

green matters

It's the rare garden that never needs fertilizer, so many gardeners wonder, "Which is better, organic or inorganic fertilizer?" The answer is both... and neither; it depends on the circumstances. Organic fertilizers—manure, compost, bone meal, and the like—usually contain many nutrients in low concentrations, which are typically released slowly over time, which can be a disadvantage. And because they supply fewer nutrients pound for pound, organics tend to be more costly to use. On the other hand, organics may be beneficial to the soil, improving water movement, adding structure, and making the soil easier to work.

Inorganic fertilizers—often called commercial or synthetic because they undergo some manufacturing—usually have only a few nutrients, usually nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and sulfur, singly or in combination. Because these are in a concentrated form, readily available to plants, such inorganics are a good choice for plants that need a particular element quickly. The nutrients are lost from the soil quickly, however, and the inorganic fertilizer may need to be reapplied several times during the growing season.

Both types of fertilizer require great care in their application. Since many of the inorganics are concentrated and very soluble, it is easy to apply too much, which can damage the plants. But some organics also can create problems: too much fresh, non-composted manure may contain harmful amounts of salt.



Begonia 'Dragon Wing Red'

The 'Dragon Wing Red,' one of several begonias in the garden, is a wonderfully easy-going plant: tolerant of sun and shade, virtually problem-free, requiring no pruning. It covers a large area quickly during growing season, and the cascading red flowers blend well with both foliage and other blooms.

S U M M E R H I G H L I G H T

BRYANT PARK CORPORATION (BPC), a private not-for-profit company, was founded in 1980 to renovate, restore, maintain, and operate this urban oasis, designated a Scenic Landmark by the NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission. Funded by an assessment on neighboring properties, income from concessions, event revenues, and corporate sponsorships, BPC employs a staff of up to 80 to provide security and sanitation, manage the public restrooms, upgrade and operate park structures, and maintain the park's six acres of lawn, promenades, trees, and gardens. Over the years, BPC has installed new lighting, 3,500 movable Paris-style park chairs, 50 café umbrellas, and tables. It continues to expand Bryant Park's attractiveness and attractions: a restaurant, outdoor café, and four food kiosks; a carousel, opened in 2002; and the outdoor Reading Room, a warm-weather fixture since 2003. The latest additions include ping-pong tables and a new outdoor seating area called the Southwest Porch. To the program of spring and summer public events—including music and dance performances and the HBO Bryant Park Summer Film Festival—the BPC has added the holiday shops and The Pond ice skating rink in fall and early winter, making Bryant Park a year-round destination.

BRYANT PARK, designed in the French Classical tradition, features 240 trees, including *Platanus acerifolia* (London plane) along the promenades; more than 100 species of woody shrubs, herbaceous perennials, annuals, and 150,000 bulbs; a 1.25-acre lawn; and six monuments. More than 20,000 people visit Bryant Park on an average summer day.

GARDEN NOTES

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BRYANT PARK

GARDEN NOTES

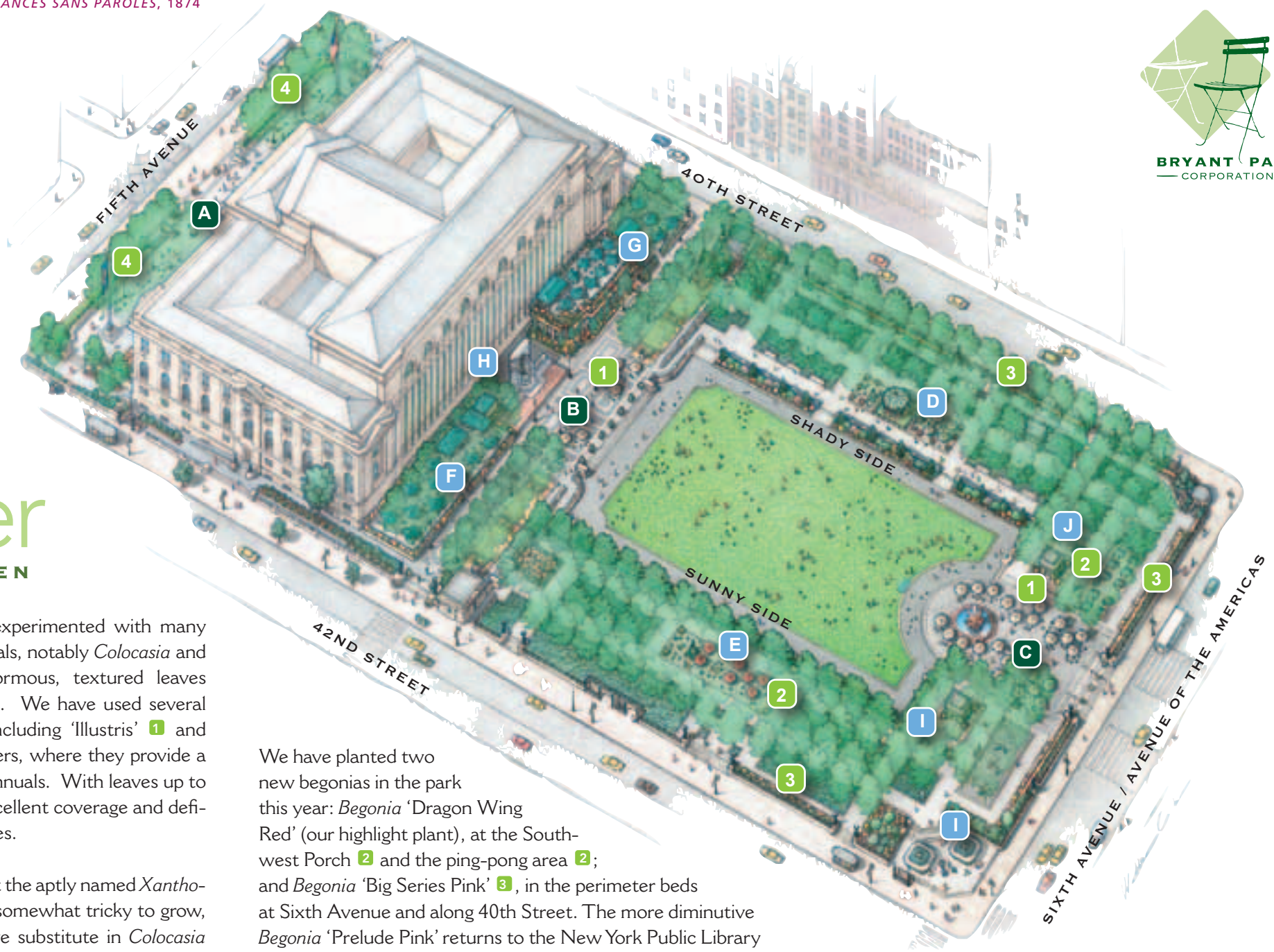


S U M M E R 2 0 1 0

“Here are fruits, flowers, leaves and branches,
And here is my heart which beats only for you.”

PAUL VERLAINE, *ROMANCES SANS PAROLES*, 1874

BRYANT PARK



Summer IN THE GARDEN

Over the years we have experimented with many of the broad-leafed tropicals, notably *Colocasia* and *Xanthosoma*, whose enormous, textured leaves add great drama to pots and beds. We have used several varieties of *Colocasia esculenta*, including ‘Illustris’ **1** and ‘Blackie,’ as centerpieces for planters, where they provide a tall canopy above shade-tolerant annuals. With leaves up to two feet long, they also provide excellent coverage and definition on patios and in urban squares.

We were equally enthusiastic about the aptly named *Xanthosoma* ‘Chartreuse Giant.’ But it is somewhat tricky to grow, and we recently found an effective substitute in *Colocasia* ‘Elena,’ this issue’s cover plant **1**. It combines the best traits of the two genera especially the bright chartreuse coloring it shares with the *Xanthosoma*.

We have planted two new begonias in the park this year: *Begonia* ‘Dragon Wing Red’ (our highlight plant), at the Southwest Porch **2** and the ping-pong area **2**; and *Begonia* ‘Big Series Pink’ **3**, in the perimeter beds at Sixth Avenue and along 40th Street. The more diminutive *Begonia* ‘Prelude Pink’ returns to the New York Public Library display beds along Fifth Avenue **4**.

— MAUREEN HACKETT, DIRECTOR OF HORTICULTURE

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| A LIBRARY TERRACE | D Le Carrousel | I witchcraft Food Kiosks |
| B UPPER TERRACE | E Bryant Park Reading Room | J The Southwest Porch |
| C FOUNTAIN TERRACE | F Bryant Park Café | 1 Bed locations, noted in the copy above. |
| | G Bryant Park Grill | |
| | H Bryant Memorial | |

For more information about
Bryant Park and the Bryant Park Corporation,
please visit our web site:

www.bryantpark.org

A comprehensive Map and Guide to the park can be found at
rules and regulations/ information kiosks.