

Colors of Autumn



Cosmos in Bloom: Awaji Hanasajiki, Hyogo Prefecture

The cosmos, introduced to Japan from Europe over a century ago, has become the star among Japan's autumn flowers. Indeed, it is sometimes called "autumn *sakura*" for its resemblance to the *sakura* (cherry blossom), the lead player in the springtime floral lineup. At Awaji Hanasajiki, a large garden stretching from a hilltop toward the sea in the northern part of Awajishima Island, visitors are treated to displays of flowers that vary from season to season. In autumn, cosmos plants blossom into a huge multicolored carpet. This scenic site is located by the Awajishima end of the Akashi-Kaikyo Bridge, the world's longest suspension bridge, which links the island to Kobe.



Autumn Foliage: Ritsurin Garden, Kagawa Prefecture

The Japanese have a long tradition of taking pleasure in viewing colorful autumn foliage, just as they love viewing the flowers of spring. One place to do so is Ritsurin Garden in Kagawa Prefecture, Shikoku. This extensive garden, which was completed in the eighteenth century, includes 13 hills, representing mountains, and six ponds, and it has more than a hundred types of flowering plants that offer an ever-changing tapestry. In autumn, visitors can take in the views of the beautiful seasonal red leaves from various angles both by strolling the paths and by cruising the ponds on traditional Japanese boats, as did the daimyo, the lords of yore for whom the garden was landscaped. The area is about two hours by plane from Tokyo; from Osaka and Kobe, you can go there on a day trip by car.