

Volcanic Vents and Sulfur Mining

At the base of the volcanic vents, a distinctive yellow color can be seen. This is sulfur, the fifth most common chemical element on Earth. Sulfur occurs in abundance in the Earth's crust and upper mantle. It emerges from Mt. Asahidake's vents in liquid form, along with water vapor and other gases, before precipitating on the relatively cooler rocks at the base of the vents.

For a few years during the 1940s, Mt. Asahidake was mined for sulfur, which was used to make gunpowder. At that time, a small, horse-drawn rail system ran down the hillside from the volcano. If you look closely, you can still see the outline of the tracks where vegetation has struggled to regrow.

Small pieces of sulfur can be found on parts of the Sugatami Pond walking path. Though difficult to spot, these sulfur fragments resemble small yellowish pebbles.