

Swiss alpine flora

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SWISS ALPINE FLORA.

Nature lovers who visit the Swiss highlands cannot fail to observe and to admire the rich variety of plant life that adorns the meadows and mountain slopes of the Alpine region. This particularly applies to the Bernese Oberland.

The profusion and the beauty of this plant-world has led to the idea of creating a kind of botanical garden in which the wild Alpine flowers could be collected and cultivated, and their growth studied in natural surroundings.

Under the auspices of the Swiss Botanic Society such a garden was laid out and opened to the public in 1929. The site chosen was the Schynige Platte, an hour's run by train from Interlaken.

The Schynige Platte, probably so named because the smooth rocks which form its slopes glint or shine in the sunlight, lies at the western extremity of the Faulhorn range, standing back from the main chain of the Bernese high alps. It commands a magnificent view not only of the major peaks of the Oberland but also of much of the Midland plateau and the Jura mountains. The area it covers is rich in natural vegetation; this and its position and accessibility made it an ideal spot for an Alpine garden.

On this promontory, at a height of some 6,000 feet, the gardens were laid out. In 1931 a suitable building was erected to house the staff and a laboratory was set up for the scientific experiments and research which, from the outset, were carried out under the direction of Dr. W. Lüdi of the Geobotanisches Institut Rübel in Zurich.

The gardens are most attractively laid out. There are no formal avenues or parterres: the natural original contours and accidents of terrain are in the main left intact, thus allowing the growth and flowering of a large variety of Alpine plants to proceed in their appropriate natural conditions and habitat. Today most of the important plant groups of the kind are represented, each type carefully labelled with its German and Latin classification. The collection is varied and extensive, even the elusive Edelweiss, raised from seeds, has taken root.

A full description of the Alpine Garden and its contents has been written by Mr. Hans Itten and is published in an excellent English translation (by

Elaine Rubli) by Paul Haupt, Berne, in their series of "Swiss Homeland Books". The title is "The Alpine Garden of Schynige Platte", the price Swiss frs.4.50. The book is small, only 48 pages and it is beautifully illustrated with 33 full-page photographs and coloured plates which give a good idea of the magnificent scenery surrounding the gardens and the splendour of the flora on show.

This handsome and interesting publication should be eminently suitable as a gift volume to friends who are lovers of mountains and of flowers.

J.J.F.S.

FIRST METROPOLITAN ARRIVES IN SWITZERLAND.

Swissair's first Convair Metropolitan arrived at Zurich Airport on Sunday, June 10th. It had covered the 6,658 kilometres from New York to Zurich in the net flying time of 15 hours eleven minutes, with intermediate stops at Gander and Shannon. The 3,275 kilometres from Newfoundland to Ireland were covered in seven hours six minutes.

The crew comprised Swissair's Chief Pilot Flight Captain Hans Ernst, Flight Captains Huerzeler, Muser and Bezzola and navigator-radio operator Kraehenbuehl.

The machine is the first of eleven Metropolitans Swissair has on order. Seven more will be delivered in the course of this summer. The first scheduled flight will take place from Zurich to Manchester on June 29th. Metropolitans will be in regular service between London-Geneva and London-Basle by the end of July.

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