

Tsutsujigahara Nature Trail: rare alpine vegetation and an active volcano

The Tsutsujigahara Nature Trail is a pleasant hiking course leading through three distinctly different landscapes. It starts in the middle of a verdant forest of towering Sakhalin spruce and Mongolian oak before entering a meadow of rare alpine plants, including stubby Japanese stone pines and Labrador tea. The trail ends at the base of Mt. Io (Atosa-nupuri), an active volcano that vents sulfur from multiple fumaroles (openings in the earth's surface), turning sections of the mountainside bright yellow.

The trail path remains flat for its entire length. There is a wooden viewing platform around 10 minutes from the base of Mt. Io from which the surrounding volcanic terrain can be surveyed. Labrador tea blooms in certain areas along the trail from late June to early July, creating swathes of white blossoms.