

## About Ueno Farm

### Quintessential Hokkaido Garden

The greenery and flowers at Ueno Farm are at once wild and carefully orchestrated, providing the pioneering model of what has become known as a “Hokkaido Garden.” Sections like the Purple Walk, White Birch Path, Circle Border, and Mirror Border are done in the style of an English country garden.

### *From Farm to Garden*

Ueno Farm is a family enterprise started in 1906 to grow rice. Then the current manager of the farm, Ueno Sayuki, went to study gardening in England in the 2000s. After she returned, Ueno started cultivating her version of an English garden. She wanted to create an oasis for local residents who came to purchase rice from the farm. As she succeeded in coaxing perennial flowers to thrive in Hokkaido’s harsh environment, the reputation of the garden spread far beyond the community.

The family realized they could make the garden a business. In 2001, they completed the transformation. The old cattle barn became the garden entrance and shop, while the old storage barn now houses the Naya Café behind massive doors and under a soaring ceiling. Outside the café there are many benches, tables, and chairs, as well as soft and rugged furniture designed for outdoor use.

### *Terraces, Flowers and Trees*

The soil of the rice paddies terraced around the hill was already fertile. Since the paddies were also partitioned, they created natural tiers for the gardens spread around the hill. These old paddy boundaries form soft natural borders, giving visitors a sense of subtle variation within the garden.

Ueno Farm is full of flowers, which was a key part of Ueno’s original design. It also has a lot of trees, particularly pines and *shirakaba*, a type of Japanese white birch common in northern Japan. In the area near the pond is the “Voice of the Tree Garden.” When the wind rustles the leaves of the lone black poplar tree there, it reportedly creates a distinctive sound.

### *Shateki Mountain*

The rainbow-colored chairs atop the hill called Shateki Mountain have become a symbol of the farm. This hilltop was once a shooting range for soldiers in training. Another well-known spot is the Gnome's Garden, easily recognizable because of a gnome-sized stone hut that is reflected in the pond surrounding it. Gnomes reportedly come out after midnight to keep the garden tidy.

Behind the nursery in another part of the garden is a small shed where the Ueno family keeps chickens. The birds often find their way out and wander about the garden.

#### *Hokkaido Garden Concept*

In 2004, Ueno won a contest for garden design in the Japanese gardening magazine *Bises*. She was eventually hired as the head garden designer for a TV drama called *Kaze no Gaaden*, which debuted in 2008. Ueno is credited with inventing the term "Hokkaido Garden." She developed the concept because she believed that the singular combination of the environment, climate, culture, and historical background of Hokkaido should distinguish its gardens from those found elsewhere.

In 2009, Ueno also became one of the central figures in forming the Hokkaido Garden Way. This was an important step in the development of the Hokkaido Gardens concept.

#### *When to Visit*

Ueno Farm is open every day but Monday during daylight hours between late April and mid-October. Please follow this link [\[link to What to Do page\]](#) to find out what you can do at Ueno Farm.