

Presse anglais



**Jardin botanique alpin  
Botanischer Alpengarten**

The Flore-Alpe, alpine botanical garden

of the

Jean-Marcel Aubert Foundation,  
Champex-Lac



# Media Presentation

## Table of Contents

Flore-Alpe, an exceptional garden	p 2
Jean-Marcel Aubert Foundation / CAP	p 3
Particularities of the Flore-Alpe	p 4
Reception and guided tours	p 5
Programmes and themes 2011	p 6
Exhibition 2011	p 7
Lodging	p 8
Practical information	p 9
Contacts	p 10

Annex:           Map of the garden – Programme of activities

## The Flore-Alpe, an exceptional garden

The alpine garden Flore-Alpe is enchantingly situated at an altitude of 1500 metres overlooking Champex-Lac at the foot of Le Catogne. Strolling the winding paths between the rocailles and bridges overlooking the pools of glacial water, visitors can contemplate the magnificent and unique panorama of Champex-Lac and the snow covered tops of Les Combins.

Nearly four thousand species of plants flower can be found here on more than 6000 m<sup>2</sup>, from local species to species from neighbouring regions, the mountains of Europe and the five continents.

**The botanical garden Flore-Alpe is one of the richest and most prestigious of the Alps.**



The garden specialises in collections of wild roses, rhododendrons, primroses, gentians, botanical roses, houseleeks and conifers.

Space is reserved for plants on the protected list and species indigenous to the Valais highlighting those from the steppes of the inner valleys of the Alps. Medicinal plants and carnivores are also to be seen.

The structure of the garden is the fruit of the impassioned work of Egidio Anchisi, chief gardener for more than forty years. Several characteristic biotopes such as wetlands, bogs, a scree and moraine have been reconstituted. Currently, Jean-Luc Poligné maintains and develops this magnificent collection.

In 2007, Flore-Alpe received the prestigious “Prix Schulthess des jardins” awarded by Patrimoine Suisse.



*Sculpture :*  
*Etienne Krähenbühl,*  
*Petit cube suspendu,*  
*2003*

## The Jean-Marcel Aubert Foundation

The Jean-Marcel Aubert Foundation was formed with the collaboration of the city of Geneva, the State of Neuchâtel, and Mr. Jean-Marcel Aubert on May 22, 1967. The state of Valais and the Commune of Orsières assumed responsibility for the Foundation in October 2007 and it pursues the following objectives:

- to assure and maintain the continuity of the Flore-Alpe and its exceptional collection
- to support the scientific research on the flora and vegetation in the mountain systems, in particular the Alps
- to accord particular importance to information and to the awareness of the public regarding all that concerns the flora and the environment in general



Charles Rey, botanist, presides over the Foundation. The Foundation in turn manages the alpine botanical garden Flore-Alpe at Champex-Lac and collaborates directly with the Museum of Nature of Valais, in Sion. By its presence

## The Alpien Centre for Phytogeography

According to the wishes of the founder a scientific section was added to the Flore-Alpe, The Alpien Centre for Phytogeography. In collaboration with the Universities of Neuchâtel, Geneva, Lausanne and Rome as well as the Conservatory and Botanical Garden of the City of Geneva, The Alpine Centre for Phytogeography develops research on environmental changes in Valais. There is a particular interest in plant diversity and the distribution of the flora at the alpine and sub alpine levels. A long term monitoring of the process of the flora and vegetation was put in place, with the participation among of the project GLORIA, an international network for observation of the mountains in Europe. It is directed by Dr. Jean-Paul Theurillat, one of the co-authors of numerous seminal publications such as: *Flora Alpina*, *Flora Vegetativa*, *Flore du Canton de Genève*.

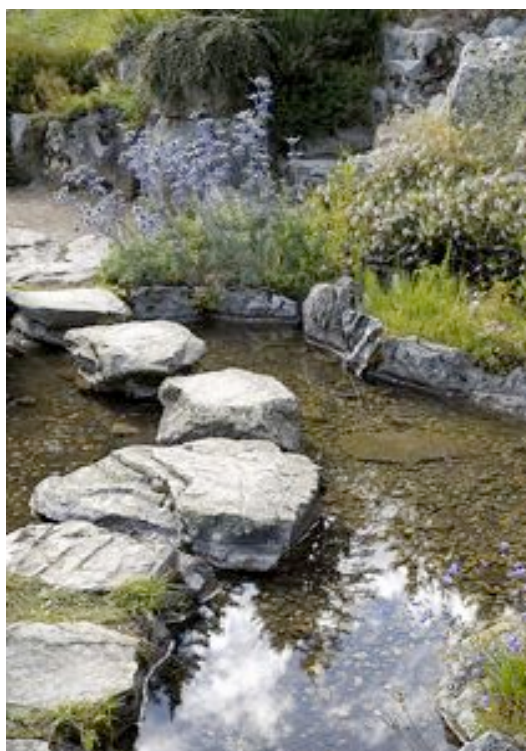


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## Features of the Flore-Alpe

The industrialist Jean-Marcel Aubert established the Flore-Alpe in 1925. Originally conceived as an ornamental garden for his secondary residence, it gradually became an **alpine landscape garden**, a unique creation. The two chalets with their unique architecture added to the charm. The Flore-Alpe is particularly interesting from the point of view of the history of the culture of gardens: the ideal of equilibrium, the art of gardens and the science of botany.

Patrimoine Suisse states that the alpine gardens created at the beginning of the 20th century in response to the menace of burgeoning tourism on the alpine flora, play an important role today in research on the evolution of the alpine ecosystems.



The alpine botanical garden Flore-Alpe is an exceptional place of discovery in any season. From June to July the colours explode; it is an ideal period for visiting. The collections are presented in a reconstituted environment mirroring their natural milieu. The garden participates in *International Museums Day* and *Botanica*, a week devoted to the promotion of botanical gardens in Switzerland.

Flore-Alpe maintains several important collections including an innumerable variety of conifers, primavera, saxifrages, rhododendrons, gentians, sempervivums and botanical roses. The alpine botanical garden Flore-Alpe constitutes **the living botanical collection of the Canton of Valais**, in compliment with the cantonal herbier of the Museum of Nature of Valais, in Sion. It delights amateurs of beautiful flowers as well as scientists keen on knowledge.



## Reception and guided tours

The Flore-Alpe is an ideal place to begin your experience with alpine flora, for children as well as adults. A competent personal guide is present to initiate your understanding of everything that touches on the flora and its environment.

### Field trips and classes

Classes and groups are welcome at the Flore-Alpe. For the little ones, the visit is centred on the five senses, the shapes, colours and perfumes that create a garden of delight. **A pedagogical guide is available for teachers.** For adults, thematic visits are suggested.

Flore-Alpe also lends itself to organised school field trips. The *grand chalet* offers comfort and accommodation for 20 people.

A course centred on the study of alpine flora can benefit from the infrastructure of the Flore-Alpe, which can provide an ample sized meeting room, observation equipment and a library.



### Guided tours

Participation in a guided tour is the ideal way to discover the Flore-Alpe, the history of the garden, the collection and its particularities. Visitors are introduced to the importance of conserving the diversity of alpine flora and are encouraged to observe, admire and respect.

- Many themed tours are scheduled during the season
- Every day, guided tours on demand, a reservation in advance is preferable
- From June to September: instructive exhibits, excursions, guided tours, workshops, boutique
- From June to September: Fridays, 16h00, guided tours of the garden and the sculpture installation

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## Activities



Throughout summer, many activities are offered: conferences, exhibitions, excursions, discussions, demonstrations, guided tours, open house, workshops for children and adults, a seed and plant market, and once or twice the garden will vibrate to music as we present concerts in collaboration with the Verbier Festival and Academy.

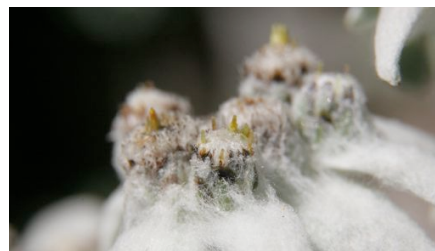
### Theme 2011 « Mythical Edelweiss»

*Legend has it that the Silver Star was gathered from the moon and spread wide over the earth. Dare to hope for immortality!*

During the summer of 2011, the Edelweiss, *Leontopodium alpinum* Cass., will be the emblem of the Flore-Alpe and serve as a common thread for the many activities that will highlight the qualities and popularity of this legendary flower.

#### Programme:

- 15 July: Symposium: «Edelweiss: Botany – Domestication & Culture – Phytochemistry – Myth»
  - 16 July: Excursion: Edelweiss: ecology
  - 31 July: Open House, The Edelweiss and its virtues
  - 21 August: Open House, The Edelweiss in celebration



### The Edelweiss

There are almost forty species of edelweiss in the world, of which two are found in Europe (*Leontopodium alpinum* Cass. and *Leontopodium nivale* (Ten.) Huet). The name "Edelweiss" is a Germanic corruption of a Romansch word meaning "star". White star and Star of the Alps are the most common names found in the Alps. *Wollblume*, the first name found published, was identified by Gessner in 1560 in the region of Engelberg. From the eighteenth century, the Edelweiss has become a symbol of tourism in the Alps. This plant of the daisy family (*Asteraceae*) grows wild in the Alps, but also in the Pyrenees and the Carpathians. It prefers dry soil and limestone pastures and rocky lawns. In Switzerland, it blooms from July to September at an altitude of 1300 to 3000 meters. It is totally or partially protected throughout Switzerland according to the canton. Edelweiss is medicinally and cosmetically interesting and it is cultivated in Valais by the agricultural cooperative Valplantes. The discovery of Edelweiss while hiking in the mountains is always a source of unforgettable emotion.

## Exhibit 2011: Gillian White / Sculptures - Installations

**From June 25 to September 25, 2011**

**Every day from 10h to 18h, Fridays in July and August from 10h to 20h**

For the eighth consecutive year, the Garden Flore-Alpe is the setting of an exhibition of outdoor sculpture. The works of Gillian White, artist argovienne, inhabits the space this year. Her work can be described as exceptionally severe in the symmetry of the lines, tight rhythms and static gravity but which give rise to a poetic lightness and harmony with repetitive cadences expressing forms in motion. Her smaller sculptures, mobile and playful, invite visitors to play.



*Gillian White, Danseurs, 2002*

*Gillian White, Windjammer  
(Complainte du vent), 2000*

### Hybrids of shapes

Gillian White's sculptures come to life and evolve in the alpine botanical garden Flore-Alpe in symbiosis with plants, symbolizing the celebration of life and nature, constantly changing. Characters born from the imagination of the artist, from inert matter they become hybrid beings sharing an exchange. In the privacy of the workshop and following the act of creation, the metal is transformed into a family, a dancing couple, a fight.

Through an active dialogue with the flowers, rocks and pools of water in the Garden, a striking contrast between art and nature, the sculptures bind to each other in this mythic space. Presence or mystery, each work in its way, the celebration and the image. All the sculptures are made of corten steel, a steel surface that has a forced corrosion giving it a patina as well as making it weather resistant.

#### **Botanical Garden**

- In the pools: Spiders, corten steel, 2005
- On the slopes of the garden: Family, 4 sculptures (symbol of generations,) corten steel, 2010
- Wrangle, corten steel, 2002
- The space, corten steel, 2009
- Tanzende (Dancers), corten steel, 2007

#### **Beside the lake**

- Dancers, corten steel, 2002

#### **Foundation Pierre Gianadda in Martigny, in parallel and collaboration**

- Dancers, corten steel, 2000

#### **Traffic circle of the autoroute Martigny-Fully**

- Windjammer, corten steel, 2000

## Accommodation

The chalet is open to students taking courses in botany, as well as hikers and families looking for a nice quiet place to rest and recharge.

In a rustic style, the chalet can accommodate up to 20 people comfortably throughout the year. Reservations are recommended.



### Price of rental:

- Rooms: CHF 25. -/person/night using your own sleeping bag
- Dormitories: CHF 23. -/ person/night using your own sleeping bag
- Children: free from 0 to 6 yrs, CHF 13. - from 6 to 16 yrs
- A Nordic duvet can be rented for a forfeit of CHF 20. -
- Self service
- Guests have free access to the garden



## Practical information

### To reach us

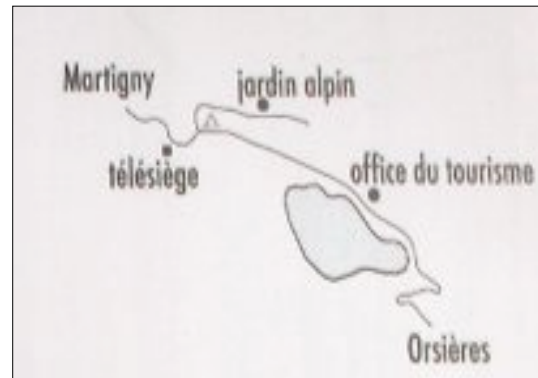
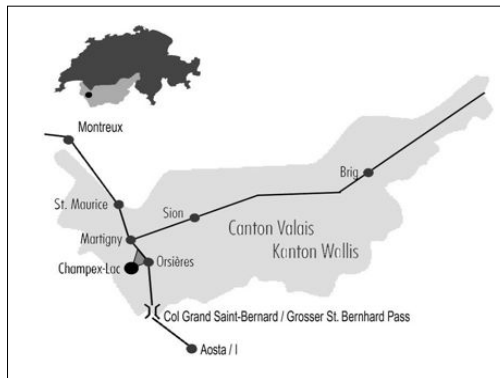
The alpine garden Flore-Alpe is situated 20 kilometres from Martigny.

### By road

Quit the auto route at Martigny, direction Grand-Saint-Bernard, exit at Orsières, park at TéléChampex, you are about 5 minutes on foot to the Garden.

### Public transport

The train Martigny-Orsières runs every two hours then ascend by postal car to Champex-Lac.



## Schedules and tariffs

Every day from May to October from 10h to 18h, Fridays July and August from 10h to 20h

### Entrée

- Adult: CHF 5. -
- Child from 6 to 16 years: CHF 2. -
- Family: CHF 10. -
- Group: (from 12 pers.) CHF 4. -, 13<sup>th</sup> free
- School classes from Valais: free
- Groups of children (from 12 children) and school classes from outside the canton: CHF 20. -

### Guided tours

- Adult: CHF 8. -
- Children from 6 to 16 years: CHF 3. -
- Family: CHF 16. -
- Groups: (from 12 pers.) CHF 7. -, 13<sup>th</sup> free
- School classes from Valais: free
- Groups of children (from 12 children) and school classes from outside the canton: CHF 40. -

## Tips for visitors

The Garden is not completely accessible by wheel chair and there is no WC for the handicapped.

Access is forbidden to dogs. There is an authorised picnic area.

## Contacts

For all complimentary information, please address:

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## Illustrations

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