

Ichinose Meadow

Ichinose Meadow is a large, open flatland in the Norikura Kogen highlands. The site was once crossed by logging trains, and in the early twentieth century it was used as pastureland for horse and cattle farming. The area had been covered in forest, but land utilization helped give shape to the meadow as it is today. Eventually, farming activity on the meadow died off, and while the crops and cattle may be gone, varied flora have taken their place, including white birch trees, verdant ferns, and colorful wildflowers. Groups of white skunk cabbage grow in marshy areas in spring, and fiery orange Japanese azaleas bloom in summer. Some areas of the meadow have been shaped into large gardens and ponds, while others remain completely wild—mountain ants build large mounds, and woodpeckers and jays dart through the overgrowth.

The area currently serves as a multiuse space. The meadow's even terrain is suitable for short hikes in summer, and some of the hiking trails continue to Mt. Norikura and other routes in the surrounding mountains. Streams running through the meadow are a popular place for children to play. In winter, the meadow draws cross-country skiers, and on clear nights, the lack of light pollution makes it an ideal spot for stargazing.