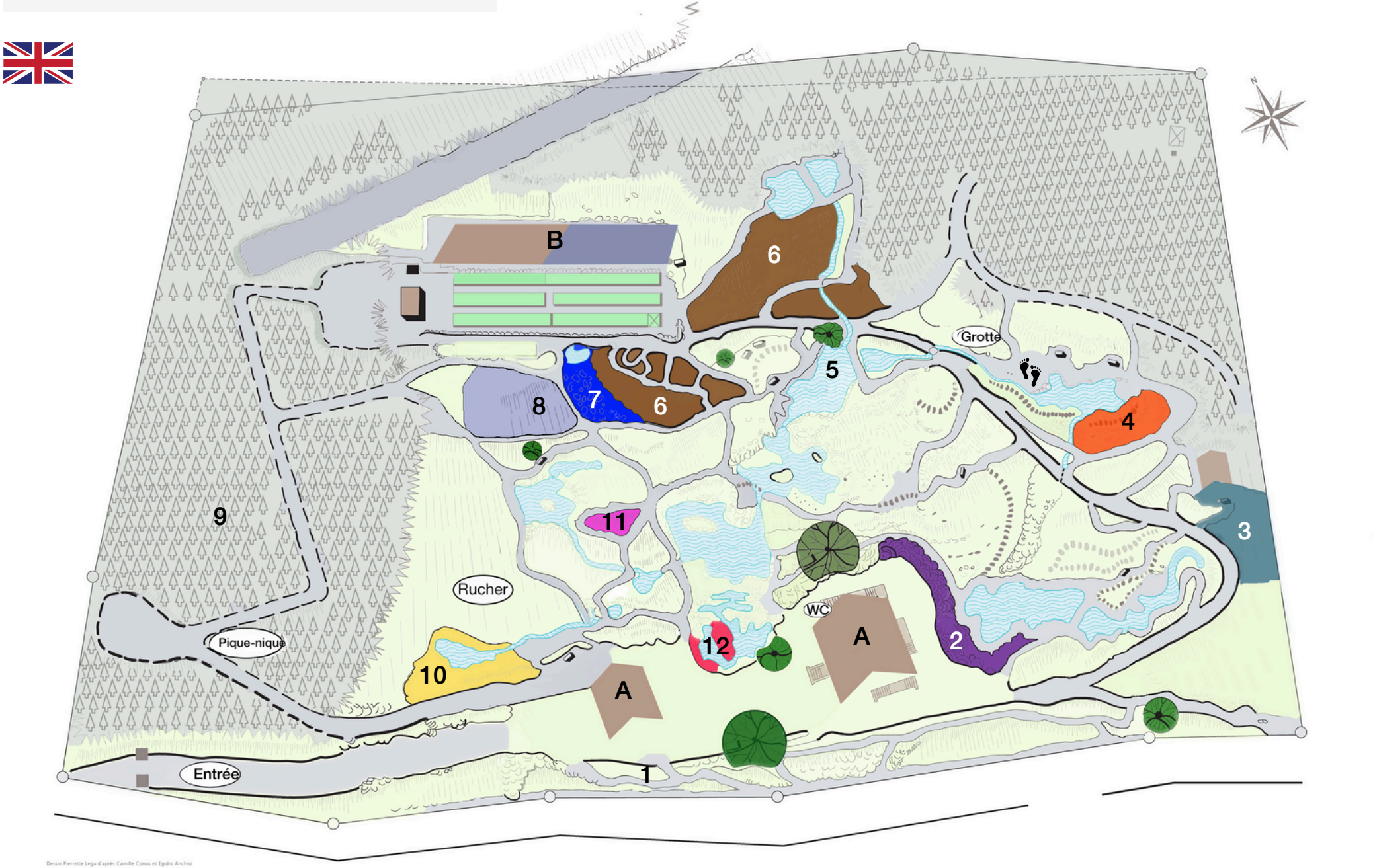
Altitude : 4500 ft.
Number of plants : Approximately 4000
Surface : 2.4 acres
Date of creation : 1927
Owned by : The Foundation Jean-Marcel Aubert
Managed by : The Canton of Valais and the Municipality of Orsières

A Reception and shop
B Chalet of Mr. Aubert (accommodation)
C Gardeners' working place (Private)
Barefoot path

FLORE-ALPE
Champex – Lac
Jardin botanique alpin
Alpine Botanical Garden



Dessin Pierrette Lega d'après Camille Conus et Egidio Anchisi

Our story

The alpine garden „Flore-Alpe" features a large variety of indigenous plants as well as species from mountain regions throughout Europe and other continents, making it one of the richest alpine gardens in the Alpes. The exposure to the South makes it particularly favourable to plants from the southern Alpes. Streams and ponds, trees ans bushes, rockeries and moraines of granite and calcium, help create the contrast necessary for botanical diversity. The number of plants is estimated at around 4000 (species, subspecies, varieties).

Flore-Alpe was created on the private initiative of the industrialist and engineer Jean-Marcel Aubert (1875-1968), who acquired a modest 600m² (6458 ft²) plot of land in 1925. In 1967 he set up the Foundation Jean-Marcel Aubert with the help of the City of Geneva and the Canton of Neuchâtel. The garden grew over the years to cover more than a hectare in 1953, when it was entrusted to the passionate head gardener Agidio Anchisi, who shaped and enriched it until 1997.

Since 2000, the garden has been maintained and developed by Jean-Luc Poligné, another great enthusiast and connoisseur of flora.

In 1991, with the help of the canton of Valais and the municipality of Orsières, the Foundation set up the Alpine Center of Phytogeography (CAP). The centre has been active for over 30 years in the long-term study of the relationship between climate and mountain ecosystems.

In 2009, the Aubert Foundation was taken over by the Canton of Valais, under the aegis of the Cantonal Museums, and by the Commune of Orsières.

Enjoy the visit!

A few activity ideas

The sensory path

Dive into the heart of the botanical garden and awaken your senses through our sensory path.

Follow the rock jasmine (logo on the right) through this immersive experience. She will show you what to smell, touch, look at and where you can take your shoes off to enjoy the barefoot path that ends up in the pond!

The scientific tour

Discover the secrets of the mountain vegetation, its strategies for adapting to climate change and its future. Finish your visit by immersing yourself in a scientific experiment on a human scale (ITEX chamber).

The garden by environments and collections

1. Alpine swards
This grouping brings together the dominant species of the main types of alpine swards. For example, you'll find blue moor-grass and evergreen sedge on calcareous soils, and crooked sedge on acidic soils.

2. Rhododendron collection
The dark green foliage of the rhododendrons is complemented in May by beautifully coloured flowers in white or pink, some speckled with purple. The garden features a large number of species, their hybrids and white forms taken from the wild.

3. Medicinal plants
People have always used plants in various forms (decoctions, infusions, homeopathic doses, etc.) to treat their ailments. Examples include thyme, bilberry and wild garlic.

4. The steppe
This dry grassland, found in Switzerland's main intra-Alpine valleys, is particularly common in the Valais. It is home to specialised species for which our flora is famous, such as the mugwort, stipes and Swiss ephedra.

5. Ponds and streams
The water that runs through the garden's ponds and streams comes from the municipal supply. An irrigation system brings life and freshness to the garden and allows us to have plants that thrive in wetland sites.

6. Tufa stone
Tufa is a porous rock formed over time by an accumulation of calcium on mosses and leaves. Among the wide variety of plants we find in this area of the garden are gentians, edelweiss from the Alps and Tibet, and the Thomas herb (Aethionema thomasianum).

7. Moraine
In nature, moraine can be considered as thinner and colder scree due to its proximity to glacial ice. Among the plants you can find here are the Alpine Rock-Jasmine (androsace alpina), dwarf scorpion grass and the glacier crowfoot.

8. Limestone screes
These are stony accumulations formed on mountainsides or at the foot of cliffs. The plants that thrive here, which include pygmy hawksbeard, paradoxical butterbur and distich oatgrass, are resistant to all sorts of traumas, including being covered by the movement of mountain rocks.

9. Forest
A forest of spruces and larches surrounds the garden, but numerous conifers from other regions can also be found here.

10. Protected flora
Humankind's destructive lifestyle has led to the disappearance of certain plants. Measures have therefore been taken to safeguard certain species from excessive harvesting or to protect rare species. The garden is a place for conserving biodiversity.

In the garden, plants marked "Protégé" are protected at national or cantonal level.

11. Sempervivum and their hybrids
Commonly known as hens and chicks, Sempervivums are very drought-resistant plants. Their thick leaves, well adapted to difficult conditions, form a rosette that rises in the centre when the plant is in bloom. The collection is particularly rich and highlights species indigenous to the Valais.

12. Carnivorous plants
These plants are well known for their ability to digest small insects as a source of nitrogen. Round-leaved sundew, pitcher plant and diverse carnivorous plants grow in the garden.