

ORCHIDS, FLORA AND ALPINE SCENERY IN SWITZERLAND

OCA Tour June 12-27, 2022

From the Airport-Zurich to Lenzburg - Hotel Mercure Krone: As planned, everyone (except one participant) arrived at Zürich Airport on schedule (noon on Sunday, June 12, 2022) and were met by Judith, our tour guide and the Bus with Beat, our driver. Tom Givnish had an unfortunate detour via Warszawa-Zurich. A few miles from the airport, on the way to the Hotel in Lenzburg, we took a little detour as an orchid friend guided us to a spot along the road with rare orchids.



Himantoglossum hircinum



Ophrys apifera



Anacamptis pyramidalis



Exit to Glattfelden where we encountered *Himantoglossum hircinum*, *Ophrys apifera* and a nice spot with *Anacamptis pyramidalis* - **It was a great start of the Tour!**

Monday, June 13, 2022 Obererlinsbach AG (1,400-1,500 ft)

A walk on the orchid nature trail of the Aargau Native Orchids Group (AGEO), led by the President of the AGEO Beat Wartmann. This is a nature trail with protected plants, including a considerable number of orchid species. There are narrow paths along a rather steep hillside. We encountered *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Ophrys apifera*, *Cephalantera rubra* and a number of *Epipactis* in bud.



Gymnadenia conopsea



Spiro



Cephalantera rubra



Epipactis in bud.

After the walk on the AGEO site, Beat suggested to visit another site in Asp, a 5 mile (8km) ride from Obererlinsbach.

What a surprise to find so many Genera and species on this rather steep hillside along the forest, for example *Limodorum abortivum*, *Orchis anthropophora*, *Platanthera bifolia*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Lilium martagon*, *Digitalis lutea*, *Epipactis atrorubens* and a few other species not in flower.

It was a long walk and we were exhausted after the two walks.



Ringstrasse
Circular Road



Platanthera chlorantha



Cephalantera rubra



Neotinea ustulata

Tuesday, June 14, 2022 Tannbüel (2526 ft)

Tannbüel is a wellknown nature reserve near Barga, on the border of Switzerland and Germany. The great “flagship plant species” in Tannbüel is undoubtedly the “Frauensüeli” or lady’s slipper, which unfortunately, with the warm weather in early May, was past flowering. However there were other orchids in bloom.

Later a visit to the Munot, a circular fortress and the town’s landmark, built in the 16th century. A drive to the Castle of Laufen to view the Rhinefall, the largest waterfall in Europe and later, a drive along the Rhine River to visit historic Stein am Rhein, famous for its finely painted facades, half-timbered houses, and the lovely countryside surrounding it. We enjoyed our dinner on the Bank of the Rhine River.



Dactylorhiza fuchsii



Platanthera bifolia



Gentiana lutea



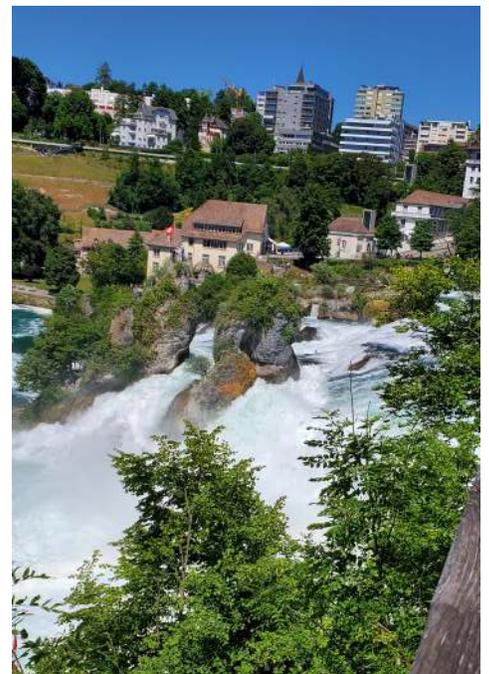
Cephalanthera damasonium



Tannbüel



View from Mounot to the Rhine River



Rheinfall

Wednesday, June 15, 2022 A visit to Interlaken and Bern.



From Interlaken to the top of the mountain on the Harderbahn funicular to view the mountain range Eiger, Monch and Jungfrau. The funicular navigates 2,500 fascinating feet in just 10 minutes at an incredible average incline of 64 %.



Not many cities have managed to retain their historic features quite as successfully as Bern, the capital of Switzerland. The old town of Bern is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and thanks to its 4 miles of arcades boasts one of the longest weather-sheltered shopping promenades in Europe. There are more than 100 public fountains that are all notable for each intricate decoration. The water on these fountains is safe for drinking and is usually situated in the capital's busy streets where people can quench their thirst for free. Above: The City of Bern with the Aare River

Zytglogge: Despite the many redecorations and renovations it has undergone in its 800 years of existence, the Zytglogge is one of Bern's most recognizable symbols and the oldest monument of the city, and with its 15th-century astronomical clock, a major tourist attraction. It is a heritage site of national significance, and part of the Old City of Bern, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage site.



Thursday, June 16, 2022 Transfer from Hotel Mecure Krone, Lenzburg to Sachseln - Hotel Paxmontana (2,400 ft)

On the way to the Paxmontana Hotel a short stop in Alpnach to view orchids, have lunch and cafe. Johann takes us through a small patch with *Ophrys*, *Gymnadenia conopsea* and *Epipactis palustris*



Ophrys apifera



Ophrys holoserica



O. apifera X O. holoserica

Photos: Johann Blättler



Gymnadenia conopsea



Epipactis palustris



The goats were at the Tannalp

Friday, June 17, 2022 Alpine Flora on the Pilatus

To the Pilatus Railway in Alpnachstad. Commissioned in 1889, is the world's steepest cogwheel railway, with a gradient of up to 48 percent. The ascent takes about 30 minutes, scaling it way meter by meter from Alpnachstad to Pilatus Kulm, past alpine meadows, orchids and striking rock formations.



Saturday, June 18, 2022 The Lady's slipper trail in Bürglen UR

An hour Bus ride from Paxmontana along Vierwaldstattersee to Brügg-Biel and then a 15 minute ride on a cable car up to mountain. The "Gangbachweg", also called "Orchidway", is a popular circular trail of about two hours, on which we encountered many orchid species as well as the yellow lady's slippers, Orchis and gentian. Unfortunately most lady's slippers were past blooming but there were a few in bloom at higher ground, which some of us managed to climb.



Sunday, June 19, 2022 Stöckalp – Melchsee-Frutt (6,500 ft)

The bus took us to the Stöckalp, then by cable car to the Melchsee-Frutt mountain station at 6,500 ft. From there, an easy hiking trail where we encountered a variety of alpine flowers and some orchids. Half way some of us took the Melchsee-Frutt train to the Tannalp Inn for lunch. The though folks walked the decent from Melchsee to Stöckalp where they encountered some rare orchids and alpine flowers.



Pseudorchis albida, *Gentiana acaulis*, *Ophrys insectifera*, *Lilium bulbiferum*, *Lilium martagon*, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, *Aquilegia alpina*

The Alpine Marmot Family - mother and 4 young (we didn't see)

Monday, June 20, 2022 Aare Gorge - Meiringen

Our bus took us (except Spiro and Judith) to the East entrance of the Aare Gorge, a 1400 m long and 200 m deep natural wonder. Walking over footbridges and through tunnels was an impressive sight. The Haslital is one of the large transverse valleys of the Alpine massif. It stretches from the Grimsel Pass to Lake Brienz. The flat bottom of the lower valley is separated from the upper valley by an imposing rock bar called "Kirchet". The Bus meet us at the west entrance of the Gorge and off they went for PIZZA lunch in the town of Meiringen.



Tuesday, June 21, 2022 Paxmontana to Schatzalp in Davos

By bus on a lovely journey over the Oberalppass to Davos by the most scenic route via Andermatt –with a stop at the Devils Bridge - the legend goes:

The narrow rock bar above Göschenen has always blocked the access to the Gotthard and thus the passage to the south. Therefore, it proved to be extremely difficult to build a bridge there. The legend tells of the futile efforts to build a mule track through the narrow Schöllenen gorge and to erect a bridge over the young Reuss river, surrounded by vertical rock walls. In his despair, the Landammann cried out, "Let the devil build a bridge there!" Thereupon the devil appeared and said: "I will build you a bridge. But the first one to cross it shall be mine."

The people of Uri agreed to the deal. After three days, a bridge did indeed arch over the Reuss. On the other side sat the devil waiting for his reward. Instead of a man, however, the people of Uri sent a billy goat across. "You may keep him," they shouted, "Here you have the first soul to cross the bridge!"

Full of anger, the devil tore the goat apart and fetched a huge stone with which he wanted to destroy the bridge again. Then an old mother came along the way, recognized him and carved a cross into the stone. When the devil saw this, he missed his target and the stone landed in the valley, not far from Göschenen. There it lies since then - the devil's stone.

The Devil's Bridge, built of wood in the 13th century was replaced by a stone bridge around 1585 and provides access to the Schöllenen Gorge and allows passage from north to south and vice versa over the Gotthard Pass. The stone bridge has since been replaced and extended several times. The most recent bridge dates back to 1956.



Devils Bridge



Stop at the Oberalppass

A bit of botanizing ,
lunch and Cafe

The mountain sides
were covered with Rho-
dodendron, and
we encountered *Gentiana punctata*, *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and *Pseudorchis albida*.

Also many *Gentiana purpurea* but not in bloom

Wednesday, June 22, 2022 Davos and Schatzalp

Due to some activities at the Schatzalp we spent the first night at the Kongress Hotel and then transferred to the Schatzalp the next morning. It rained so the original schedule was not visible but Fabian gave us a short introduction of the gardens then we ventured out on our own. After dinner Fabian gave us a slide presentation on alpine flora



Thursday, June 23, 2022 Davos and Rinerhorn (8,300 ft)

Due to repairs on the Lift to the Gotschnaalp Fabian took us to the Rinerhorn outside of Davos. The cable car took us to 8,300 ft. for a comfortable walk on a gravel road. Since the Rinerhorn is covered on all sides with forest and grass areas, an ascent/decent presents no difficulties. The view from the Rinerhorn down into the Davos valley is “magnificent”.

The good hikers decented to the Sertigtal while the rest of us returned to the cable car to return to Davos. Hillsides covered with Rhododendrons, diverse alpine flora and we encountered some orchids.

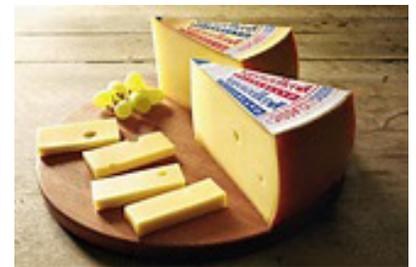


There are many species of blue Gentiana and Fabian is explaining us how to recognize this species

Friday, June 24, 2022 From Davos to Arbon via (St. Gallen) and Appenzell

An early departure from Davos to get Eric and Christina on the train to Bern to retrieve Eric's Purse at the US Consulate. Then a mishap on my side that made our Bus driver had to the ER in St. Gallen. Fortunately it settled itself and on to Appenzell for Lunch and a short sightseeing trip before heading to Arbon.

Appenzell has very traditional decorated homes with flowers, is well known for cheeses, and Cheesecake, not the sweet kind, but onion and cheese known as Käsekuchen or Käsewähe, more like Quiche.



Saturday, June 25, 2022 Arbon to Insel Mainau

A short train ride to Romanshorn to board a boat for a journey to Insel Mainau, an island in Lake Constance, that is part of Germany. It is maintained as a garden island and houses a large orchid collection. Spring starts with about a million tulips and other spring flowers, hundreds of rhododendrons and fragrant roses sweeten the summer. While roses were past their peak the Hydrangeas were in full bloom. It houses the second largest butterfly house in Germany, but time was spent at the Orchid Houses. Some giant sequoias (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*) and coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens*), in the park came to Europe from California in the 19th century. Return to Romanshorn by boat and it was PIZZA night at the Seerestaurant.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY Valerie!



Sunday, June 26, 2022 Arbon to Magdenau

A short bus ride to the Naturreserve Jomertobel/Grünholz near Magdenau and a walk through the woods and pasture where we encountered mostly *Gymnadenia conopsea* and *Epipactis palustris*. The slipper orchids were past bloom. A pasture with lots of flowers where bees and butterflies feed on nectar.



Orchid species

01. *Aceras - Orchis - anthropophorum*
02. *Anacamptis pyramidalis*
03. *Cephalanthera damasonium*
04. *Cephalanthera longifolia*
05. *Cephalanthera rubra*
06. *Corallorhiza trifida*
07. *Cypripedium calceolus*
08. *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*
09. *Dactylorhiza majalis*
10. *Epipactis palustris*
11. *Epipactis muelleri*
12. *Epipactis atrorubens*
13. *Epipactis helleborine*
14. *Epipactis purpurata*
15. *Gymnadenia conopsea*
16. *Himantoglossum hircinum*
17. *Limodorum abortivum*
18. *Listera ovata*
19. *Neottia nidus-avis*
20. *Gymnadenia rhellicani*
21. *Platanthera bifolia*
22. *Platanthera chlorantha*
23. *Ophrys insectifera*
24. *Ophrys apifera*
25. *Ophrys holoserica*
26. *Ophrys apifera X Ophrys holoserica hybrid*
27. *Orchis militaris*
28. *Orchis - Neotinea ustulata*
29. *Pseudorchis albida*
30. *Coeloglossum viride*
31. *Malaxis monophyllum*
32. *Epipogium aphyllum*

Alpine Flora

Aquilegia alpina
Digitalis lutea
Gentiana lutea
Gentiana punctata
Gentiana purpurea
Gentiana alpina
Gentiana verna
Gentiana bavarica
Lilium bulbiferum
Lilium martagon
Veronica austriaca