

Toronto - By Stan Southwick



The September SLAM is a bit late because I spent four days in Toronto, Ontario Canada the end of September when I would normally have written this article. When I got back and unburied myself from the emails and messages, this article had slipped my mind. I was in Toronto for the Council of Landscape Architecture Registration Boards (CLARB) annual conference and business meeting. This was my first trip to Toronto. During our only break in the meetings, I headed outside and explored downtown Toronto. The city of 2.8 million, in a relatively small area of 243 square miles, is one of the cleanest I have ever



seen. After walking around the downtown area for 3 hours, I only found one discarded water bottle. I even passed a homeless camp under the freeway that was fairly clean and orderly! The downtown residents live mainly in high-rise apartment buildings although I passed an inviting and well-kept street of brownstone homes in the shadow of the much taller buildings. It was inserted in the dense urban scene like a ray of sun slicing through a dark cloudy sky. Toronto's transportation system is designed for trains, bicycles and pedestrians. Travel methods are appealing with different paving materials and landscape and clearly separated for safety. The vehicle circulation takes a back seat and is crowded and slow. The biggest surprise were the 9 parks within one mile of the hotel... I do love the outdoor spaces. Toronto was a great place to visit.



“The Mojave is a big desert and a frightening one. It’s as though nature tested a man for endurance and constancy to prove whether he was good enough to get to California.”
 — John Steinbeck

Favorite Flora:

Lavandula stoechas ‘Otto Quast’- Otto Quast Lavender- By Jon Marenfeld

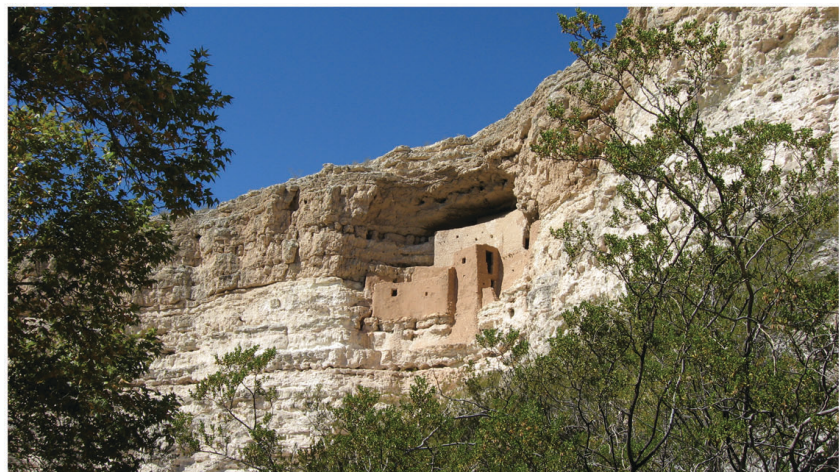


Finding a good, colorful, container, border, or accent plant can be tough in our harsh climate. The normal go-to choices are Lantana, Germander, Dalea ‘Sierra Gold’ or Damianita. Lavandula stoechas ‘Otto Quast’ is a nice alternative or addition to the typical picks. This Mediterranean region native is known for its year-round interest, dramatic foliage, easy care, and drought and heat resistance. It’s genus Lavandula is named for the Latin verb, lavo (to wash) because of its use in ancient Roman Baths. Spanish Lavender is very fragrant and is very popular today for aromatic cuttings and essential oils. It attracts hummingbirds,

butterflies, bees, and birds. It’s evergreen with gray-green foliage and showy royal-purple flowers that look like miniature pineapples. A moderate grower, it reaches up to 24” tall and 36” wide.

As with most arid climate plants it’s relatively care-free. It should be planted in well-drained soil in full to partial sun exposures. Once established it has average water needs but will require more in extreme heat or if planted in a container. Be sure not to overwater. Cluster Lavandula stoechas ‘Otto Quast’ next to landscape boulders or posts to soften the transition. As an accent clump 3 to 5 of them together or use as edging. Plant them in a rock garden with fountain grasses (Pennisetum), rosemary (Rosmarinus), Coneflower (Rudbeckia), Damianita (Chrysactinia mexicana), and boulders for picturesque colors and textures.

Photo of the Month



Montezumas Castle
 Camp Verde, AZ
 Jon Marenfeld