

【Sunshine Trail】

The Sunshine Trail walking course has a paved path that is suitable for wheelchairs and strollers and is the most easily accessible trail in the Shiga Highlands. It begins at Hasu Pond, right next to the Shiga Kōgen Nature Conservation Center, then meanders on a 3.9-kilometer route around several picturesque ponds before ending at the Asahiyama-shita bus stop. The course has only a slight change in elevation of about 100 meters and requires approximately 90 minutes to complete.

The highlight of the course is Biwa Pond. The pond is ringed by purple irises and red azaleas in summer, and in autumn the red and gold of Mt. Asahi's changing foliage is beautifully reflected in the surface of the water. The course provides an opportunity to see a broad range of the alpine and subalpine wetland plants for which the Shiga Highlands are famous.

With so many ponds in which to lay their eggs, it is not surprising that 32 different species of dragonflies and damselflies make this area their home. Common types include the moorland hawkler (*Aeshna juncea*), distinguishable by its brown body with blue and yellow spots, and the white-faced darter (*Leucorrhinia dubia*), which is black with red and orange markings. Visitors might also spot the yellow-striped black bodies of the Japanese Relict Dragonfly (*Epiophlebia superstes*), a so-called "living fossil" species that has remained largely unchanged since the Mesozoic Era.