



This swing suspended from a large tree is a popular spot for taking photographs

NOKONOSHIMA Island in Hakata Bay in Fukuoka City, Fukuoka Prefecture is home to Nokonoshima Island Park, where in autumn 800,000 cosmos flowers bloom.

Nokonoshima is a small island with a circumference of about 12 kilometers, about 10 minutes by ferry from the port of Fukuoka, and is known as a vacation resort. This island park opened in 1969 and originates from when 19-year-old Kubota Kosaku (1934-2005), who ran a sweet potato farm, decided to create a nature park that soothes the soul, since farming on the small island could not compete with large-scale agriculture. While growing his sweet potatoes, Kubota

THE ISLAND PARK COVERED IN COSMOS FLOWERS

When autumn comes to Nokonoshima Island in Fukuoka City, Fukuoka Prefecture, the island park is covered in cosmos flowers, offering a “soul-soothing” experience.

SASAKI TAKASHI



continuously planted azaleas and other plants, finally opening the park more than fifteen years later.

“I heard that the park was not very popular when it first opened, so many business people recommended that they introduce roller coasters and a Ferris wheel, but Kubota didn’t listen to them,” says Yamasaki Hiroaki, the public relations manager at Island Park. He explains, “This was because he was convinced at a time when Japan was experiencing rapid economic growth that before long people would eventually seek healing from the beauty and kindness of nature.”

Various flowers bloom in abundance throughout the year, from spring rapeseed flowers to winter daffodils, but the most popular are the cosmos flowers in autumn. There are two large cosmos fields in the park, one with about 500,000 early-blooming cosmos and the other with about 300,000 late-blooming cosmos. Early-blooming cosmos are in full bloom from early to late-October, and late-blooming cosmos are best seen from late October to mid-November, which means there is plenty of time to enjoy the cosmos flowers. Beyond the

cosmos flowers swaying in the sea breeze, visitors can see the azure sea and the islands of Hakata Bay. It is wonderful scenery that can only be seen here in Nokonoshima.

“What we care about most is how to help visitors take beautiful pictures and have fun. That’s why we have created passages in the cosmos fields so that people who have come to see the wide carpet of flowers can poke their heads out for pictures,” says Yamasaki. “There is also a swing hanging from a large tree beside the early-blooming cosmos field, where you can take photos that look as if you are swinging out toward the sea, which is such a popular spot that we even get inquiries from overseas.”

At Nokonoshima Island Park, a nostalgic townscape called “Memory Lane” has been created where visitors can also enjoy the island’s specialty dish, Noko *udon* noodles.

The pink cosmos blossoms against the blue sea and sky together form a beautiful scene, making Nokonoshima a great location to forget the hustle and bustle of the city and spend a relaxing autumn day. 🍁



Early-blooming cosmos at Nokonoshima Island Park

All Photos: Courtesy of NOKONOSHIMA ISLANDPARK



A store on “Memory Lane” with its nostalgic townscape