

## ***Katakuri* Flowers**

The Kuwadorihi district in the mountains around Shimogo is known for the *katakuri* (Asian fawnlily) that bloom there in the spring. Clusters of the bright purple flowers form a carpet over an area of about two hectares. A two-kilometer-long walking trail winds through the area. The best time to view the *katakuri* is usually from late April to early May, but there are many other kinds of flowers to see along the trail in the spring and summer months. *Katakuri* plants grow slowly, typically taking seven to eight years to bloom. Visitors are asked not to pick the flowers.

*Katakuri* flowers lend their name to a common ingredient of Japanese cuisine called *katakuriko* (*katakuri* flour), which is similar to cornstarch and used as a thickener. In the past this starch was extracted from bulbs of the *katakuri* plant, but during the Meiji era (1868–1912) it was replaced with potato starch. The “*katakuriko*” sold today is mostly made from potatoes.