

Ayame Iris Pond

When this pond of Japanese *ayame* iris bursts into color from mid-May through early June, the striking bright purple of the blossoms is accentuated by the height of its stalks, some as tall as 70 centimeters. Legend has it that Princess Yamatohime-no-mikoto brought the first iris here to the island from the capital of Nara some 2,000 years ago. She is the same princess who is believed to have established Ise Jingu, the most important Shinto shrine in Japan. The pond is located atop a hill about a 20-minute walk from the Sakatejima port.