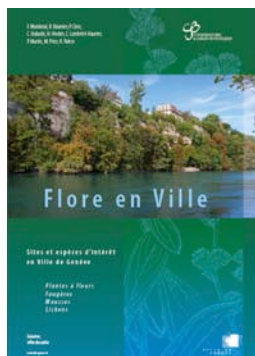


Press Release
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Media representatives

Flore en Ville

A new publication to inspire the discovery of the flora in City of Geneva



Within the framework of the strategic programme *Genève, ville durable* (Objective No. 5 – *Biodiversity*), the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de la Ville de Genève has published « *Flore en Ville: sites et espèces d'intérêt en Ville de Genève* ». The fruit of three years of extensive and meticulous inventory activities, this work invites the reader to discover the extraordinary diversity of plants that live in our city. Richly illustrated, *Flore en Ville* is a journey into the heart of Genevan botany, inspiring the idea that Nature in the City is not a utopia but a reality that needs to be protected and fostered for the prosperity of ourselves and that of our children.

The strategic programme *Genève, ville durable*

In a difficult context at the global level, marked by social, economic and ecological crises, cities are increasingly called upon to play a key role in the implementation of policies that are respectful of the environment and of people themselves. In 1995 the City of Geneva signed the Aalborg Charter, the European reference for sustainable cities, and for the last 20 years has engaged itself in favour of sustainable development. The strategic programme *Genève, ville durable* adopted by the Administrative Council in 2010 permitted the elaboration of a coherent, transversal and measurable vision of sustainable development in the City of Geneva for the period 2011-2014¹. The office *Agenda 21 - Ville durable*, amongst other missions, is responsible for its operationalization, in association with 16 project teams distributed throughout the municipal administration, with the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques for Objective No. 5 – *Biodiversity*. The advancement of the programme is published every year in the form of an annual report; besides which, the quarterly newsletter *Genève, ville durable* informs citizens about the municipal achievements.

Theme of objective No. 5 – *Biodiversity*

Objective No. 5 – *Biodiversity* of the strategic programme *Genève, ville durable* proposes that the City of Geneva develops its natural spaces and network of quality habitats to augment biodiversity².

This objective will be achieved in several stages:

- Stage 1 – *Observations*: priority sites within the territory and the animal and plant species that are important for biodiversity and their heritage value are identified and inventoried. *Flore en Ville* is the result of the work done on the plant species during this first stage.
- Stage 2 – *Propositions*: conservation and management measures are proposed based on the knowledge gained during the first stage. It is within this perspective that two management plans for woodland beetles³ and three for plants⁴ have been elaborated. One of the first consequences of these is the establishment of “Insect Hotels” in several city parks (La Grange, Trembley and Perle du Lac).
- Stage 3 – *Management*: the question of the reassessment and development of the large parks (notably, La Grange and Beaulieu) will be treated to determine, in terms of their usage and identity, what the main objectives are, but also to plan the renovation of the small and medium sized parks or the creation of new urban green spaces.

During these stages our fellow citizens, naturally, need to be informed about the importance of urban biodiversity, today called *Nature en Ville*⁵. The publication of *Flore en Ville* is a good example of this.

Richness of the urban flora

At the end of a three year inventory period more than 770 wild species (flowering plants, conifers, ferns, mosses and lichens) were identified in the 22 sites of special interest selected. This represents more than a third of the species known for the whole of the Canton of Geneva. These inventories also revealed 8 species of lichens that are new for Switzerland and 43 for the Canton, as well as 3 species

of mosses that are new for the Canton, indicating that we still have a lot to learn about our urban environment.

The results presented in *Flore en Ville* confirm the idea that urban zones have an important role to play in preserving native biodiversity.

The urban flora in danger

Despite the fact that about 65 % of the City of Geneva is developed (buildings, roads, pavements, etc.), it is not just a “mineral kingdom” as the lake, two large rivers with certain of their banks preserved, ancient parks, railways lines, walls, paved courtyards and an increasing number of “green roofs” are also present. These areas provide a diverse range of habitats that, if interconnected, facilitate the preservation or expansion of urban biodiversity.

Nevertheless, the disappearance of industrial waste-lands, certain holding stations or old paved areas influences the regression of certain types of habitats that are favourable for certain specialised species, called ruderals, that are currently under threat. It is the same for numerous species of mosses and lichens that grow on old walls and which are threatened by the maintenance or renovation activities that are not adapted to their ecological requirements.

A total of 77 species that are present in the City of Geneva are threatened at the national or cantonal level, and for certain of these the Canton of Geneva bears a national responsibility for their conservation.

A floristic richness to discover

Beyond a simple inventory of the flora of the City of Geneva, *Flore en Ville* is an invitation to the citizens of Geneva to take a new look at the environment around them. Three botanical walks are proposed so that people can discover for themselves the floristic richness that is at their doorstep.

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What does *Flore en Ville* offer?

- A history of the study of the regional flora of Geneva.
- A richly illustrated presentation of the organisms studied.
- A general reflection on urban biodiversity.
- A description and overview of the fieldwork undertaken.
- A presentation, in the form of information sheets, of the 22 sites of special interest in the City of Geneva, with photos, maps of the habitats and complete inventories.
- A presentation, in the form of information sheets, of the 36 species of special interest that are present in the City of Geneva, with descriptions, conservation status, regional and national distribution maps.
- Three Botanical itineraries promoting the discovery of the floristic richness of the City of Geneva.
- A lexicon giving definitions of the main scientific terms used in the work.

Flore en Ville is for sale in the Botanic Shop of the Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques, for CHF 27. –

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¹<http://www.ville-geneve.ch/ville-durable>

²<http://www.ville-geneve.ch/themes/developpement-durable-energie/geneve-ville-durable/biodiversite/>

³http://www.ville-ge.ch/mhng/coleopteres_bois_geneve.php

⁴http://www.ville-ge.ch/cjb/conservation_indic6.php

⁵<http://ge.ch/nature/information-nature/nature-en-ville/le-programme-nature-en-ville>