

Alpine flowers charm visitors to high slopes : edelweiss grows upon beetling cliffs, crocus blooms under snow

Autor(en): **[s.n.]**

Objektyp: **Article**

Zeitschrift: **Helvetia : magazine of the Swiss Society of New Zealand**

Band (Jahr): **17 (1952)**

Heft [10]

PDF erstellt am: **28.05.2024**

Persistenter Link: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-942587>

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ALPINE FLOWERS CHARM VISITORS TO HIGH SLOPES

EDELWEISS GROWS UPON BEETLING CLIFFS, CROCUS BLOOMS UNDER SNOW

An attraction of a Swiss vacation that never fails to charm visitors is the millions of vari-coloured little flowers which carpet the valleys and mountain slopes from June to August.

The exquisite Alpine flowers have always cast a romantic spell over mountaineers. Many have endangered their lives to reach them, and some have fallen to their death.

These tiny, fragile flowers—whose seeds have been sown far and wide by the mountain winds—grow in the most unexpected places—in the midst of inhospitable rocky fastnesses, on the most sterile soil, next to snow and ice, in spots exposed throughout the day to the blazing sun. When the snows melt in the high valleys in spring, the crocuses are found flowering beneath them.

The famous edelweiss that grows on dangerous cliffs is only one of thousands of varieties to be found in the Alps. The rich, deep-blue of the gentians peeping out from under rocks is particularly beautiful. Contributing to the gay splashes of colour are the lichens and saxifrage, which live on almost nothing; the catch-fly, which blooms in wild crevasses; the houseleek, growing on the highest peaks amid sun and wind.

List is Endless

Then there is an endless list of others—the anemone, the primula, auricula, bluebell, daisy, primrose, soldanella, violet, bugle, aster, king's cup, arnica, wolf's bane, old man's orchid, columbine, Turk's-cap lily, poppy, lady's slipper, wood pink, assfoot, hairy daphne, nettle-leaved speedwell, dog's tooth, red mountain lily, blue lettuce, dwarf milfoil, rock orpine, Alpine columbine, larkspur, spring snowflake, liver-leaf hepatica, beaked lousewort, glacier crowfoot, bearded bellflower, bird's-eye primrose, black masterwort, Alpine toad-flax, cut-leaved groundsel, great grass-lily and one-flowered wintergreen.

There are many, many more, and it's fun, on an afternoon's walk through the valley to see how many you can identify.

THREE SWISS WHO BECAME FAMOUS U.S. CITIZENS

From the earliest days Swiss have emigrated to the United States and many have become well-known citizens of their new homeland.

Albert Gallatin, a native of Geneva, was Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury. He negotiated the treaty with England after the war of 1812, and succeeded in having all the fortresses along the American-Canadian border dismantled.

Louis Agassiz, the famous geologist, Harvard professor and founder of Agassiz Museum in Cambridge, Mass., was a native of Switzerland. And so was Gen. Johann August Sutter, founder of the colony of New Helvetia, where many of California's most famous gold mines were later discovered.

300th ANNIVERSARY OF THE LOWER ENGADIN

The people in the region of the Lower Engadin will celebrate this summer the 300th anniversary of the acquisition of its freedom from Austria. The official celebration took place at Bad Scuol-Tarasp-Vulpera on June 22nd, 1952. The morning was reserved for the reception of the guests and the official ceremonial act, whereas in the afternoon the main procession "The Lower Engadin 300 years ago and today" with 700 participants took place. The festival play "La Changun da la liberta" ("The Song of Freedom") by Men Rauch was presented on the typical Engadin village square, the "Bugl grond" in lower Schuls.

SWITZERLAND GIVES THE TOURIST VALUE FOR MONEY

With the outbreak of war in Korea, an upward trend in International prices set in. Switzerland, however, followed this upward movement only in a relatively modest degree. This is shown by the following facts: the Swiss cost-of-living index (August 1939: 100) average 159.1 in 1950 and 166.7 in 1951—a rise of only 7.6 points or 4.7 per cent. At present the cost-of-living index in Switzerland appears to be becoming stabilized at around 171. Prices in foreign countries, which two years ago gave Switzerland the reputation of being an expensive country for tourists, have to a large extent moved up to parity with the Swiss price level, and in some cases beyond. In order to support this statement with hard facts on matters concerning the tourist, the Swiss National Tourist Office has carried out a comparison of prices on a uniform basis in collaboration with nine of its agencies in European countries. In nine of the countries which play an important part in international tourism—France, Italy, Austria, Western Germany, Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, Sweden, and Spain—the prices a tourist of the middle income groups has to pay for transport by various means, for food and accommodation and also for certain extras and other expenses in big resorts, were ascertained and compared with the corresponding prices in Switzerland.

On the basis of the total of 10 tourist regions (nine abroad and in Switzerland), 10 different price positions were established, the first being the cheapest and the tenth the dearest.