

Spring

The warm winds of spring bring the promise of new life, when the trees bud and flowers start blooming across the area—from fields of azaleas high in the hills around Sasebo to the purple blossoms of a rare vine on the island of Tokoi. People begin to prepare for the busy fishing and tourism season. After the sometimes cold and even snowy days of winter, the Kujukushima islands flourish in a warm temperate climate.

- Use the QR code to get more information about the photos on display. Free WiFi is available.

<PHOTOS>

***Tobikazura* Vine**

First discovered in 2000 on Tokoi Island, just northeast of Takashima Island (the second-largest island in Kujukushima), this rare flowering plant is found in only one other spot in Japan. It blooms with purple flowers from mid-April to early May.

Drying *Hijiki* Seaweed

Spring is the season for collecting and preparing *hijiki*, a type of seaweed from the sargassum family that is commonly used in Japanese cuisine. It grows extensively in the waters around Kujukushima, and can be seen drying on Takashima Island and other locations, slowly turning from brown to black as it dries.

Nagushiyama Park

The observatory in this park to the northwest of the city of Sasebo offers one of the finest views of the northern Kujukushima islands. In spring, some 100,000 azaleas can be seen in bloom across the slopes below the observatory.

Goshinkosai Festival

This Shinto festival is a traditional ritual of spring, during which prayers are offered for safety on the sea, successful fishing in the coming season, and happiness at home. The festival is held in the Kosaza area of Sasebo City.