



Press-Information

## Mainau Island: A garden and nature experience all year round

Spring, summer, autumn and winter: Mainau Island is always worth a visit. Each season has something special for visitors besides the ocean of flowers in the park and gardens. The Palm House and Butterfly House are unique attractions especially on cooler and rainy days. Erected on the palace terrace in 1998, the architectural design of the Palm House is a real eye-catcher. It provides shelter for more than 20 different palm species including a Canary date palm over 17 metres tall.

Visitors to the Butterfly House, one of the largest in Germany, enter a lush tropical landscape with temperatures between 20 and 30°C. 120 butterfly and moth species from different continents flutter through the air all year round. Fittingly, the gardens surrounding the Butterfly House provide the ideal habitat for native butterflies.

### **The Mainau Flower Year**

The orchid show in the Palm House traditionally heralds the start of the Mainau Flower Year in March. The exhibition is one of the most significant of its kind in Europe. Around 3,000 types of orchids are imaginatively arranged in this show. At the same time, spring flowers burst into colour outside in the park. The first snowdrops and winter aconites bloom as early as February. These are followed by colourful crocuses and then tulips in a host of different shapes and colours. More than 430 different varieties of this plant bloom in the flowerbeds and meadows along the Spring Avenue. Up to 256,000 tulip bulbs are planted each year in the

flowerbeds and meadows on the whole island – including the island’s southern flank contributing to the spectacular ocean of more than a million colourful spring flowers.

The spring flowers have barely faded when the rhododendron grove bursts into life. Rhododendrons and azaleas, in a variety of sizes and colour shades, grow up the steep east slope above the lakeside garden. About 200 species of this peat bog plant can be admired here. Magnificent peonies also start to bloom in the peony garden next to the Floral-Water-Cascade built in the style of an Italian Renaissance garden.

The rose month of June is the next highlight in the Mainau Flower Year. About 800 varieties of the ‘Queen of Flowers’ bloom along the Wild and Bush Rose Promenade and in the Italian Rose Garden which Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden laid at the foot of the palace.

### **Summery Blossoms**

There’s an explosion of blossoms everywhere around the island during the warmer months of the year. Besides having wonderful flowerbeds, Mainau upholds its reputation as a ‘tropical island’ through special attractions. For example, the fountain arena with its terraces is the ideal spot for Mediterranean plants like the bird of paradise plant, bananas, palms, agaves, trumpet flowers, bougainvilleas and sweet chestnuts. Fuchsias can be admired in the new park area “Ferns & Fuchsias” – some are over a hundred years old and up to four metres tall.

The historic collection of citrus plants is on show in the palace courtyard from June to September. These plants originally came from botanical gardens and also from plantations of Italian aristocratic families. They include Seville oranges, limes, oranges, grapefruits, papedas, citrons and lemons. The collection consists of around 50 plants, some of which are several decades old, including some very rare varieties.

There are spectacular views from the roof garden of the Comturey restaurant at the island's harbour. A main feature of this part of the park is the so-called hydrangea path which is lined with many varieties of this plant and has plenty of places to sit. This stepless path winds its way up to the Schwedenschenke restaurant at the centre of the island.

Some people are wary of them because their sting is not entirely harmless. However, they are necessary for farming, fruit and vegetable cultivation. In reality, wild and honey bees are important helpers because plants that aren't pollinated don't bear fruit. The insect garden located below the vineyard at the Swedes' Tower illustrates the importance of these insects, the role they play for our nature and cultivation landscape and also the measures that need to be taken to preserve these endangered insects. The garden not only has nesting places but also provides forage for bees with so-called melliferous plants which produce lots of pollen and nectar from spring until autumn. There are tips for visitors on how to encourage bees to their own gardens to help these important insects survive.

### **Autumn's Harbingers**

The annual dahlia show along the lakeside garden has a long tradition on Mainau Island. It colourfully announces autumn's arrival in September. Over 12,000 dahlias in around 290 varieties provide a stunning firework of flowers all vying for the visitors' vote to be crowned the Mainau Queen of Dahlias. Strollers come across decorative, ball, pompom and cactus dahlias along the path with views of the shimmering Lake Constance.

Who doesn't know perennials from their own garden? These robust, luxuriant, long-flowering plants last more than a single year. Mainau's herbaceous garden, set out in individual beds below the vineyard walls, is full of inspirational ideas. The sheer number of plants, around 20,000 in more than 800 varieties, makes this

part of the garden interesting not only in spring and summer but also in autumn and winter. Willows and beech hedges add structure to the garden. Pathways meander by plazas, seating and fantastic flowerbeds planted up according to the seasons. It's a place to relax, linger and saunter around and is an especially good spot for taking nature photographs.

Autumn is a particularly lovely time to take a stroll through the Arboretum at the centre of the island when the leaves of this large collection of trees change colour. This unique plantation is considered the heart of Mainau. It dates back to the time of Grand Duke Friedrich I of Baden who bought the island in 1853 as a summer residence and planted the first exotic trees here in 1864. Today, some 150 years later, there are 250 tree and shrub species in the Arboretum including native evergreen and deciduous trees and also exemplars from Asia, North Africa and America. Giant sequoias, Atlas cedars, Lebanon cedars and tulip trees are amongst the most impressive. The ginkgo tree planted next to the palace church in 1872 also belongs to the list of spectacular trees.

### **Winter Magic**

Mainau Island is still charming during the winter months. Even on cold days, there are dashes of colour in the park as witch hazel, camellia, mahonia and other attractive winter-flowering shrubs come into bloom. Warm up afterwards in the Butterfly House and Palm House with a coffee and cake. There are exhibitions for the whole family in Mainau Palace's Heraldic Hall during the autumn and winter months.

The start of the festive season on Mainau Island is heralded by the popular Christmas Garden where glittering illuminations bring the flower island to life in an extraordinary way, transporting visitors to an atmospheric Christmas world.

Mainau's destiny is steered by the two managing directors Count Björn Bernadotte and Michael Roensch. Due to the connection between

the Bernadotte family and the Swedish royal family, Scandinavian customs have always been practised on Mainau Island alongside regional ones. The Lucia festival on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> December is one of the traditions celebrated on Mainau. The candlelit procession is said to bring light in the dark days. The island's chefs also serve the traditional Swedish Christmas buffet, otherwise known as 'Julbord', on further days throughout November and December.

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