

The seven hills of Zurich

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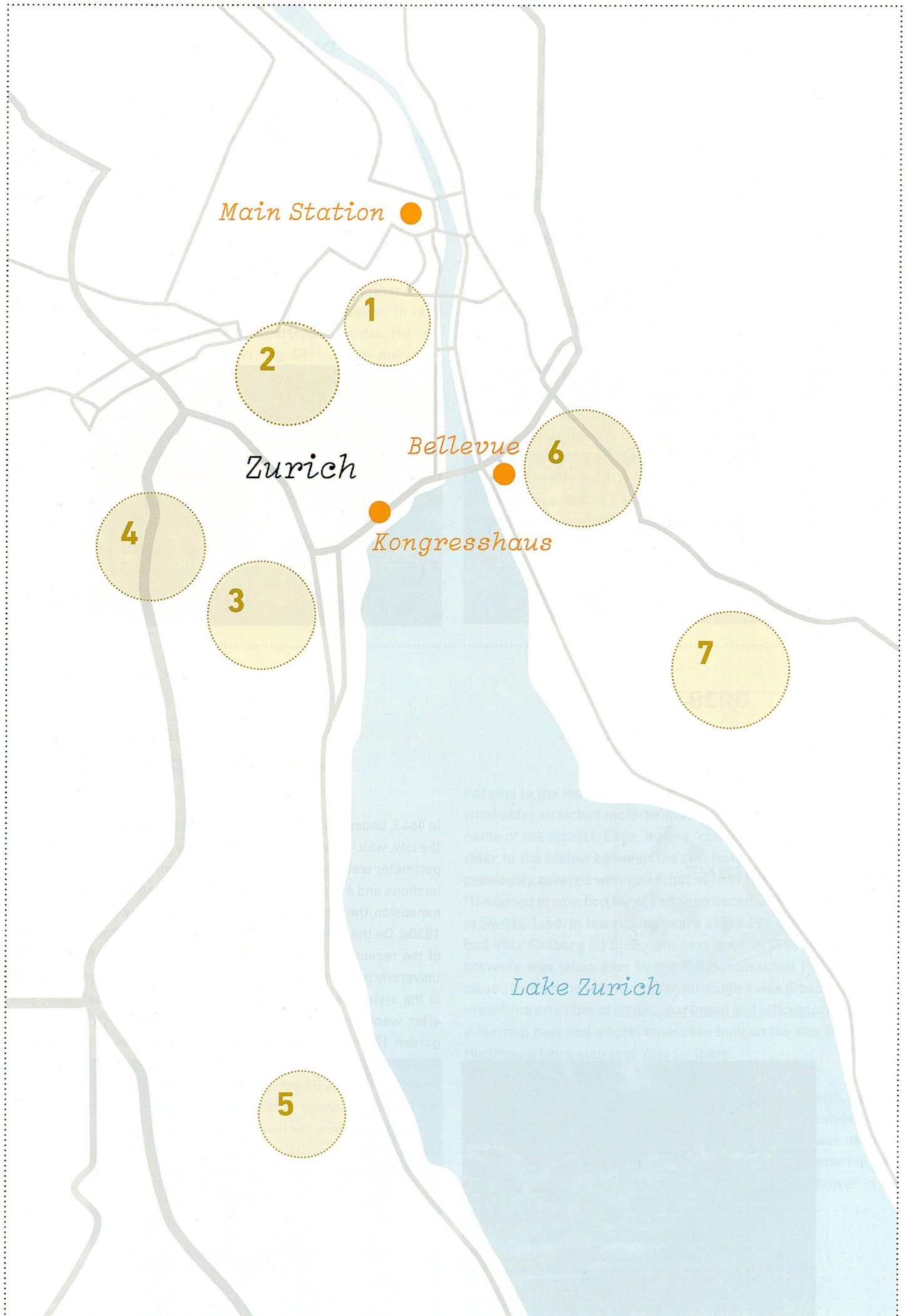
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THE SEVEN HILLS OF ZURICH

An invitation and suggestion to seven walks in Zurich, short and not so short. Zurich owes its existence to the Ice Age. 17 000 years ago, the receding Linth glacier stopped when it got to where Zurich now stands, and deposited at the edge of its tongue megatons of moraine scree. This moraine rampart dammed Lake Zurich. **Stefan Ineichen**

The settlement of the region began on the shores of the lake, and since at the end of the lake goods had to be reloaded from lake boats on to river boats, the Roman administration set up a customs post on the Limmat: it was called Turicum, from which present-day Zurich developed, even though the border between the provinces of Gaul and Rhaetia lay a long way off.

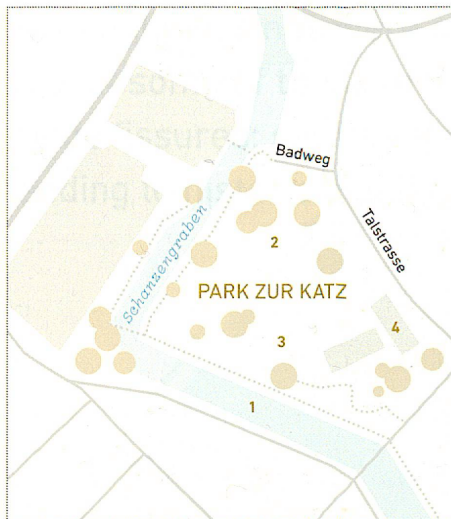
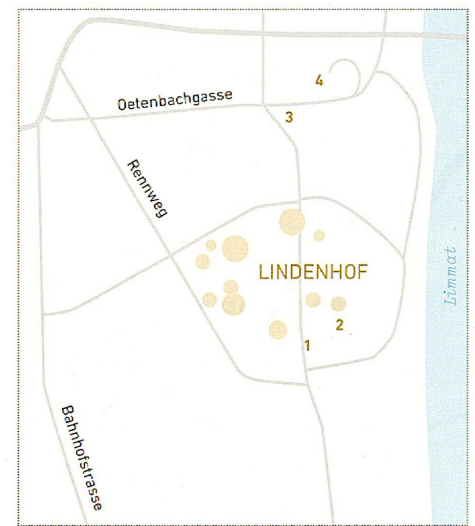
“Zurich owes the beauty of its location for the most part to its former glacier,” said the geologist Bernhard Beck as long ago as 1915. “It created the fertile hills along the lake, it shaped the lake itself and prevented it from draining, and the terminal moraines were a positive invitation to put a town there.” Reason enough to visit some of these moraine hills, cleft as they are by rivers, streams and man-made fissures: seven suggestions for walks, short and not so short, in Zurich, leading to historic buildings, city-planning highlights, and notable green spaces.



1 LINDENHOF

Grief for the Sweetest Little Boy

In early historical times, the Lindenhof was like an island in the delta of the Sihl, an Alpine river whose branches originally washed the moraine hill on both sides to flow into the lake and the Limmat. The inscription on a gravestone (1) found in the 18th century, dating from the time around 200 CE, provides evidence of the name Turicum for the Roman customs post, and gives some inkling of the grief of the parents for their "sweetest little boy" who had died at the age of eighteen months. In the decades before the withdrawal of the Roman occupation forces in about 400, there was a fortress with ten towers on the Lindenhof. In the Middle Ages, monumental palaces were built on its site, serving as residences for the kings when they sojourned in Zurich, and were later rebuilt as the castle of the imperial bailiffs. Once they could answer directly to the emperor, the people of Zurich razed the castle and in the 15th century laid out a square as an inner-city green space planted with lime trees. In 1850 the Zurich freemason's lodge moved into the building on the southern side of the square (2). 1877 saw the erection of a decorative group, consisting of erratic boulders, at the northern foot of the Lindenhof (3). In 1970/71, following the 1968 unrest, a youth centre was established in the shelter built into the hill during the Second World War. Today there is a multistorey car-park inside the hill (4).



2 KATZ

Theodor Froebel and Jack the Ripper

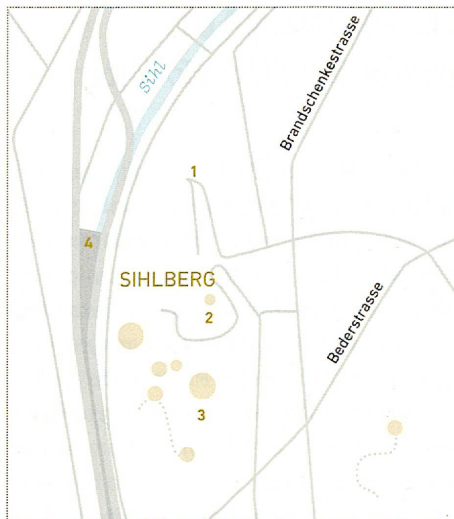
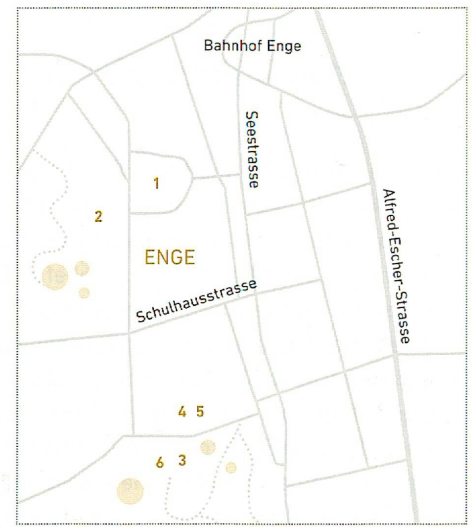
In 1643, under the shock of the Thirty Years' War, the authorities in the city, which was protected at the time only by a single medieval perimeter wall, resolved to construct a rampart with a number of bastions and a moat (1). In order to make room for uninhibited city expansion, the fortifications were almost entirely demolished in the 1830s. On the only bastion that was spared, the Botanical Garden of the recently founded university was laid out in 1837. The first university gardener was Theodor Froebel, who designed the park in the style of a landscaped garden. In 1838, Froebel, who, soon after, went into business on his own, laid out Zurich's first alpine garden (2) in the Park zur Katz. The octagonal greenhouse (3) dates from 1877. The park served in 1976 as the location for Jess Franco's "Jack the Ripper" with Klaus Kinski in the lead role. In 1977 the Botanical Garden moved out, and to day the institute building houses the university's Museum of Ethnography (4). The same year the underground complex of the city electricity utility was built in the hill. It provides power for the city centre.



3 ENGE

Tuff Grottoes and Landscaped Garden

In the district of Enge, incorporated into the city in 1893, a well-preserved longish section of the moraine rampart extends in a north-south direction. Standing majestically at the northern end of the elevation is Enge church, built in 1894 in the Neo-Renaissance style by Alfred Friedrich Bluntschli (1) on the site of the popular restaurant for excursionists, the "Bürgliterrasse". Very close by, surrounded by vineyards, is the Bürgli manor house (1834), home of the writer Gottfried Keller from 1875 to 1882 (2). Further to the south is Villa Wesendonck (3), built by Leonhard Zeugherr in 1857 in Zurich's largest and most beautiful landscaped garden, the Rietpark, laid out by Theodor Froebel. The German silk merchant Otto Wesendonck and his wife Mathilde provided Richard Wagner with a house in the grounds during his Zurich years. This house was demolished in 1888 to make way for the Villa Schönberg (4), whose architect, the aforementioned Bluntschli, also designed the tuff grottoes beneath the brick building (5); walled up for a time, they were exposed once more in 2003. Villa Wesendonck today houses the Rietberg Museum of Non-European Art, which in 2007 was enlarged by the addition of a new section with a glazed entrance pavilion, sensitively harmonized with its surroundings (6).



4 SIHLBERG

Not Beer but Google

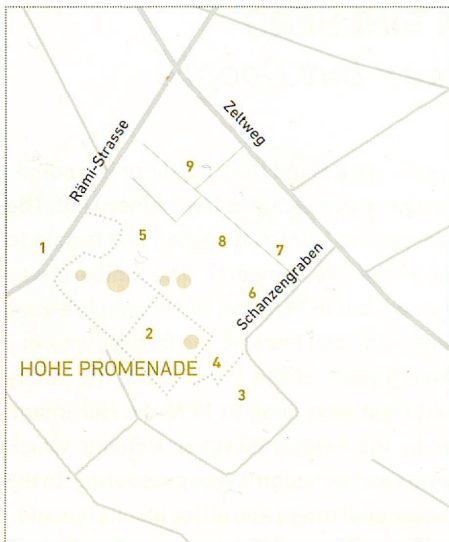
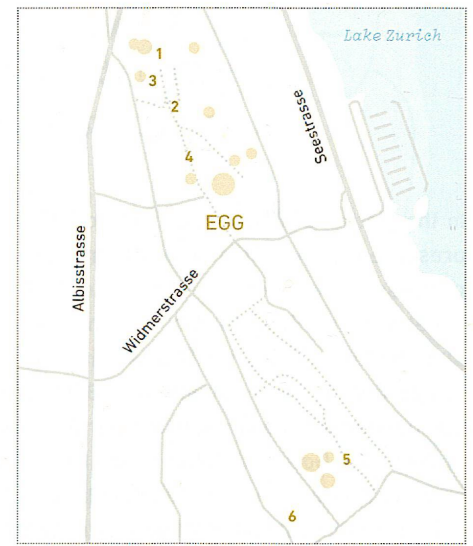
Parallel to the inner moraine arc around the lake there is a somewhat older stretch of moraine which includes the Sihlberg hill. The name of the district, Enge, means "confined space", and is said to refer to the hollow between the two ramparts. The Sihlberg was previously covered with vines, but in 1867 the Hurlimann brewery (1) started production here, and soon became the largest brewery in Switzerland. In the closing years of the 19th century, the family had Villa Sihlberg (2) built right next door. In 1996 the Hurlimann brewery was taken over by the Feldschlösschen Holding, which closed it down the following year, although it was prospering. In the meantime a number of shops, apartment and office blocks (google), a thermal bath and a hotel have been built on the site. In 2005 the Hurlimann heirs also sold Villa Sihlberg.

The Klopstockwiese (3), which adjoins the area to the south, was laid out in the 1850s as a simple green area on a country estate, which the city was able to purchase cheaply on condition it was used for the public good. The wooded western flank of the moraine hill falls away steeply towards the Sihl, which since 1974 has flowed in the shadow of the Sihl flyover (4).

5 EGG

Central Park for Wollishofen

The Wollishofen Reformed Church (1936) by Walter Henauer and Ernst Witschi (1) lies at the northern end of an elevation which continues to the city limits. The muschelkalk-clad reinforced concrete structure has, over the entrance, a relief by Otto Bänninger, who in 1942 also carved the figure of a woman (2) that stands at the end of the square in front of the church. This square was designed by the landscape architect Gustav Ammann and is bordered by terraced houses dating from the 1930s (3). Pastures, orchards and family gardens along the Egg Promenade (4) have been preserved as open spaces because even before the slopes of the moraine hill were built on, the plots were bought up one by one by the city. Under the aegis of the Social Democrat mayor and building committee chairman Emil Klöti, the declared aim of civic open-space policy in the first third of the 20th century was "to ensure that building land was permeated with open spaces for recreation and physical exercise, as well as for family gardens". Close to the border with Adliswil is the "Kleine Rigi" (5), a viewpoint with a bench and a lime tree. To the west of the Kleine Rigi is the Werkbund estate of Neubühl (6), which, when it was built in 1930, lay far away from the city amidst green fields. It attracted artists, intellectuals and émigrés, and was disrespectfully referred to by outsiders as the "Kistenpass" ("crate pass")



6 HOHE PROMENADE

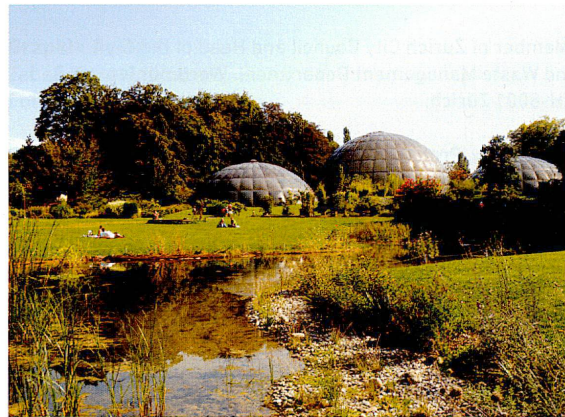
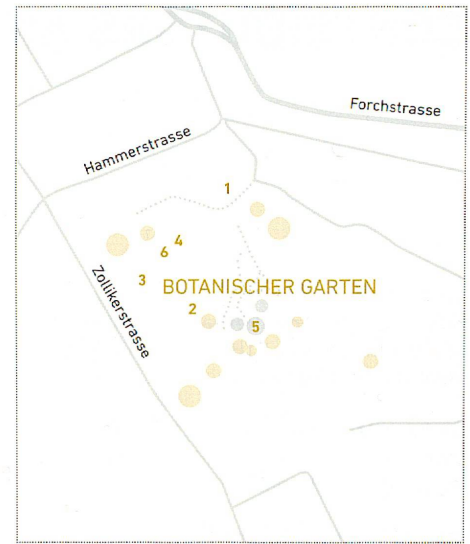
Goethe Turns up his Collar

Between Winkelwiese and Hohe Promenade the moraine rampart on the right bank of the Limmat and Lake Zurich is intersected by Rämistrasse (1), which was created after the ramparts were demolished. It was in 1784, when the city was still surrounded by Baroque fortifications, that the "Hohe Promenade" (2) was laid out, a 200-metre-long avenue with pergolas and a magnificent view. When Goethe strolled along the Hohe Promenade on his third visit to Zurich in the autumn of 1797, he saw coming towards him his former friend Johann Caspar Lavater, with whom he had quarrelled. Goethe turned up his coat collar, pretended to be lost in admiration of the Alpine panorama, and was not recognized. When the fortifications were demolished, a public and a private cemetery (3) were opened in the mid-19th century on the site of the bastion. The private cemetery is the last resting place of Hans Georg Nägeli, who formed the first Swiss male-voice choir in 1810, and after his death was memorialized with a bust (4) whose nose is damaged. On the site of the public cemetery was built in 1913 the Höhere Töcherschule (5), a girls' high school, which in 1976 became a co-educational cantonal school. There are three churches along the Promenadengasse: the Neo-Romanesque Eglise réformée française (6), the Methodist Tabor Chapel (7), and the Neo-Gothic St Andrew's Church (8), which occupies the former cemetery chapel. The house at Promenadengasse 18 (9) was occupied in 1934 by Lale Andersen, who became world-famous during the Second World war with her song "Lili Marleen".

7 BOTANISCHER GARTEN

9000 Species of Plants

To the north of the Botanical Garden, the Wildbach (1) has carved a passage through the moraine rampart on the right bank of the lake. The Wildbach, which flows into the lake as the Hornbach near Zürichhorn, has banked up the densely built-up plain of the Seefeld. The moraine tract, on which the Botanical Garden of the University of Zurich has been located since 1977, is adjacent to Burghölzli hill, which consists of molasse. The Botanical Garden is three times the size of its predecessor in the city centre, and is subdivided into various sections, such as carnivorous plants, food plants and dye sources, or are assigned to particular habitats, such as the native forest (2), the Mediterranean garden (3) and the Alpinum (4), which was renovated in 2010. Conspicuous are the three hemispherical perspex greenhouses (5), which are currently being thoroughly restored and are hence closed to the public until 2012, as well as the cubic Institute Building (6). The Botanical Garden was laid out by the landscape architects Fred Eicher and Ernst Meili in the grounds of Villa Schönau, originally laid out by Theodor Froebel. Until its demolition, the villa, which was built for the silk manufacturer and merchant Gottlieb Julius Martin in 1866, stood on the terrace on which the Institute Building now stands.



Directions

How to find the locations

Route 1

From Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse: tram # 6 (direction Bahnhof Enge), # 7 (direction Wollishofen), # 11 (direction Rehalp), # 13 (direction Albisgütli); station "Rennweg"; or from Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse, tram # 4 (direction Bahnhof Tiefenbrunnen), station "Rathaus".

From Zurich, Bürkliplatz (near Kongresshaus): tram # 11 (direction Auzelg), station "Rennweg".

Route 2

From Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse: tram # 11 (direction Rehalp) to Paradeplatz (station), transfer to the line # 8 (direction Hardplatz); station "Bahnhof Selnau". Alternative: from Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse: tram # 3 (direction Albisrieden) to Stauffacher (station), transfer to the line # 8 (direction Hardplatz); station "Bahnhof Selnau".

From Zurich, Bürkliplatz (near Kongresshaus): tram # 8 (direction Hardplatz), station "Bahnhof Selnau".

Route 3 / 4

From Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse: tram # 13 (direction Albisgütli), station "Waffenplatzstrasse".

From Zurich, Bürkliplatz (near Kongresshaus): tram # 5 (direction Laubegg), station "Waffenplatzstrasse".

Route 5

From Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse: tram # 7 (direction Wollishofen), station "Morgental".

From Zurich, Bürkliplatz (near Kongresshaus): tram # 5 (direction Laubegg) to "Bahnhof Enge" (station), transfer to the line # 7 (direction Wollishofen), station "Morgental".

Route 6

From Zurich, main station: S5 (direction Pfäffikon/SZ), S9 (direction Uster), S6 (direction Uetikon am See) – train, not tram! – station "Bahnhof Stadelhofen".

From Zurich, Bürkliplatz (near Kongresshaus): tram # 2 (direction Bahnhof Tiefenbrunnen), tram # 11 (direction Zurich, Rehalp), station "Bahnhof Stadelhofen".

Route 7

From Zurich, main station/Bahnhofstrasse: tram # 11 (direction Rehalp) to station "Hegibachplatz".

From Zurich, Bürkliplatz (near Kongresshaus): tram # 11 (direction Rehalp) to station "Hegibachplatz".