

## Plant and Animal Life in the Grasslands and Wetlands

### Animals

- Japanese Fire-bellied Newt (*Cynops pyrrhogaster*)  
An amphibian reaching 10 centimeters in length, notable for its mottled ventral pattern of bright red-and-black skin, which contains a dangerous tetrodotoxin. If accidentally handled, wash point(s) of contact thoroughly.
- Japanese Relict Dragonfly (*Epiophlebia superstes*)  
About 5 centimeters long, with wings of 3 centimeters. A relict species, or “living fossil,” and the only surviving member of the once-widespread Epiophlebiidae family.
- Scarce Large Blue Butterfly (*Phengaris teleius*)  
Forewings measure 18–24 millimeters. Caterpillars produce a sweet nectar and are adopted into ant nests, where they feed upon ant broods before pupating. Critically endangered as of 2019.

### Grassland Plants

- Golden Lace (*Patrinia scabiosifolia*)  
Perennial. Flowering in August, it is one of seven plants associated with autumn in traditional Japanese poetry. Its Japanese name, *ominaeshi*, is also used to describe a traditional pattern of layered green and yellow kimono.
- Citron Daylily (*Hemerocallis citrina* var. *vespertina*)  
Perennial. Brilliant yellow with a lemony fragrance. Blooms in the evenings from July to August, and individual flowers only open for a single day. Dried blossoms, called “golden needles,” are used in several Asian cuisines.
- Japanese Ladybells (*Adenophora triphylla* var. *japonica*)  
Perennial. Delicate lavender bells appear from August to September. Its long, pale root resembles ginseng, giving it the native name *tsurigane-ninjin*, meaning “temple-bell ginseng.”

### Wetland Plants

- Japanese Water Iris (*Iris ensata* var. *spontanea*)  
Perennial. Bold purple with yellow stripes on the falls; usually blooms in June. The wild ancestor of many modern iris cultivars grown worldwide.
- Kiseruazami Thistle (*Cirsium sieboldii*)

Perennial. Blooms from August to October, producing magenta flowers with a characteristic droop. Its Japanese name of “pipe thistle” (*kiseruazami*) comes from its resemblance to a *kiseru*, a traditional Japanese tobacco pipe.

- Fringe Sedge (*Fimbristylis dichotoma*)

Annual. Sprouts red-brown spikelets from July to November. Some attribute the native name, which can be read as “sky-piercer” (*tentsuki*), to these skyward-pointing flower heads.