

### **【Shinanoki Course】**

The Shinanoki Course is an easy walking trail with two paths leading to a venerable Japanese linden tree (*Tilia japonica*) that has been designated a Natural Monument by Nagano Prefecture for its unrivaled age and stature. The tree is approximately 800 years old and stands 23 meters tall, and its trunk has a circumference of 10 meters.

The trailhead is located at the Ichinose Diamond Ski Slope. From there, one route heads through the Ichinose Diamond Wetlands before turning toward the famed tree. In May and June, the white furls of Asian skunk cabbage flowers rise from the shallow water of the wetlands. They are followed in summer by the purple sprigs of fireweed blossoms. The second route heads directly up the slope to the linden. Both options cover about 2 kilometers and take 30 minutes one-way. Alternatively, the entire course can be done as a 60-minute loop.

Nagano Prefecture has a strong historic connection to linden trees, or *shinanoki*. According to various sources, such as a wooden stake that was uncovered from the Asuka period (552–645), it was even referred to as the Land of Linden Trees (*shinano no kuni*). Prior to the invention of nylon, linden bark was one of the strongest and most flexible materials for making durable rope and cloth.