**Wasabi Products**

The high-quality wasabi produced by farms in Azumino is sold fresh or used in pastes and powders. Because the plant is so difficult to cultivate, it is still relatively rare and expensive. What many people know as wasabi is actually a mixture diluted with western horseradish, which shares some of the same spicy attributes, but is easier to grow and has a sharper, longer-lasting effect. The amount of actual wasabi in products differs: those marked “*hon*-wasabi,” or “true” wasabi, include more than 50 percent of the real thing; other products consist mostly of horseradish, green dye, and other additives. Quality-conscious sushi chefs insist on working with the actual rhizomes, grating them to a paste just before serving, so customers can appreciate the natural sweetness along with the pungency.