

Spring in Full Swing with Beautiful Blossoms



Wisteria: Ashikaga, Tochigi Prefecture

The wisteria has long been loved by people in Japan. Called *fuji* in Japanese, it has been celebrated in poetry and appeared in tales since early times. The flowering vine blooms from April through early May, its small blossoms gathered in elegantly hanging bunches. Wisteria can be seen growing along overhead lattices in parks and gardens around the country, attracting many visitors when the fragrant and beautiful flowers are in full bloom. One such location is Ashikaga Flower Park, about 90 minutes north of Tokyo by car or train. Here the vines of a great 150-year-old wisteria extend along lattices covering an area of more than 1,000 square meters (11,000 square feet), producing a breathtaking display when they bloom in unison.



Nemophila (Baby Blue Eyes) : Hitachinaka, Ibaraki Prefecture

Hitachi Seaside Park is on the Pacific coast of Ibaraki Prefecture, about a two-hour drive northeast of Tokyo. This extensive public park has many flower gardens, displaying colorful tapestries that change with the seasons. From late April through mid-May, a major attraction is nemophila, a flowering plant native to North America that has also become widely popular in Japan. Some 4.5 million of these plants bloom in the park around this time, turning broad expanses into beautiful sky-colored fields. Across these fields visitors can enjoy views of the Pacific gleaming in the spring sun—sea, sky, and flowers blending in a harmony of brilliant blue.