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## Le Jardin Botanique

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Thursday, May 2, 2013

# La Jardin Botanique

Ashley Niemeier

Greetings from mainland Europe! I feel very fortunate to be in such a beautiful place.

While friends back home are wrapping up the Spring semester I am obliged to continue with my studies in Geneva, Switzerland. In cahoots with the other students in my program, I decided to opt out of attending my one remaining French language class and even though I enjoyed the professor's quirky sense of fashion and sometimes equally far out teaching methods, the thought of no exam has lightened the study burden considerably. In any event I still manage to meet twice weekly to practice French with my tandem language partner, an African man studying for his master's degree in environmental science.

Now I want to talk about my newest intrigue: garden hopping. As an alternative to reading in my flat and also in face of a few cloudy and windy days, I have been regularly riding my bike to Le Jardin Botanique. Le Jardin Botanique is a beautiful conservatory and trail park on the left bank of Lake Geneva. Specifically, the garden is connected to at least 5 other parks bordering the lake.

Below, see some photos of various flora and plant life invading the greenhouse.

The garden features plenty of eco-friendly practices. For example, stashed near the entrance stand several compost bins and independent garden plots, presumably meant for locals to harvest produce of their own.

After passing through the bulk of the garden, one runs into Lake Geneva which sports a 100m jet fountain as well as nude spa goers when the weather happens to turn for the better. Given the Alpine origins of its water, the lake is the bluest of blues. I'm told that it's pleasant for a swim (nude or non-nude) in the summertime.

But despite the *lake's* popularity, my most desperate wish is to float down a portion of one of the two rivers that empty into its banks. When I brought up the idea of planning a trip to swim in the river at some point, one of my flatmates, a sunny Salvadoran named Carolina, told me that the water is probably far too cold for this.

"But, it looks too good to resist!" I replied. She only laughed.

happy Springtime (and belatedly Earth Day!)



