

About Daisetsu Mori Garden

A Most Exclusive Experience

Daisetsu Mori Garden is settled deep in snow country in Hokkaido. This hillside garden at the foot of the Daisetsuzan mountain range offers outdoor and hands-on activities, including crafts workshops, an area for kids called the Play Forest, and lots of room to roam free. Its restaurant, Fratello di Mikuni, is run by world-renowned owner-chef Kiyomi Mikuni, and offers Italian cuisine.

Mountain Mecca

This region is dominated by Daisetsuzan National Park, the largest national park in Japan. The Daisetsuzan mountain range has some of the tallest peaks in Hokkaido. These rugged mountains are a mecca for hikers and naturalists.

The Daisetsuzan range provides more than a backdrop for the garden. The alpine meadows and peaks here are home to many native species of plants and animals, including brown bears. Winters here are harsh and long, bringing accumulations of more than two meters of snow throughout the area. When all that snow melts with the coming of spring, the runoff flows over the hills, valleys, meadows, and plains below. It also keeps the groundwater supply for this garden topped up.

Overlapping Seasons

Spring, summer, and fall are compressed into just seven months in this region. Spring and summer start late, and autumn gets an early start. Just as the midsummer flowers are blooming, the leaves begin to change color. With the seasons overlapping like this, the garden produces an unusually broad palette of colors and combinations of plant life.

From Hot and Cold Climates

Daisetsu Mori Garden has plants of alpine origin as well as many that are native to the lowlands. The gardeners here are constantly monitoring microclimates within the garden, using the forest and the naturally undulating hillsides to provide shelter for the plants.

Some of the plants Daisetsu Mori Garden's caretakers nurture are native to much warmer climates. The most challenging species is *Gunnera manicata*, a plant from

Brazil that grows up to three meters tall. The gardeners ensure that *Gunnera* survives the cold winters by mulching its roots with a thick blanket of leaves and branches.

Places to Roam and Play

There are play areas in parts of the garden, including the Play Forest. Forest Garden has over 800 varieties of vines in bloom, and Forest Guest House offers a place to relax surrounded by trees and wildflowers. Visitors are welcome to venture off the path and explore.

Picnic tables and benches, parasols, open lawns, and wooden decks are scattered throughout the garden. Families can also reserve the Forest Living area, which features an outdoor kitchen with a wood-fired stone oven, bar, and large wooden deck. This is a popular option for barbecues because of its wild setting.

For Gourmets

At the garden's restaurant, Fratello di Mikuni, Chef Mikuni depends heavily on seasonal produce and other ingredients from local sources and throughout Hokkaido for his Italian cuisine. There are several luxury cottages for rent near the restaurant. Staying in one of these cottages and eating at the restaurant is a popular option. You will need reservations for lunch or dinner.

Attractions Nearby

Just a 30-minute drive away from Daisetsu Mori Garden is an *onsen* (hot spring) resort town called Sounkyo. Set in a deep gorge and flanked by forested cliffs, Sounkyo has hot springs indoors and out. There are plenty of lodging possibilities as well. Some well-known waterfalls are just a few kilometers away.

When to Visit

Daisetsu Mori Garden is open daily during daylight hours between the end of April and mid-October. Please follow this link [link to What to Do page] to find out what you can do at Daisetsu Mori Garden.