

【European Spruce Forest】

This forest of European spruce is the largest of its kind on the Japanese main island of Honshū. It was planted in 1984 as part of an effort by the government of Niigata Prefecture to preserve its local water resources. Approximately ten thousand trees cover an area of 60 hectares that begins at the entrance to Sasagamine Farm and stretches nearly to the Seki River. The trees are around 20 meters tall on average, and some measure more than 40 centimeters in diameter. Japanese larch trees are also scattered throughout the area.

European spruce trees—also called Norwegian, German, Alpine, or Italian spruce—have a high stiffness-to-weight ratio that makes them ideal for use in furniture and as the soundboards of violins and guitars. They are also used as Christmas trees, and their cones, which grow to about 20 centimeters in length, are used in Christmas wreaths.