

Selections from NDL collections

## Small Exhibition in the Kansai-kan (24): Full bloom! The World of Gardening



Exhibition poster

From August 16 to September 18, 2018, the Kansai-kan of the National Diet Library held a small exhibition entitled "Full bloom! The World of Gardening."

Gardening is familiar activity that enriches the lives of people everywhere. It has a long and varied history, as witnessed by the discovery of the ruins of an ancient Egyptian flowerbed from almost 4,000 years ago. Although gardening is a hobby to many of us, it also has diverse cultural, industrial and medicinal aspects. In this article, we will take a closer look at some of the 100 materials that were used in this exhibit, a complete list of which is available in Japanese on the [NDL website](#).

### *Jakuchu meigashu*



*Jakuchu meigashu (Jakuchu's Masterworks)*. Pictures by Ito Jakuchu, edited by Tajima Shiichi, published by Kansai Shashin Seihan Insatsu in 1904. NDL Call No. 400-48.

\* Available in the [NDL Digital Collections](#).

Ito Jakuchu was a well-known Edo-period painter, whose work remains popular to this day. He was born in Nishikikoji, Kyoto, the son of a green-grocer, and learned to draw by making detailed observations of the hens kept in the family garden. He made a name for himself as a painter of animals and plants, and this vivid scene is likely based on one from the family garden.

## Honzo zufu



*Honzo zufu (Illustrated Catalog of Flora)*. Pictures by Iwasaki Kan'en. *Honzo Zufu Kankokai*, 1916–1921, NDL Call No. 309-66.

\* Available in the [NDL Digital Collections](#).

*Honzo zufu* was one of the first high-quality illustrated catalogs of Japanese flora published during the late Edo period and was later reprinted in the early Taisho era. Over 2,000 illustrations of flowers and plants—including wild species, garden species, and foreign species—are compiled in 92 books and classified in botanical categories such as vines, weeds, or grains. Exhibited here is a two-page spread of tiger lilies from volume 48 of the series. Although lilies are generally considered flowers by modern botanists, they are classified here under vegetables, and the description says that "their roots are cultivated for food" and "should be boiled and eaten."

## *Seiyo matsutake masshurumu no nenju Saibai*



*Seiyo matsutake masshurumu no nenju saibai (Year-Round Cultivation of Western Matsutake Mushrooms)*. Published by Sosai Engi Kenkyukai in 1928. NDL Call No. 特 212-537.

\* Available in the [NDL Digital Collections](#).

*Seiyo matsutake* mushroom is a cooking ingredient often found in chicken fried rice or stew. Although not well-known at the beginning of Showa era, it is now one of Japan's most popular mushrooms. This guidebook explains how to grow mushrooms efficiently and was intended to help farmers become more productive. It also includes a number of delicious recipes.

In a separate event related to this exhibition, the NDL sponsored a lecture entitled *The Blue Rose of Dreams: Stories of Development*, which was given by Dr. Katsumoto Yukihisa, on September 14, 2018, at the Kansai-kan. Dr. Katsumoto is a principal researcher at the Suntory Global Innovation Center.

(Translated by Mika Oshima)

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