

Exploring the Grounds: Part 1

Community Square, Teaching Garden, Hanakage Pond

Community Square

A tour of the Mizunomori grounds usually starts at the Community Square in front of the Lotus Pavilion. Seasonal flowers adorn the square in pots and hanging baskets. These flowers range from delphiniums in May to cascade chrysanthemums (*kengaigiku*) in November to “ice tulips,” grown from refrigerated bulbs, in December. During summer, lotus flowers in pots are arranged around the fountain. Dedicated areas feature pygmy water lilies (*Nymphaea tetragona*) and tropical water lilies, placed so you can smell the flowers. Summer visitors may get to see a Wanvisa water lily, a two-colored flower, yellow on one side and red on the other.

Teaching Garden

The Teaching Garden features lotus plants arranged in two artificial raised ponds about 20 meters long and 2 meters wide. The lotuses are planted in

March and bloom in July. Among them is the Oga Lotus, a crimson flower that paleobotanist Dr. Ichiro Oga (1883–1965) created by germinating a 2,000-year-old seed he found in 1951 in Chiba, near Tokyo. With the lotuses growing to a convenient head height, this garden is particularly popular with photographers, who arrive early since the flowers start to close in the afternoon.

Hanakage Pond

This water lily pond is the showpiece exhibit at Mizunomori. Taking inspiration from the Giverny garden of French Impressionist painter Claude Monet (1840–1926), Hanakage Pond combines water lilies and other aquatic plants with picturesque bridges of stone and wood as a backdrop. The pond has 50 varieties of both temperate and tropical water

lilies, blooming at any given time between June and September. Most striking of these is the giant South American water lily (*Victoria cruziana*). Its lily pads, with their distinctive upturned rims and thorny undersides, grow up to 1.5 meters wide (in August, young children are invited to try

sitting or standing on the pads). Other plants in the pond include papyrus, which was used by the ancient Egyptians to make paper, and water canna.