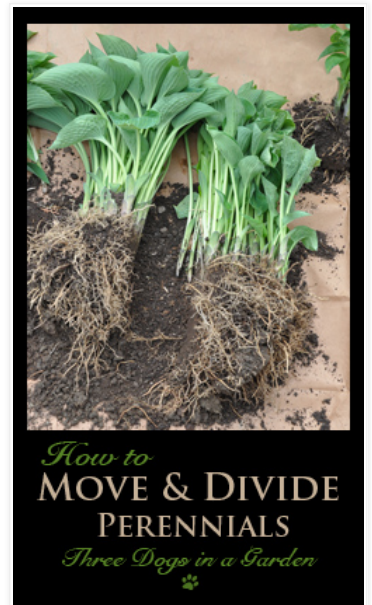


In this second property, I will show you both the front and back garden, which again was designed around a steeply sloping ravine. Neil Turnbull did the design work for this lovely garden.

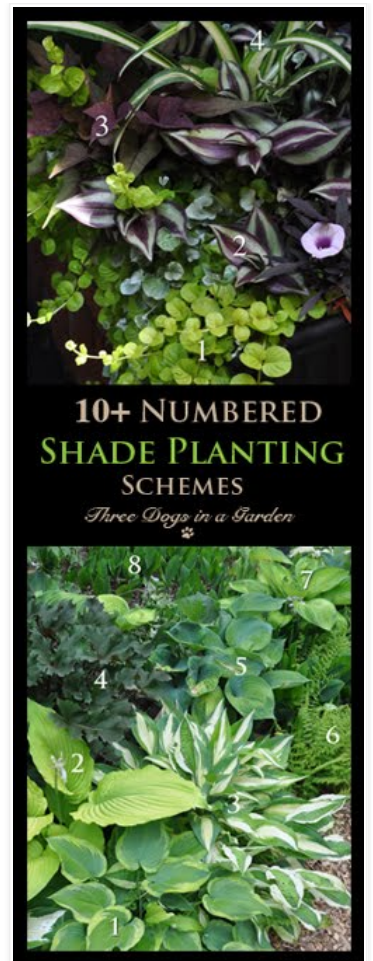
The artful front garden is sunken and almost invisible from the street. A set of steps lead you past a water feature and down into a beautiful courtyard garden.

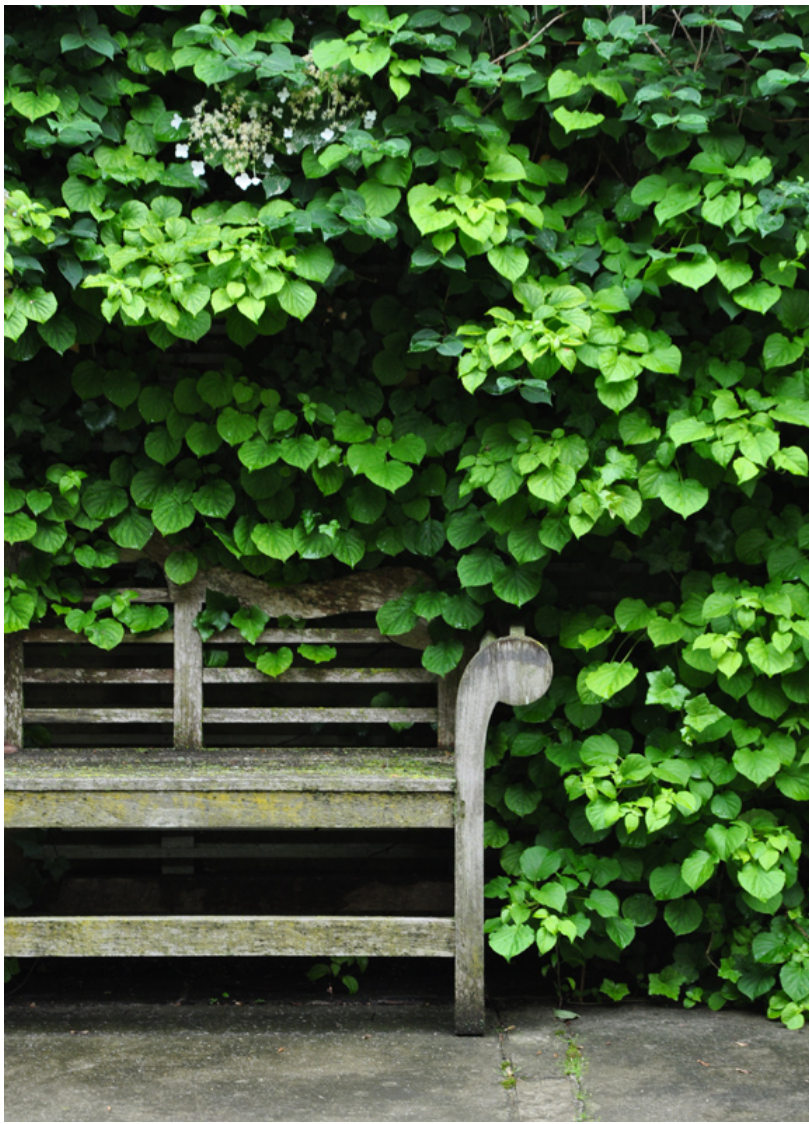


**Moving & Dividing
Perennials, Part 1**



**10+ Numbered and
Identified Shade Planting
Schemes**

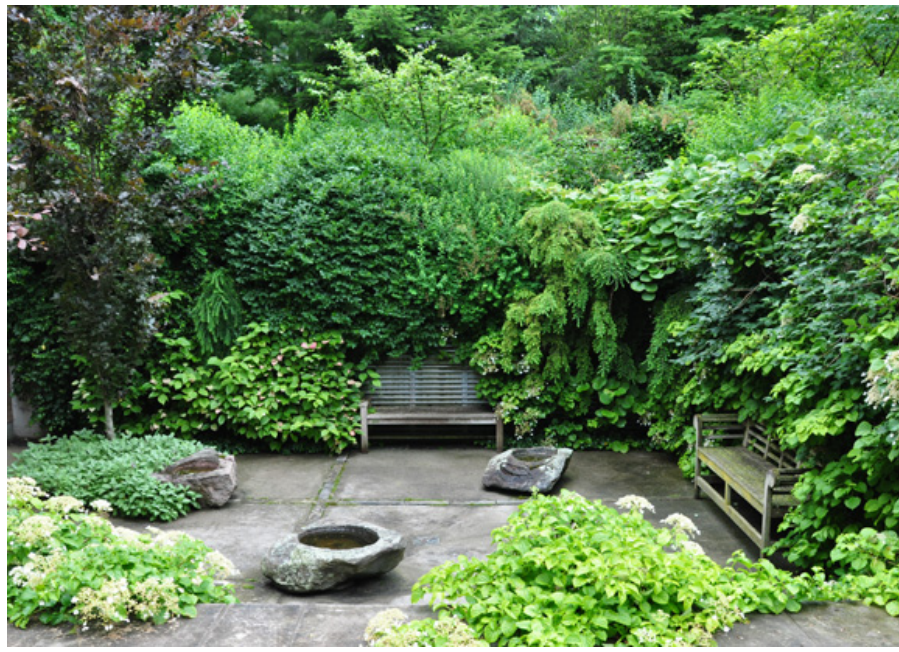




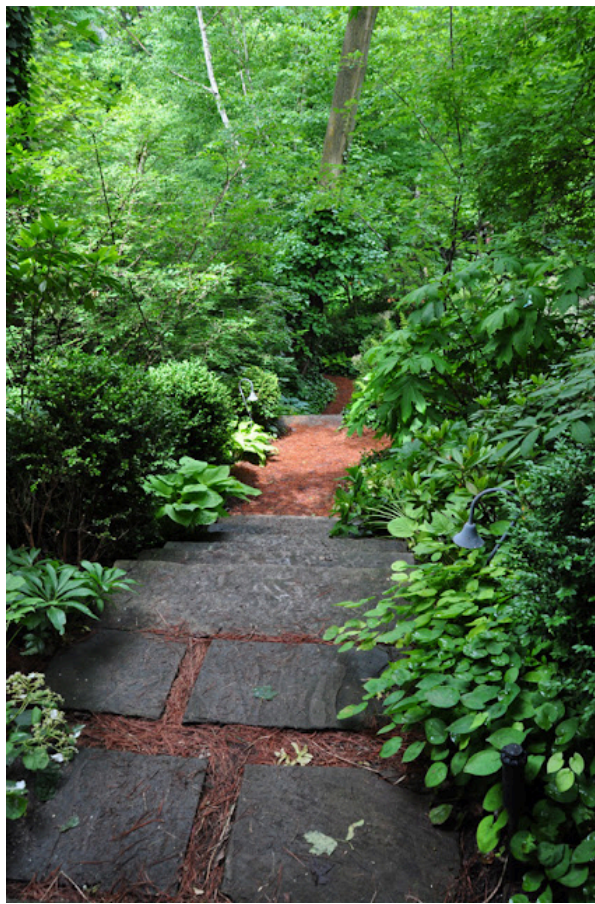
Vines including hydrangea and kiwi envelope the walls of this sunken garden.



The sound of water nicely masks any street noise. On the right is one of the three still pools.



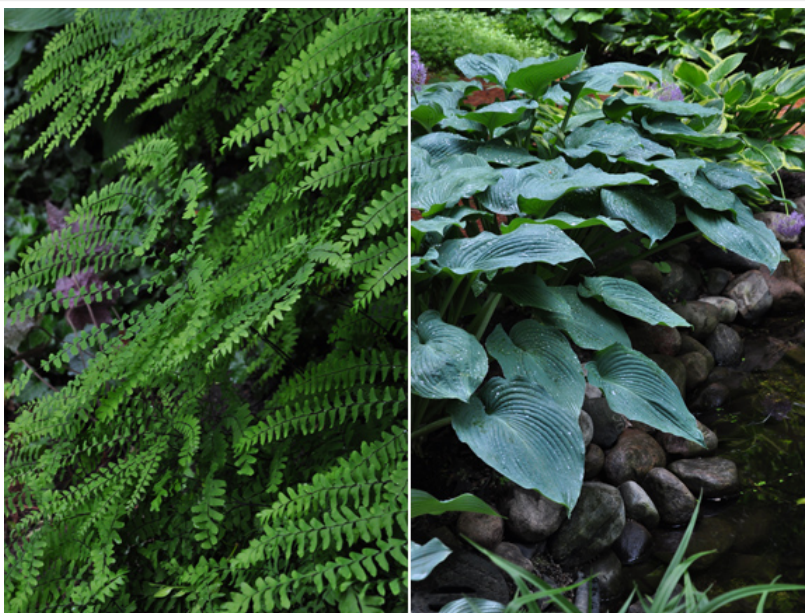
The front garden is lush and yet restrained. How do you imagine the back garden must look? For me, it was a wonderful surprise.



I am showing you this shot, not because it is a great picture, but because it best illustrates the dramatic slope of the back garden. The set of stone steps leads you down the steepest part of the ravine. From there, a series of paths wind the rest of the way down the slope.

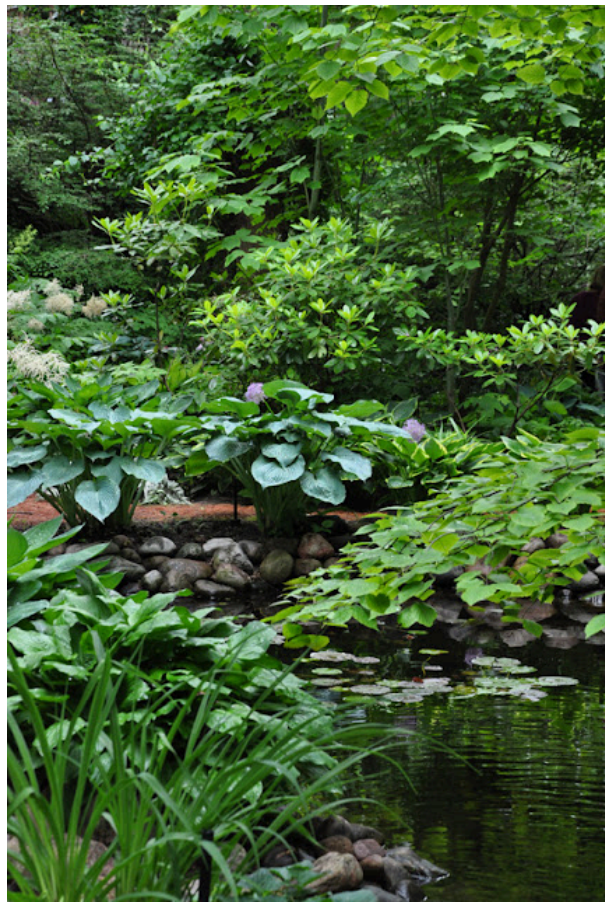


Red pine needles add a note of colour to the plantings which include native trees and plants, ferns, azaleas, rhododendrons, hosta and hellebore.





At the bottom of the garden, there is a seating area and two ponds connected by a stream. Unlike the front garden, this area feels wild and unrestrained, but make no mistake, it is thoughtfully considered and executed.



*A hosta with blue-grey leaves breaks up all the green. The white flower in the left image is Goat's Beard, *Aruncus dioicus*. There were also a number of lovely Japanese ferns (right).*



The little stone bridge crosses the stream connecting the two ponds.



Adding color were these big, purple alliums.

What do I suggest you take away from these two gardens?

If your property presents unique challenges, don't fight them, embrace them. A problem feature is just an opportunity to get creative.

Posted by Jennifer at [7:55 AM](#)

Labels: [Ferns](#), [Garden Bridge](#), [Gardens in Toronto](#), [Gardens on a ravine](#), [Hellebore](#), [Hosta](#), [rhododendrons](#), [Through the Garden Gate](#), [Woodland garden](#), [Woodland plants](#)

23 comments:

Mary Pellerito June 11, 2012 at 8:32 AM

I really like how the designs use lots of green foliage in many different shades and textures. I find these gardens stunning.

[Reply](#)



Barbara June 11, 2012 at 8:47 AM

It looks as if we might have crossed paths once again. My photos of the second garden from Saturday were most disappointing - just too many folks with umbrellas up. I'd had an excellent feeling about the garden when I was there, and didn't capture it at all. After looking at your's definitely brings back the way I felt when I was there. It's an excellent example of the amount of work and consideration that go into the design of a dramatic slope - no where did you feel that you were "falling off" but beautifully contained within this magical forest.

[Reply](#)

[Replies](#)



Jennifer June 11, 2012 at 2:42 PM

Sounds like you were there just before I was, Barbara.

[Reply](#)

Anonymous June 11, 2012 at 9:53 AM

I think you are absolutely right about not fighting what you have got. I think many people, me included, would have been put off by the different levels, and yet they work brilliantly, and are probably much more interesting than a flat plot of land.

I love the curved deck, the way it links the two levels. The sunken front garden is wonderful. For many it would have been a useless space, but here it has been used in a really inspired way. Great post.

[Reply](#)



elaine June 11, 2012 at 11:03 AM

All I can say is wow - they are amazing gardens - very cleverly designed.

[Reply](#)



Astrid June 11, 2012 at 11:14 AM

Both gardens illustrate that the best way to unite a divided garden is by using hardscaping as well as softscaping. In the first garden, the bridge becomes not only an efficient method of reaching the pool but serves as an excellent focal point in the "forest". A natural path and rock steps link the 2 areas in the second garden. Again, terrific use of multi-textured shade plants in a deeply forested area make the journey from one level to another practical and yet peaceful and relaxing. Great examples of how to cope with sloping properties, Jennifer.

[Reply](#)



allisamazing June 11, 2012 at 2:33 PM

Gorgeous gardens!

[Reply](#)



tinajo June 11, 2012 at 3:39 PM

You're always showing such amazing places that put my little garden to shame..! :-)

[Reply](#)



Gatsbys Gardens June 11, 2012 at 4:40 PM

These are beautiful gardens with so much inspiration to tackle a garden that is not flat. I have one that had ups and downs and a swale but with raised stone beds and walkways it has come together, needed a designer many years back to put this plan together.

Eileen

[Reply](#)



Rosemary Aubut June 11, 2012 at 6:10 PM

Wow what gorgeous photos! Beautiful presentation and I enjoyed my visit here!

[Reply](#)



S June 11, 2012 at 9:20 PM

This garden doesn't look planned at all. It looks so natural as if the plants have grown on their own like in a forest ! The water bodies also look so natural. Apart from the that, the garden accessories being used here are very soothing and classy. The stone human figures{ in the still pool }is no less than a work of art. This garden gives an impression that it is based on Zen principles.

[Reply](#)



Pauline June 11, 2012 at 11:17 PM

Wonderful examples that you have shown us, proving that sloping gardens are more interesting than flat ones! Much more time , effort and money are needed to make them a success, but they have so much interest when done beautifully.

[Reply](#)



Nadezda June 12, 2012 at 12:14 AM

Jennifer, than you for sharing this interesting tour! The both gardens are stunning, but I loved the first one! It's so well planning, the texture of the plants is wonderful.

[Reply](#)



Mr Paul June 12, 2012 at 1:24 AM

I'm going to have to save this post to reread when I get home from work. Outstanding, my kind of garden. Love, love, love, love it!

Paul

[Reply](#)



Karen @ Pieces of Contentment June 12, 2012 at 2:29 AM

Magnificent gardens, love all the green and the wonderful angles you have used. Love your summation at the end too.

[Reply](#)



Patty June 12, 2012 at 6:08 AM

Both the posts on uneven terrain are terrific. There are lots of great and inspiring ideas for everyone. I love the sculpture in the long reflecting pool. Lucky you to have such nice garden visits.

[Reply](#)



Rosemary June 12, 2012 at 8:42 AM

Lovely serene gardens , so glad I have flat land can't imagine climbing up and down ... congrats to those that do..

[Reply](#)



Marijke June 12, 2012 at 11:09 AM

Jennifer what a fantastic garden's you are showing. It must have been created by very creative people. Beautiful.
Have a nice evening
Reply



Marguerite June 12, 2012 at 4:49 PM

Wonderful photos of a couple really well designed gardens. If you hadn't told me there was a ravine in that first garden I never would have known. They have disguised it brilliantly and I love that they have a bridge that really was a necessity and not just for looks.
Reply



Rose June 13, 2012 at 5:30 AM

Beautiful gardens! I've always wanted a curved bridge like the one in the first garden, but they have the perfect place for it. The Japanese maple really stands out in all that lush greenery.
Reply



Kia June 13, 2012 at 5:41 AM

Both gardens are stunning and so serene! :)
Thanks for sharing your lovely photos.
Reply

Carolyn @ Carolyns Shade Gardens June 13, 2012 at 10:16 AM

These shade gardens are beautiful. I actually think it is much harder to make a completely flat piece of property interesting.
Reply



David June 14, 2012 at 9:52 AM

So what do you think? I'm guessing these are some of the finest woodland gardens in all of North America. I could stay and visit there forever (well,maybe not during winter). You have a beautiful garden blog and I love every visit. David/:0)
Reply

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