

# Switzerland

## *Wildflowers of the Bernese Oberland*

A Greentours Trip Report

15<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2025

Led by Julia Corden & Stefano Doglio

### **Day 1 Sunday 15th June To Wengen**

We took a flight from Gatwick to Zürich Airport where we were able to catch the train with our luggage in tow at 1345 to Bern where we transferred to another train which took us to Interlaken Ost arriving at 1559. The next small gauge train took us from Interlaken Ost at 1604 arriving into



Lauterbrunnen at 1626. Then we caught the Cogwheel train up to Wengen arriving at 1641. The weather was good with sunshine and views to the mountains. We met the owner of the hotel at the station who took our luggage in the little buggy back to the Hotel. We walked along the main street and as we went, I pointed out the bakers where i would get our filled rolls everyday, the co-op supermarket for fresh veg and fruit, past the ski/walking clothes shops, ATM and down past a few other hotels to get to our hotel, which is about eight minutes walk from the station. Wengen is largely car free as no public road leading to the village. We arrived and had a welcome drink and we were



allocated our rooms, somewhere south facing looking towards Lauterbrunnen Valley and others were facing towards the woods and up to the Mannlichen Ridge.

We met at 6:30 to discuss the next days plans and to answer any questions. Dinner was at 7 pm . Every other night we would have soup or a salad bar for our starter followed by a meat or fish course, desert and coffee. The hotel caters well for vegetarians and vegan plus other dietary requirements.

## Day 2 Monday 16th June Kleine Schidegg & Wengenalp

Today we met at the bakers so everyone could choose which field roles they would take for the day and we bought some cakes and I already had tomatoes, fresh fruit and other snacks. We left about 0930 giving clients time to acclimatise to the altitude and the travel from the day before.

We caught the train up to Kleine Schidegg, journey up is fantastic looking to the south towards the Jungfrau, Monch and the side of the Eiger. Plus travelling through beautiful meadows of flowers



passing Alpenrose in flower. Meadows we would then look at over the coming few days. Once arriving at the station, we then took a side path towards the Mannlichen trail. But we didn't go far because there are so many flowers to see.

Frog Orchids and Small White Orchids, *Gentiana acaulis* and *Gentiana verna* were all growing by the side of the path. It took us time to identify and see all the plants as there were so many new ones for everybody. We made our way up to the Cafe where we had a

coffee/toilet stop with amazing views towards Grindlewald. By the cafe there is a large rock which is always full of beautiful Alpines. *Primula hirsuta*, *Lloydia serotina*, *Androsace helvetica*.



We continue to look in the meadows and then stopped for our picnic lunch amongst the flowers. We then walked back down to the station and continued our walk back towards Wengenalp Station. Passing through the meadows which we had travelled through in the train. Splashes of colour from *Trollius europea*, *Ranunculus aconitifolius*, and many *Orchis* growing in the boggy



marshes. Once we arrived at the station some of the clients took the train back to Wengen and others walked all the way back to Wengen another 1.5 hours walk.

There was a lot of cloud around all day plus some rain showers and a high height of 2,061m it was quite cool and gloves were very welcome. Meeting at 6:30 to go over the days Plants and to discuss the next days itinerary. Dinner at 7 pm.

### Day 3 Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> June Mannlichen

Today we left the hotel in clear blue sky and the weather was promising for good views. We meet at the Bakers to buy everyone their rolls and a cake.

We then walked a few minutes to the cablecar which took us up to the Mannlichen in about 10 minutes where the views were stunning. looking down to Interlaken and onto Lake Thun, clockwise round to the Schilthorn, Murren, Jungfrau, Eiger, Grindlewald and Schengen Platte a lot of these



areas we were going to travel to over the next few days. We started walking up to the viewpoint where we found fields full of *Gentiana acaulis*, and areas where snow patches had just melted giving us *Crocus albiflorus*, *Soldanella alpina*, *Primula hirsuta*, *Primula farinosa*. We then walked back down to the Cable car station where there was a good place



for Coffee/toilet stop and always amazing views if clear. We then started the walk along the Mannlichen path towards Kleine Schidegg stopping a lot looking at more plants many *Anemone narcissiflora*, the yellow *Pulsatilla alpina apiifolia* and the pour white *Pulsatilla alpina* plus some hybrids between the two. Another snow patch just melted and we found beautiful *Pulsatilla vernalis* with its beautiful pink back to the petals. The path was quite busy with tourist as a very popular walk. We continue along the pass looking at more Plants binding repeats of things which is good so it gave clients time to name their own plants and get used to them. We stopped for lunch with a breathtaking view towards the north face of the Eiger. About 3/4 of the way along this path there is a huge rock on the right where you can find large clumps of *Androsace helvatica* only the adventurous can get to them as they are quite high up and awkward to get to.



We arrived back at Kleine Schidegg station where clients were given the option to either go straight back to Wengen by train or to carry on up by train to Eigergletscher at 2,320m. A short walk from the station takes you down onto glacier scree where you can find *Thlaspi rotundifolia*, *Viola cenisia*, *Cerastium uniflorum* and *Linaria alpina* it's always lovely to be in this area right underneath the glacier!

Once we had found and spent time looking at the scree we caught the train back down to Kleine Schidegg and the next train back to Wengen at about 4.30pm

6.30pm meeting to talk about the flowers we had seen and explain about the next day. Dinner at 7pm

## Day 4 Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June

## Schilthorn

Lunches bought. We started early with a 8.30 train , today there was going to be quite a lot of different types of transport with buses, cable cars and cogwheel . We arrived at Lauterbrunnen where we caught a bus, which took us 15 minutes down through the Lauterbrunnen valley next we caught a cable car up to Murren and then two more up to Birg and finally to the Schilthorn at 2970m all of this travel takes about two hours. But the views are stunning of a 360°, I organised coffee for everybody so they could sit in the James





Bond revolving restaurant and enjoy the view. It's a bit commercialised as a James Bond movie was partially filmed here and lots of people come to visit it. But the views are stunning and when you walk out and onto the path you will find thousands of *Ranunculus glacialis* a beautiful white buttercup which turns pink once it is pollinated. Also *Thlaspi rotundifolia*, *Saxifraga oppositifolia* and sometimes *Androsace alpina* but this year there was too much snow at the top. We then took the cable cars back down to Murren as there was too much snow at Birg to go out and look for Plants. Clients then had the option to walk along through the woods and Meadows looking at the flowers. There are a number of stations along this walk and people could drop out when they had walked as far as they wished. We found *Aquilegia atrata*, *Corallorhiza trifida* the Coralroot Orchid and my favourite orchid *Listera cordata* the lesser twayblade all of 2 inches high and either green or brown flowers! Many other nice woodland plants like *Pyrolas*, *Phyteumas* and *Vacciniums* to name but a few.

Quite a few of us walked to the end of the railway to Grunschalp and then caught the cablecar to Lauterbrunnen and the next train up to Wengen.

Meeting at 6:30 to discuss Plants and the plans for the next day. Dinner at 7 pm

## Day 5 Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June      Wengenalp & Biglanalp

Weather still amazing with blue skies and sunshine. Today was going to be a long day with lots of walking, some people dropped out as it is quite a long walk and we've not really any get out clauses i.e. train stations, till later in the afternoon. We organise everyone's rolls, water and snack and caught the 09.16 train up to Wengenalp.



At Wengenalp we are looking straight up to the Jungfrau. We walked down past two cheese farms and some lovely cows. The Meadows were still in full flower but in the next few days they will have been eaten by the cows as they were moving up the side of the mountain section by section. Today the aim was to get down to Biglanalp to see the Lady's Slipper Orchid. This is a famous area for it to grow and that's as much description as I'm going to give for this area!! we found one large clump of over 13 flowers in perfect condition. Also nearby lots of my favourite little *Moneses uniflora* the one flowered wintergreen, with its nodding head at about 2 inches from the ground.

We continued taking the path back towards Wengen through meadows and wooded areas passing *Orchis ustulata* and lots of *Gentiana lutea* which the cows will not eat as poisonous for



them. We stopped at the Cafe for well earned tea/ice cream and toilets. Some caught the train back and others continued a 45 minute walk back to Wengen.

6.30pm Plant meeting and discussion for the next day plans  
Dinner

## Day 6 Friday 20<sup>th</sup> June Grindlewald

Cloudy with the odd patch of sunshine coming through. Met the clients at the bakery to get everybody their rolls and then we caught the cable car up to the Mannlichen then we walked for five minutes to the next Cable car station and caught the gondola down to Grindlewald where we would then catch a train into the centre of the town. Once we arrived, we walked up through the village which has many cars, lorry's etc and very touristy for 10 minutes to the next gondola which took us up to First. The travel

time is about 2 hours but worth it for the views and at First there are some plants that we only see here.

After Coffee/toilet stop we started the walk up towards the Lake where most tourists were going. We walked till we saw the first snow patch pass many large clumps of *Gentiana verna* and we then pealed off finding lots of *Soldanella pusilla*, *Pedicularis oederi*, *Saxifraga stellaris* by the streams and more



*Gentiana acaulis*. We had our lunch in this area and enjoyed botanising for a few hours, then started the travel back this time taking the new Cable car from Grindlewald back up to Eigerglescher with great views up to the North Face of the Eiger. Then a train down to Kleine Schidegg and finally back to Wengen.

6.30pm Plant meeting and discussion for the next day plans

## Day 7 Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> June Schynige Platte

This was our last full day. Rolls were chosen and bought for everyone and then we caught an early train down to Lauterbrunnen and another train to Wilderswill. Where we caught the little alpine train up to Schynige Platte arriving about 11am.

Once we arrived at the Alpine Garden everyone had a hour or so to look around the garden on their own as the paths are very narrow. The garden is mostly full of local Swiss plants all labled. We picnicked at the top of the garden and then most people came botanising on the ridge walk, which gave views down across Lake Brienz and Lake Thun. Botanising we saw lots of *Paradisea lilastrum*, *Gymnadenia conopsea*, *Traunsteinera globosa* and the rare *Campanula thyrsoides*.

We caught the trains back for the 2 hr travel time back to Wengen and 3 trains all different types!  
6.30pm our last plant meeting and the discussion of travelling home the next day  
7 pm farewell dinner.

## Day 8 Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June                      Departure

The weather was partially cloudy and sun. We had the morning in Wengen and then we started our trip back to Zürich Airport with our luggage, 4 different trains. All the trains were running to schedule and we arrived at Zürich airport in plenty of time for our flight back to the UK.

