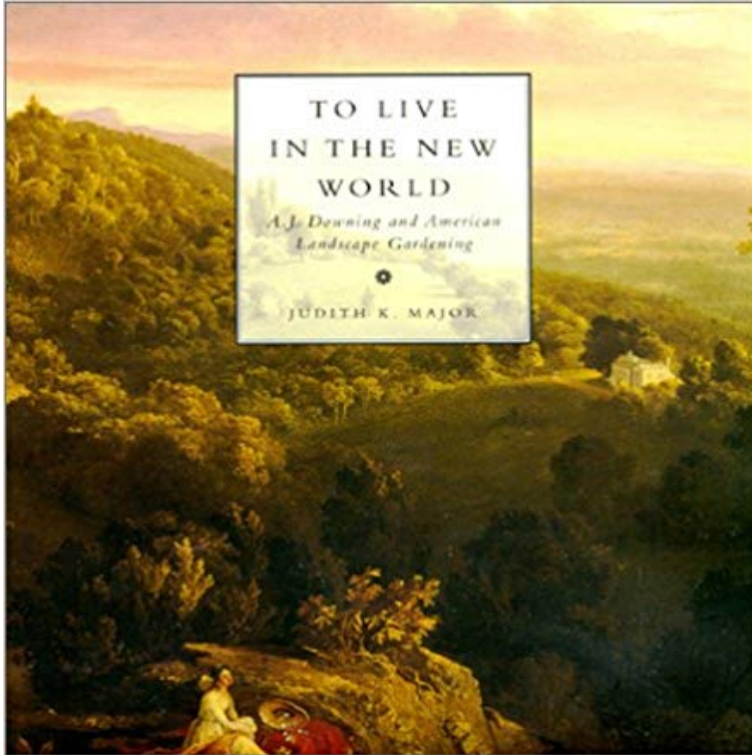


To Live in the New World: A. J. Downing and American Landscape Gardening



A. J. Downing (1815-1852) wrote the first American treatise on landscape gardening. As editor of the *Horticulturist* and the country's leading practitioner and author, he promoted a national style of landscape gardening that broke away from European precedents and standards. Like other writers and artists, Downing responded to the intensifying demand in the nineteenth century for a recognizably American cultural expression. *To Live in the New World* examines in detail Downings growing conviction that landscape gardening must be adapted to the American people and the nation's indigenous landscapes. Despite significant changes in its three editions, Downings *A Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* remained true to the original intent: to guide country gentlemen -- with enough money, time, and taste -- in the creation of ideal homes and pleasure grounds. While most historians and critics have focused on Downings more formally written treatise, Judith Major gives equal emphasis to Downings spirited monthly editorials in the *Horticulturist*. In the journal, Downing spoke American and encouraged his countrymen and women to practice economy, to use America's rich natural resources wisely yet artfully, to be content with a little cottage and a few fine native trees. Although the book is not a biography, the people, events, and experiences that shaped Downings thinking on landscape gardening are central to the story. Significantly, Downing spent his life in the spectacular natural setting of the Hudson River valley. Through his professional practice, travels, reading, and extensive correspondence, he gradually became aware of the individual and collective needs that he served. Landscape gardening, Downing came to feel, had to respect not only a client's desires and means, but also the nation's republican values of moderation, simplicity, and civic

responsibility. Major takes a fresh look at the influence on Downings theory and practice of British writers such as Archibald Alison, Uvedale Price, Humphry Repton, John Claudius Loudon, and John Ruskin, and analyzes for the first time his debt to the French academician A. C. Quatremere de Quincy's Essay on Imitation.

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