

## **The Garden of Shointei**

The garden seen from the main tea house at Shointei is imbued with an aura of understated elegance, a central theme of the tea ceremony. Rather than a vibrant and dazzling array of flowers, the garden is filled with greenery and a more refined selection of flowers. Main elements include verdant moss, evergreen trees, and shrubs that maintain their deep green color throughout the year. Small stepping-stones cross the miniature river, and the trickling sounds of water are layered with peaceful birdsong.

In summer, a small patch of irises bloom in the center of the garden, however, the dominant color remains the vibrant green of the moss and trees. The limited use of color is intentional and works to enhance the contrasting purple of the blossoms. Not all of the trees are evergreen, however, and the leaves of deciduous trees turn to rich golden yellows and deep reds during autumn, a popular time to visit Shointei.

The garden is open to visitors who may stroll within. At the back of the garden is the Hagi-an tea house, smaller than the main building and with a more traditionally enclosed design. It is named after the purple-flowered bush clover (*hagi*) that grows in the area.