

A Land Formed by Volcanic Activity

The Tsutsujigahara Nature Trail stretches 2.3 kilometers to the base of Mt. Io (Atosa-nupuri), a highly active volcano. Look for signs of the volcano's impact on surrounding plant life as you walk along the trail.

The plants have naturally adapted and evolved to thrive in this hostile environment of sulfur, volcanic ash, intense geothermal energy, and fumarolic activity (the emission of steam and sulfur from vents in the mountainside.) The trail passes through a forest of towering Sakhalin spruce trees before entering groves of Japanese white birch and Mongolian oak. A break in the forest opens on meadows of Labrador tea plants and Japanese stone pines that reach toward the barren slopes of Mt. Io (Atosa-nupuri).

Conservation and protection

Tsutsujigahara's natural landscape has remained mostly unchanged for centuries. Mt. Io (Atosa-nupuri) was heavily mined for sulfur around 150 years ago, but the forests and meadows of the Tsutsujigahara area remained untouched by human activity. It is a protected area with strict rules and regulations established to conserve the natural ecosystem.