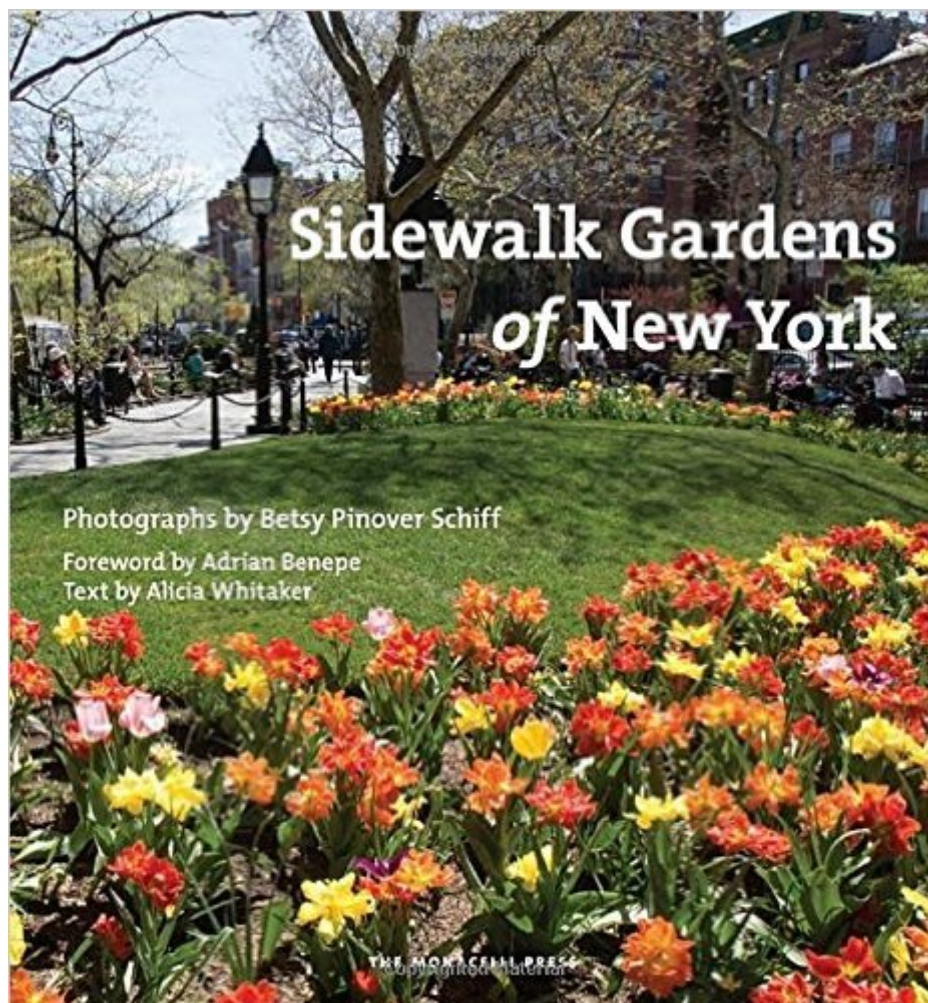


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Sidewalk Gardens Of New York (Pinover Schiff)



Synopsis

New York City looks nothing like it did just a decade and a half ago. It's a place of newly gorgeous waterfront promenades, of trees, tall grasses and blooming flowers on patches of land and peninsulas of concrete and even stretches of rail tracks that were blighted or blank before. Frank Bruni, The New York Times Betsy Pinover Schiff has been photographing urban plantings and chronicling the greening of the city for more than two decades. Once limited to private spaces and elite neighborhoods, these plantings now proliferate throughout the five boroughs. Sidewalk Gardens of New York reveals the transformation of the city of concrete and glass into one of the greenest and most richly planted urban centers in America. Nature and architecture combine in ways that will surprise even the most seasoned New Yorkers. Featured are tree beds, planters, hanging baskets, and medians that mitigate the frenzy of the street; plazas and pocket parks that offer respite to pedestrians, building plantings that create a welcoming transition between public and private; community gardens; and parks, both the iconic and the newly planted along the waterfront in Brooklyn, Queens, and Lower Manhattan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Sidewalk Gardens of New York is a gorgeous, elegantly written book with exquisite photographs that are truly representative of Manhattan and parts of the surrounding boroughs: this is not a gloss on the subject but a nuanced look at specific plantings and gardens, public and private. Alicia Whitaker's text expertly takes in vest-pocket parks, known destinations (the

High Line and Gramercy Park), and equally stunning but slightly lesser-known expanses (Central Park's Conservatory Garden, at Fifth Avenue between 104th and 106th Streets, with its wisteria and double allée of crab apple trees flanked by French and English-style gardens, all designed by Gilmore D. Clarke in the 1930s). From a stand of dark orange lilies in Hell's Kitchen to the pink and white Carefree Wonder rosebushes along the East River; from the green yews and boxwood outside a large brick apartment complex in Sunnyside, Queens, to the subdued ochres and reds of the container plantings outside the Thistle Hill Tavern in Brooklyn; and from the ivy-encrusted facades of a hidden pre-Civil War courtyard in Greenwich Village to the huge, intriguing boulders and Technicolor greens of Pier 63 in Hudson River Park—all are delightful examples of what it means to live in or visit a city that pleases the senses. A knowing foreword by Adrian Benene, commissioner of parks and recreation when the majestic and now heavily traversed High Line was first opened, reminds the reader of New York's metamorphosis from Dante's seventh circle of hell to, in Whitaker's apt term, a splendid, varied collection of Edens—which, she correctly says, should be no further than our front doors. Appropriately, her words come on a lovely page tastefully illustrated with a lush streetscape (by the book's wonderfully skilled photographer, Betsy Pinover Schiff) of a row of heavily planted brick town house entrances. Such artful serendipity is evident on every page—a credit to the spectacular book design by Susan Evans, of the Manhattan firm Design per se. Whitaker's introduction, six one-page section openers, and short, wildly informative captions throughout are savvy enough to please everyone from serious horticulturists and residents (many of whom will be surprised to learn of the variety and complexity of the plantings in their midst) to visitors hoping to bring a piece of New York home with them on the plane.

A beautiful survey of the plantings that have transformed the city's streets.

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