

The approach of spring in Japan is first **pronounced** by the arrival of delicate plum blossoms. Budding around February, they bring about a subtle, sleepy scent of new life. But the cherry tree is undeniably the celebrity spring flora of Japan. With blossom forecasting, extensive media coverage, domestic and international visitors, it is truly an adored and **coveted** spectacle.

Japan is a volcanic island, rich in nutritious soil, abundant in a wide range of native plants. Spring is a time to celebrate the explosion of flowers, each unique and delightful in their own way. Here are some that we can enjoy in the few months to come:

#### Canola Flowers / *Nano Hana* (mid-March to early April)

This canary-yellow flower can often be seen anywhere along the river banks of Kyoto, but one of the most impressive is the yellow-brick-road like canola field found around the Matsumoto brewery in Fushimi. The gold field reflected by the river, against the **backdrop** of the brewery's **charred**, ancient wood is truly a picturesque scene. You can also enjoy the sight by lounging on a lazy cruise down the river.

#### Azaleas / *Tsutsuji* (late April to early May)

A vibrant firework of **fuchsia**, pink and white of the azalea plant will take over the Mimuroto-ji temple in Uji city during the months of April and May. This temple has a spacious garden of approximately 16,500 square meters and is also known as the "Temple of Flowers". The temple has 20,000 azalea blossoms on average, providing one of the best displays in the Kanto region.

#### Wisteria / *Fuji no Hana* (late April to early May)

The Toba Treatment Plant in Minami-ku is home to a grand tunnel wisteria **trellis** stretching over 120 meters. The ocean of purple is mesmerising, giving you the sense of being completely submerged in a sea of flowers. The experience is heightened by the wave of heavily infused scent, making the moment unforgettable.

#### Water Iris / *Hana-shobu* (first half of May)

Ota Shrine in Kita-ku is the subsidiary shrine outside the ground of the Kamigamo Shrine, and is home to about 25,000 water irises. They thrive like an impressive army in the east side of the compound. The expanse of purple carpet over water has been famous as far back as the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and has inspired countless Japanese artists. It even makes an appearance in one of the poems in "Waka", a poetry book written by Toshinari Fujiwara in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. A truly romantic site to spark one's creativity.

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#### Word definitions

<b>pronounced (adj.):</b>	noticable, cannot miss it.
<b>coveted (adj.):</b>	greatly desired.
<b>backdrop (n.):</b>	scenery behind something.
<b>charred (adj.):</b>	burnt surface.
<b>fuchsia (n.):</b>	a bright pink colour.
<b>trellis (n.):</b>	latticework (frame) used to support climbing plants.

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#### Activity:

Please use the given metaphor / simile cards to describe a spring scenery you've recently come across, or was memorable for you. Use a rich description to help your listener clearly imagine your experience.

Some useful adjectives are:

*gorgeous, handsome, stunning, breath-taking, grand, heavenly, godly, angelic, wonderful, dreamy, vivid, enticing, alluring, dazzling, cute, sweet, charming, elegant, exquisite, graceful, magnificent, marvelous, divine, radiant, sublime*