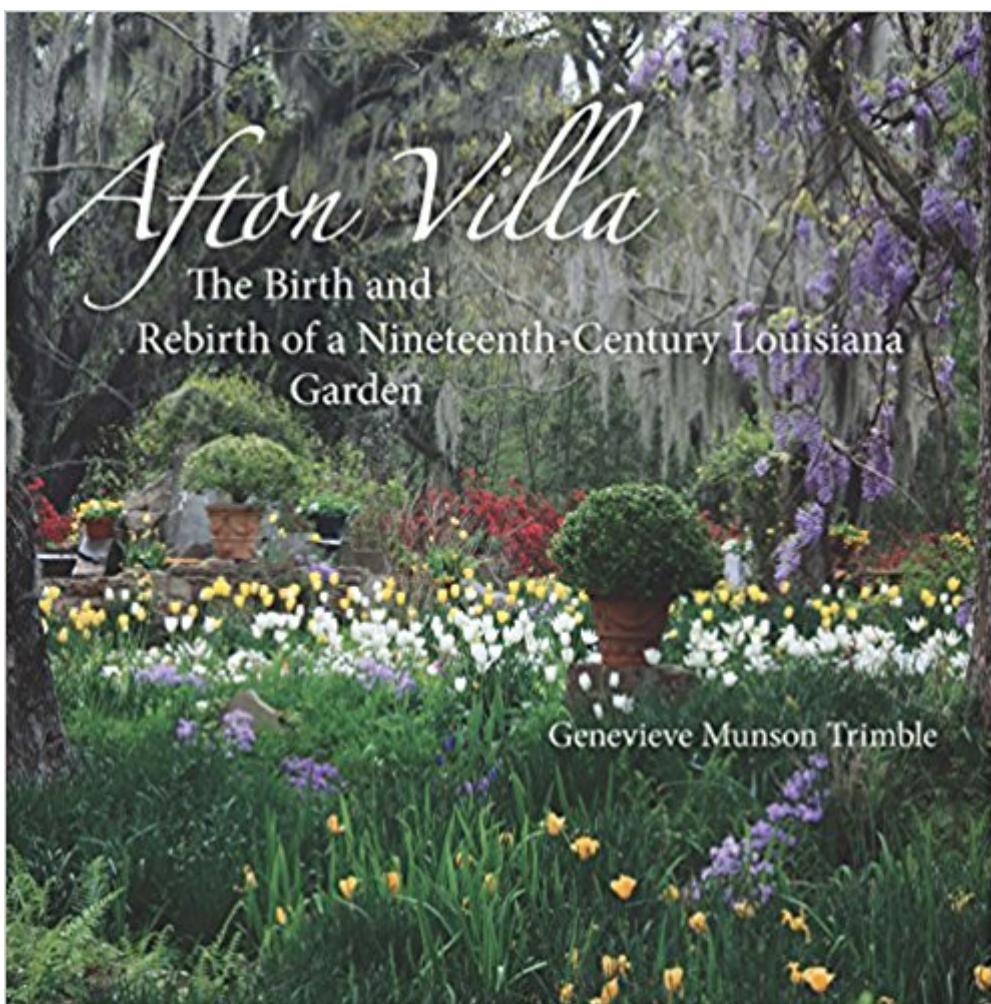


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# Afton Villa: The Birth And Rebirth Of A Nineteenth-Century Louisiana Garden (Reading The American Landscape)



## Synopsis

Genevieve Trimble's remarkable story of Afton Villa began with a tragedy. In 1963, fire ravaged the forty-room Victorian Gothic plantation home on the historic estate, bringing to ashes over 170 years of history. Over the next decade, its once-regal serpentine entryway and carefully laid out gardens gradually deteriorated, as vines strangled the rows of azaleas that once welcomed guests. A place of enchantment crumbled toward extinction. The irreversible loss of Afton Villa's once pristine nineteenth-century gardens and carefully built stately home did, however, inspire Trimble to seize the opportunity to protect the derelict property from oblivion and she and her husband purchased the estate in 1972. This ambitious move initiated a forty-year regeneration of one of the most treasured and legendary gardens in Louisiana. Afton Villa documents Trimble's decades-long restoration project while providing a history of the original owners and paying tribute to the other people who contributed to its rebirth. Focusing on preservation, Trimble reveals how the garden's original footprint survived as well as how she thoughtfully introduced new flora into the terraced landscape, including the foundation ruins of the house, under the guidance of landscape architect Neil G. Odenwald. With steep learning curves and devastating setbacks, including hurricane destruction, each milestone in the recovery of Afton Villa marked a triumph of collaborative will over adversity. Hundreds of visitors every year journey to St. Francisville to enjoy the result of Trimble's arduous and rewarding efforts. The moss-draped oaks welcome them to a rolling vista of daffodils, cherry trees, and a boxwood parterre as well as hundreds of other features in this thirty-five-acre garden. With a vivid narrative and beautiful images, *Afton Villa: The Birth and Rebirth of a Nineteenth-Century Louisiana Garden* captures the story of this remarkable restoration.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

"Although she is known as a gardener and preservationist, Trimble also is a wonderful writer. . . . Her prose, including the excerpts she includes from the garden journal she has kept, guides the reader with wit and feeling through the history of Afton Villa, the reclamation of its original garden spaces and the creation of new garden rooms. . . . Less of a how-to guide, it is a sensitive portrait that traces the history of the place, explores the lives that have been devoted to it, and describes a singular and ever-evolving approach to garden-making."--Baton Rouge Advocate" Afton Villa . . . combines the personal travails of the families who created the plantation with historical events, in Gen's lovingly told account of the joys and challenges of preserving, interpreting, and re-creating these important gardens. . . . [Trimble's] life's work embodies the very words she quotes of British landscape designer Russell Page of a garden as 'an expression of faith, the embodiment of hope, and a song of praise.'" --Preservation in Print

In addition to Afton Villa, Genevieve Munson Trimble oversaw the restoration of the New Orleans Botanical Garden, where she served as president of their Foundation for twenty-five years. Among many other accolades for her horticultural achievements, Trimble received the Place Keeper Award from the Foundation of Landscape Studies, the Garden Club of America's Achievement Medal, the inaugural Edith Stern Legacy Award from Longue Vue Gardens, and the Preservation Award from the Foundation for Historical Louisiana.

A true testament of how beautiful Louisiana and Mrs. Trimble is! Having been to many garden symposiums, Afton Villa is absolutely this beautiful! It has kept Mrs. Trimble so young!!! It should be on everyone's bucket list to see this place before you die!

Having visited this garden, it was nice to learn the story-behind-the-story of the restoration plantings and upkeep.

this is a great book for garden lovers.

Very well written.

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