

February

■ Girl's Day

Girl's Day is held on March 3rd. Artists in Tamagawa Gakuen cooperate to run the *hina* "gallery walk".

■ Hina Dolls

People put *hina* dolls on display. These dolls are usually dressed in the *heian* aristocrats clothing.

■ Ume

Ume, or Japanese apricot trees (sometimes referred as plums) will bloom at the beginning of March.

■ Machida Tourist Gallery

It is the visitor center of Machida in the Poppo Building near the Machida Station. English service is available when an English-speaking staff member is available.

Artistic *Hina* Dolls on Display in Tamagaku Until Girl's Day



Traditional *hina* dolls with ornaments made by local artists

It seems that visiting art galleries in Tamagawa Gakuen is becoming more popular each year. For Tamagawa Gakuen, or Tamagaku for short, is known as a

Art galleries in and around Tamagawa Gakuen are displaying *Hina* dolls, which originally are believed to bring good luck for girls' happiness.

town of artists. In this time of the year, a group of artists in Tamagaku called "The Little Gallery Group" display their artwork of *hina* dolls.

On March 3rd, Girl's Day is held to wish for good health and happiness of the girls in your family, by putting out a set of *hina* dolls.

The standard *hina* dolls are dressed in traditional *Heian* (roughly the 8th century) aristocratic clothes, set on a platform. The top two dolls on the staircase-like platform represent an emperor and empress, accompanied by attendants, musicians, ministers, and beautiful accessories.

At the galleries of "The Little

Gallery Group", artists display their handmaid *hina* dolls, reflecting their art style. There are *hina* dolls made out of glass, wood, or other materials. They also offer workshops that give you a glimpse into their creations. (Most of them require a small fee)

These handmade dolls are on display from February 15th to March 3rd and the galleries are open from 10am to 5pm. (The artists take a break on February 21st)

The map for this "gallery walk" in Japanese is available at the Machida Tourist Gallery.

Machida, the Ramen and Secondhand Clothing Mecca

Machida is widely known as a town of ramen noodle and secondhand clothing shops. Ramen and secondhand clothing shop maps are now available at the Machida Tourist Gallery in the Poppo Machida building. They are both free papers and available only in Japanese.



Ramen map (top) and secondhand clothing shop map (bottom)



Ume Trees Bloom in Early March

Ume trees, or Japanese apricot (plum) trees will start to open their buds in late February. The blooming is expected to reach its peak in early March. There are several popular viewing points for the *ume* trees.

For example, the *Yakushi-ike* Park has 250 beautiful *ume* trees. There is a café in the park, which offers *dango*, tea, and more to take a break. The park is also known as a popular destination for photographers due to the wide range of flowers the park has.

The easy access to the park is to

catch a bus from stop #21 near the Pop building. It takes only about 20 minutes from Machida Station by bus.

The update on flower information is monitored on the notice board at the Machida Tourist Gallery.

The *ume* trees at the *Yakushiike-Park* in full blossom. (Photo taken in 2010)



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