

The Japanese Iris Garden

The iris garden is the centerpiece of Kamo Garden and is approximately one hectare in size and contains over 600 varieties of Japanese iris (*hanashobu*). All of the roughly 500,000 bulbs are hand-planted and replaced every year. Peak bloom is from late April until the end of June, making this period the park's busiest season.

According to family legend, the original irises were brought from the distant Iwadeyama Castle in northern Japan during the early Edo period (1603–1867) by a noblewoman who married into the Kamo family. Irises are sacred flowers and were believed to ward off evil, and may have been planted in front of the main gate to ensure that no harm would befall the marriage.

During World War II, the size of the iris garden was severely reduced so that the land could be used for food production. It was restored to its current state after the war, and due to continued cultivation by the Kamo family, the garden retains its picturesque beauty to this day.