

Donden Highland

These rolling highlands, located about 900 meters above sea level, are favored by hikers and wildflower-lovers. A huge variety of flowering plants, many of which grow only at much higher elevations on the mainland, bloom here from March through October. Visitors can take in views of the surrounding valleys and the Sea of Japan, or hike the highland's accessible network of trails, with routes ranging from two-and-a-half hours to seven hours long. Accommodation is available at the Donden Highland Lodge.

The tallest peak of the highland is Mt. Tadaramine (934 m), popularly called "Mt. Donden." The strong winter winds at the peak stunt the growth of trees, leaving the area grassy and open. The harsh winters may also be responsible for the so-called "summit effect" of the highlands, where it is possible to find alpine plants that normally grow at elevations of 1,500 meters or more.

Sado's official mountain wildflower calendar lists more than two dozen species among the highlands, including purple-white Japanese hepatica (late March through April), dogtooth violets (April and May), and yellow-spotted *Euphrasia insignis* (mid-September to late October). Visitors are asked to help protect the environment by limiting flower-hunting to photography. (No picking, please.)

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