

Forest Recreation Zone

The Forest Recreation Zone offers admissions-free access to Heisei-no-mori's relaxing woodland environment. The zone's main entrance is through the Field Center, but visitors also can access the area from Komadome Waterfall Parking.

The zone has three loop trails. The hike to the Komadome Waterfall Observation Deck is about 3 kilometers long and takes around 90 minutes to complete. For those with less time, the 1-kilometer Footpath takes about 40 minutes. The third trail, a 300-meter surfaced path that is accessible to wheelchairs and strollers, takes about 15 minutes.

In winter, the Recreation Zone offers two guided snowshoe walks. The shorter route takes about 2 hours, and the longer one about 3 hours. Snowshoes and poles can be rented at the Field Center, or visitors can bring their own.

The Field Center offers 30-minute instructional programs, free of charge, with no reservations required. These programs are held partly within the exhibit hall, and partly in the Forest Recreation Zone. Guides point out seasonal aspects of the forest, and use visual aids, props, and samples to give participants a deeper understanding of the forest.

Azaleas bloom throughout the area in spring, and the frail, pale-blue flowers of nettle-leaved hydrangeas appear along the trails in June. In early summer, visitors may find tiny, curled leaf packets along the trails. These are cut and rolled by female leaf-rolling weevils, which lay a single egg inside each leaf. The scroll-like appearance of these packets gives the species its Japanese name: *otoshibumi*, meaning "dropped letter."