

The Colors of Urabandai (Flowers and Birds)

The scenery of Urabandai changes throughout the year, transitioning from lush greenery in spring and summer to the vibrant colors of fall, and finally to a snowy white in winter. Seasonal birds and flowers add extra color to the wetlands, ponds, and subalpine forests.

In summer, the Asian stubtail (*Urosphena squameiceps*) and the Eurasian wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) appear in a palette of muted browns, while the Siberian blue robin (*Larvivora cyane*) and yellow bunting (*Emberiza sulphurata*) liven up their surroundings with flashier hues. Nikko day lilies (*Hemerocallis dumortieri* var. *esculenta*) carpet the wetlands in a blaze of yellow.

Fall offers a more muted palette, from the purple petals of Japanese aster (*Aster microcephalus*) to clusters of tiny white blooms that cover tall stems of bugbane (*Actaea simplex*). In winter, the gray trunks and bare boughs of Japanese horse chestnut (*Aesculus turbinata*) and beech (*Fagus crenata*) trees stand out against thick blankets of snow. The red berries of the guelder rose shrub (*Viburnum opulus*) and flashes of the red-tipped feathers of the Bohemian waxwing (*Bombycilla garrulus*) accent the landscape with hints of color.

The warmth of spring brings lush greens and vivid blooms back to Urabandai. Crimson Japanese azaleas (*Rhododendron japonicum*) flower near Lake Oguninuma, while pink wintergreens (*Pyrola asarifolia*) bloom in subalpine forests.