

## **Hiroshima Castle Chrysanthemum Exhibition**

Flower enthusiasts flock to Hiroshima in autumn for the annual Hiroshima Castle Chrysanthemum Exhibition. The event runs from late October to early November and is a chance for local growers to show off their prize chrysanthemums. Held in the outer grounds of the castle, the festival features decorative flower arrangements and dioramas, sales of chrysanthemums, growing workshops, and even bonsai tree displays.

Chrysanthemums are a symbol of autumn in Japan and have been an important part of the culture since they were introduced from China in the eighth century. Cultivating the flowers became so popular at the royal court that the emperor adopted a 16-petal chrysanthemum as his emblem; this still serves as the Imperial Seal of Japan today, and can be seen on passports and the 50-yen coin. In fact, the seat of the emperor's power is called the Chrysanthemum Throne. Traditionally, the ninth day of the ninth month according to the lunar calendar was a time for admiring the blooms.

There are more than 2,000 flowers on display at the exhibition each year, accompanied by street food stalls and performances of traditional Japanese music.