

1948 // NATIONAL PROFILE SWITZERLAND

By Sophie von Schwerin

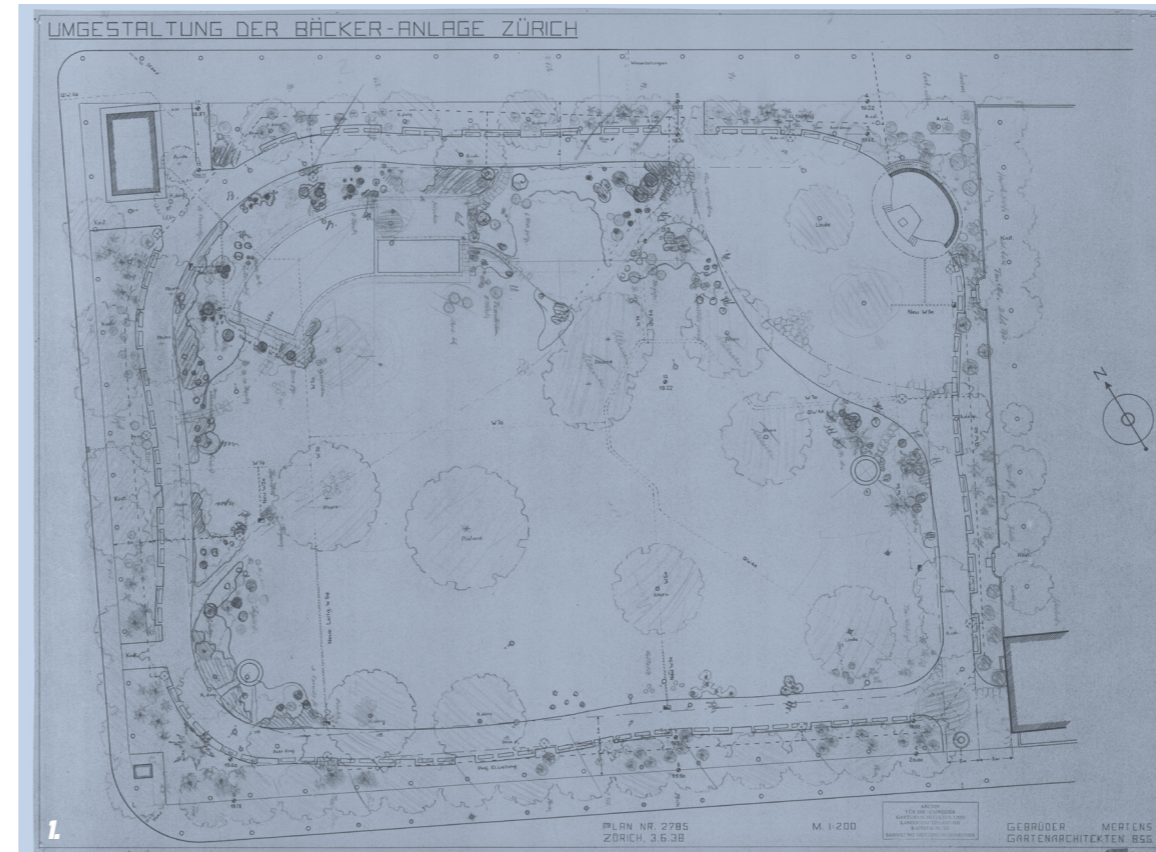
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE IN 1948

The profession in German speaking part of Switzerland started in the late 19th century when several family businesses in Switzerland designed and built gardens. Soon this group connected and shared information about where to acquire education and practical experience. Many garden designers from that era attended schools in Germany until the Horticultural School of Oeschberg, located near Bern, opened in the 1920s. The profession had developed by then, and the Federation of Swiss Landscape Architects was founded in 1925. Within this organization, discussions focused on creating rules of practice that regulated fees and set standards. During the international exhibition and conference on landscape architecture held in London in 1948, ten participants from Switzerland were present. All members participated in the exhibition and presented a selection of their landscape designs, thus representing the contemporary Swiss landscape architecture scene. Walter Leder (1892-1985) was one of the founding members and second President of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) from 1954 to 1956. He organized the 5th annual conference, titled "Landscape in modern life", in Zurich in 1956. Subsequent years saw Swiss delegations participating in the conferences, and the interest and influence of the profession grew. However, there was still a lack of education in the field. In 1972, when the University of Applied Sciences in Rapperswil was established, the Landscape Design course was introduced. Since then, the profession has grown in Switzerland. In 1980 the city of Bern hosted the 18th congress of IFLA with the title "River and lake landscapes".

NOTABLE INDIVIDUALS

Willy Liechti (1918 – 1980) entered the service of the Municipal Gardening Department of Bern in 1946 and eight years later he was elected Municipal Gardener. He introduced many changes,

whereby his primary concern was to balance the care of public green spaces in a way that delivered the best possible results for relatively low maintenance and management. Liechti was responsible for bringing two congresses to Bern, namely the 1969 IFPRA-Conference "The urban development and the recreation problem" and the 1980 IFLA-Kongress "River and



lake landscapes". He served as President of the organising team for both.

Walter Leder's (1892 – 1985)

professional career began in 1912 with an apprenticeship as a gardener at the horticultural school in Châtelaine near Geneva. He then left Switzerland in 1915 and attended the garden technical school in Köstritz in Germany. After that he worked for two years in Berlin and two years in Hamburg with the renowned garden architects Ludwig Lesser and Leberecht Migge. Within the context of rapidly growing cities, their focus was on the planning and execution of large housing projects. During the First World War, he also engaged in questions of design and self-sufficiency.

In 1920, Leder returned to Switzerland and took a job as a teacher for gardeners in Oerlikon, where he taught the subject of horticulture. That same year he opened his own office in Zurich. In the following years, he extended his teaching activities to the trade schools in Horgen and Wetzikon. He enriched the teaching with specially produced teaching materials,

which he developed from his practical experience as a garden architect. The publications "Planning and Drawing" and "Building and Plants" helped the next generation with their work. Leder was one of the important figures in the design of house gardens in the 1930s to 1950s in Switzerland. Instead of great artificial effects he pleaded for the informal and sensual homeliness of gardens, in which different garden seating areas, a grass carpet for playing and lying down, and cooling water were essential elements.

His interest in promoting the profession was extensive, and as such, he played a major role in many professional associations. He was President of the

Federation of Swiss Garden Designers BSG (now BSLA) and co-founder of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA) in 1948. In 1954 he was elected IFLA President, which brought him worldwide contacts and friendships. Last but not least, he was appointed Corresponding Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects ASLA from the 1950s on.

Eugen Fritz (1910 – 1997), after an apprenticeship as a gardener in his father's business, travelled abroad for further education. Important stations were Versailles, Orléans and London - where he worked in gardening - Berlin-Dahlem and finally Dresden in Germany, where he was able to gain office experience with the by that time well-known designer Gustav Allinger. After returning to his father's business, he continued to attend lectures at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) Zürich and participated in numerous IFLA congresses around the world. This indicates that he had an international perspective, recognizing the importance of these networks within his own practice.

Ernst Baumann (1907 – 1992) was a garden designer in Thalwil. After his school years, he completed his apprenticeship there in a mixed village nursery. In addition to the practical training, the theoretical basics were taught at the gardening school, where Walter Leder (1892-1985), among others, taught. Ernst Baumann's training lasted a total of 3 ½ years, also due to the slender stature of the 15-year-old. His first job then followed in the perennial nursery Haggemacher in Winterthur, which also planned and built gardens. He then moved to Zurich to the business of Ernst Klingelfuss (1878-1938). At the beginning of the 20th century, Klingelfuss mainly planned elaborate villas. In between, Ernst Baumann did another year of training in 1926/27, this time with Albert Baumann, the main teacher at the Oeschberg

1. The Swiss delegation of landscape architects showed a selection of projects on the IFLA conference in 1948. The Plan is an example for a redesign of a public parc in Zurich made by the firm of Gebrüder Mertens in 1938. Archiv für Schweizer Landschaftsarchitektur

2. The design for a private garden created by the very expressive and modern landscape architect Ernst Cramer in 1948. It shows a clear structured garden for a family house in the style of the mid-century. Archiv für Schweizer Landschaftsarchitektur

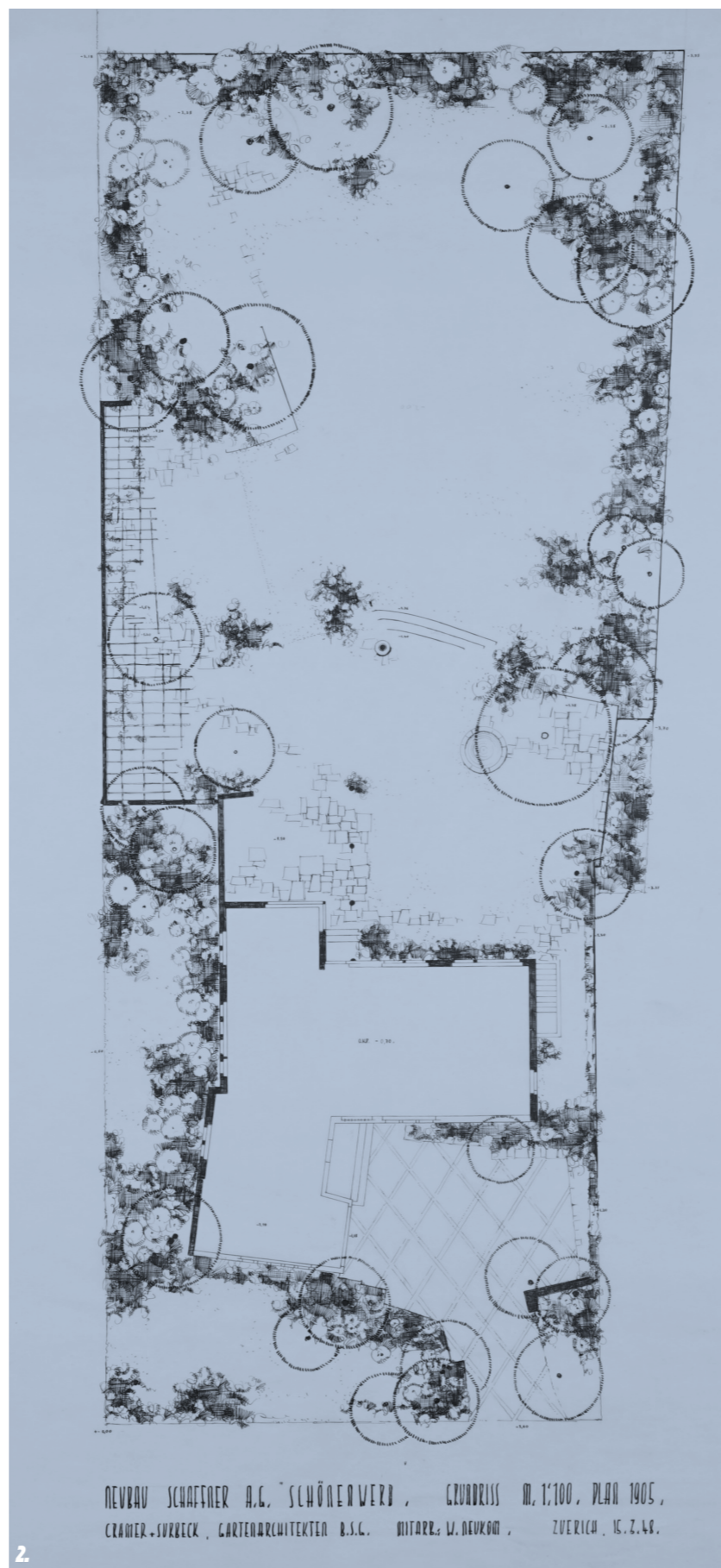
Horticultural School. This was followed by several trips by bicycle or motor scooter through numerous cities in Germany, Belgium, France, Spain and Italy. Ernst Baumann founded his own initially small horticultural business around the 1930s. Initially, he also undertook breeding experiments, for example, on delphiniums. The execution formed continuously an important main pillar, reputation he acquired however above all by the organization projects. The company was housed in the Baumann family home, so it is not surprising that both of Baumann's children learned horticultural professions and later joined the company.

Robert Seleger (1911 – 2000) was a garden designer in Zürich. As the son of a gardening couple, he came into contact with plants and gardens at an early age and also completed an apprenticeship as a gardener on his parents' farm. Finally, he attended the Cantonal Horticultural School Oeschberg in Koppigen. After the death of his father, he continued the family business as the eldest son of five siblings. In 1937 Robert Seleger achieved the highest score at the Spring Garden Show in Zurich for a garden he had designed, and in 1939 his garden was among the three best awarded gardens at the Swiss National Exhibition. In 1943 Seleger earned the federal diploma for master gardeners, and by 1945 he had 30 employees working in his business. In 1953 Seleger took over the project planning and construction management of the Spring Garden Show in Zurich's Hallenstadion. While digging up a pine tree in the Rifferswil moor, he discovered that the soil was exactly the same as in the rhododendron-growing regions of Holland and northern Germany. In the same year Seleger bought a piece of moor near Rifferswil and planted the first rhododendron. Since few plants had survived the extremely cold winter of 1956, he searched the world for hardy plants. His expeditions took him to the east and west coasts of the USA, Canada, Alaska, Russia, China and the mountains

of Nepal. By crossing the rhododendrons he brought back with other cultivars, he created a wide variety of colors and shapes that were better able to withstand the cold. In the following decades, the Rifferswil moor became a rich and varied park landscape with rhododendrons, azaleas, ferns and numerous tree and plant species from all over the world. Drainage created small streams and ponds in which water lilies and water plants took root.

Fritz Haggemacher (1896 – 1978) was a garden designer in Winterthur. In 1922, he successfully graduated from the German Horticultural School in Köstritz, Thuringia. Already a short time later he opened his own nursery, but also worked partly still as a pre-worker at the Gebrüder Mertens. In 1939 he participated in the Swiss National Exhibition Landi.

Gustav Ammann (1885 – 1955) was a garden designer in Zürich. Ammann, the son of the president of the district court on the Bürgli in Zurich-Enge, grew up in well-to-do circumstances and wanted to become a gardener from an early age. However, after attending primary and secondary school, his parents insisted that he first attend the Cantonal Commercial School in 1901. In 1903,



however, he broke off his commercial studies in favor of an apprenticeship as a gardener with the renowned gardening and landscaping firm Froebel's Erben,

which he completed in 1905. He was then employed at the Botanical Garden, where he also attended lectures by its director, Hans Schinz, who was also a professor of botany at the University of Zurich. In 1907 he left for Germany, where he first worked in the garden architecture office of Reinhold Hoemann, a committed representative of the reform style. After working there for three years, Ammann resumed his education in 1908 at the Arts and Crafts School in Magdeburg, where he took day courses instead of full-time studies - especially in drawing and painting - and met with fellow students from other disciplines. From 1909 to 1911 he worked for various studios, including Franz Paetz in Düsseldorf and, after a brief but unsuccessful stay in London, for Ludwig Lesser in Berlin and then for the Hamburg firm of Jacob Ochs, whose artistic director was the later German garden and social reformer Leberecht Migge.

From 1911 until the firm's dissolution in 1933, Ammann was the leading landscape architect at Otto Froebel's Erben, where he trained the young architect Richard Neutra and later the landscape architect Ernst Cramer. In 1934 Ammann founded his own office in Zurich and worked with the leading modern Swiss architects, including Max Frisch and the CIAM architects Max Ernst Haefeli and Werner Max Moser. Among his most important projects are numerous "natural" gardens and parks in the so-called "residential garden" style of modernism, which developed elements of the German and English reform gardens of the turn of the century. Amman was the chief garden architect for the 1933 Zurich Garden Exhibition (ZÜGA) and the 1939 Swiss National Exhibition (Landi). In numerous articles and in his book Blühende Gärten (Blooming Gardens) in 1955, he shaped the horticultural discourse of his time. In the context of European reconstruction after the Second World War, Ammann's

work was considered exemplary. Ammann was president of the Swiss Association of Landscape Architects (BSG), secretary general of the International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), and a member of the Swiss Work Federation.

Richard Arioli (1905 – 1994) worked in the municipal gardening department in Basel. After completing a gardening apprenticeship and taking evening courses in technical drawing at school, he began his first job as a gardener in Zurich in 1922. He worked several jobs both domestically and abroad before spending three years with the Mertens company and a short time with the Fröbel landscaping company. He then returned to working abroad, initially in the gardens of Versailles and Vaux-le Vicomte. Afterwards, he went on a trip to Bofarik, Algeria and eventually stopped at the Swiss garden architect J. Rossiaud's in Biarritz. He began his role as a city gardener in Winterthur in January 1933. In 1936, he joined the BSG (now BSLA) and served as its president from 1953 to 1956. He finally returned to his hometown of Basel and work for the department of gardening in March 1940. There he remained there until his retirement in 1970. On November 29, 1985, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Basel.

Heinrich Paul Daepf, (1911 – 1995) worked in Tree nursery and garden design in Münsingen-Bern. He completed an apprenticeship in horticulture at the Haas company in Bern. He then worked for one year at the Jules Tuiloux nursery in Lacelles-St. Cloux, Versailles, Paris. From 1932 to 1935 he studied garden design in Geisenheim, Germany. On January 1, 1936 he took over a nursery in Münsingen and joined the BSG a year later, as he was also actively engaged in garden design and landscape planning.