

Early Signs of Spring in Iwaki

Most people associate spring in Japan with the cherry blossoms that colour many parks and rivers around Japan in a beautiful pink around early to mid-April. However, in the lead up to the main cherry blossom blooming season, there are some other wonderful flowers that indicate spring is just around the corner such as the plum blossom, Japanese cornel and the Kawazu cherry blossom. Two places where you can enjoy the early-spring flowers in Iwaki are the Koya Hanamiyama Flower Park (front cover photo) and the park near the Joban Joint Thermal Power Plant (back cover photo).

The **Koya Hanamiyama Flower Park** is located just 20 minutes by car from the city centre, yet is surrounded by peaceful nature amongst the rural mountain region of Koya in Uchigo. If you take a visit in late-March, you will be able to enjoy the early-spring blooms of plum blossoms, Japanese cornel and Kawazu cherry blossoms. However, there are always different types of flowers blooming in the park throughout most of the year.

Located in Nakoso, the **Joban Joint Thermal Power Plant** has also provided a spot to enjoy the start of spring in Iwaki. The company planted 50 Kawazu cherry blossom trees in 2005 to celebrate the 50th anniversary since the establishment of the power plant. The pink flowers against the backdrop of the power plant's tower make for an ideal photo-taking spot.

While April is the peak flower viewing season in Japan, you can still enjoy the colours of spring both before and after the very brief blooming period of Japan's iconic cherry blossom.

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21 Umemoto Taira Iwaki City Fukushima Prefecture Japan 970-8686
〒970-8686 福島県いわき市平字梅本21
いわき市役所 観光交流課
<http://www.city.iwaki.lg.jp>
TEL: +81 246 22-1279
Fax: +81 246 22-7581
Email: kankokoryu@city.iwaki.lg.jp

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