

International workshop on living with agricultural landscapes

December 2nd, 2019: Poster & Discussion Sessions, City Lab Tokyo, Japan

December 3rd, 2019: Kokubunji Excursion and World café workshop, Tokyo, Japan

A tour of Kokubunji demonstrates how government-supported partnerships foster a strong local food system (December 2019)

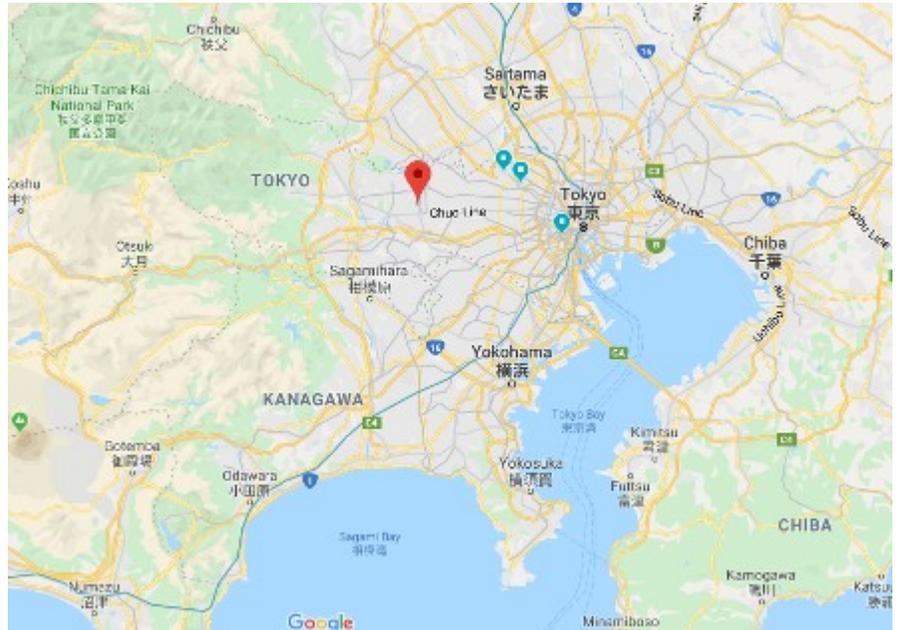
About Kokubunji City

Named after provincial temples built 8th century CE

Size: 11.46 km²

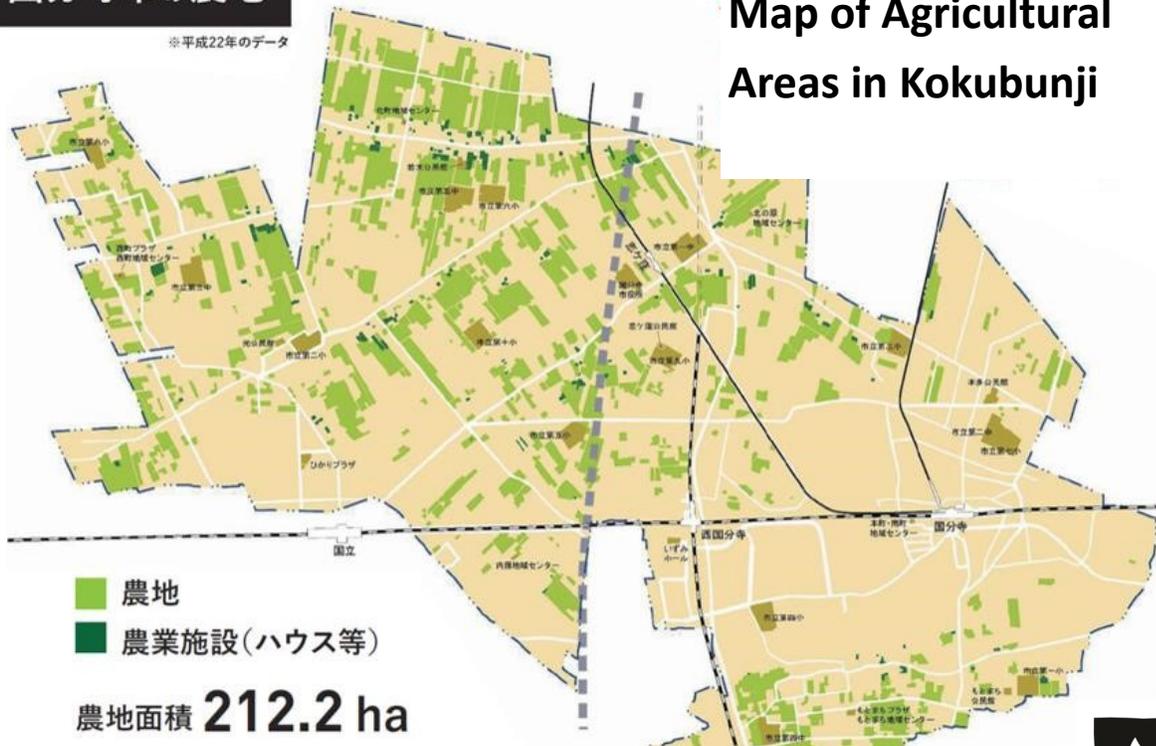
12.5% land in Kokubunji is used for agriculture (2nd largest in the metropolitan Tokyo area) for a total of 212 km²

Population: 127,000

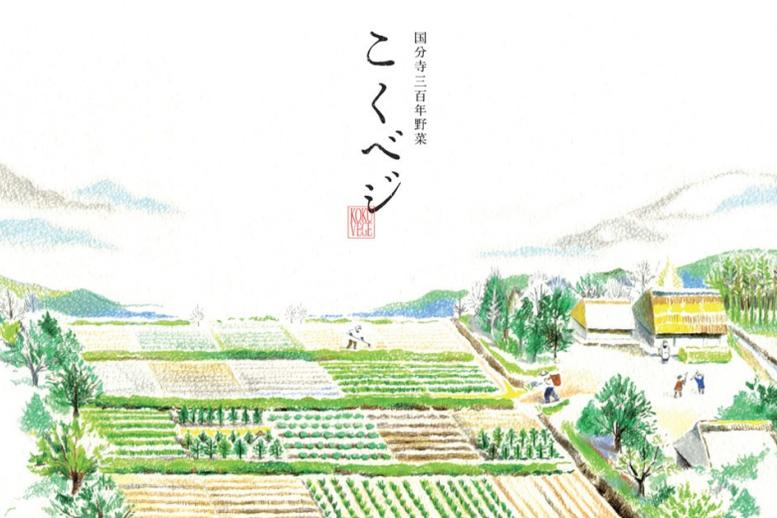


国分寺市の農地

※平成22年のデータ



Map of Agricultural Areas in Kokubunji



国分寺三百年野菜
こくべんじ



Nakamura-farm's
中村農園
の
柿 & イチゴ
persimmons & strawberries

Yamaguchi-farm's
山口農園
の
トマト
tomatoes



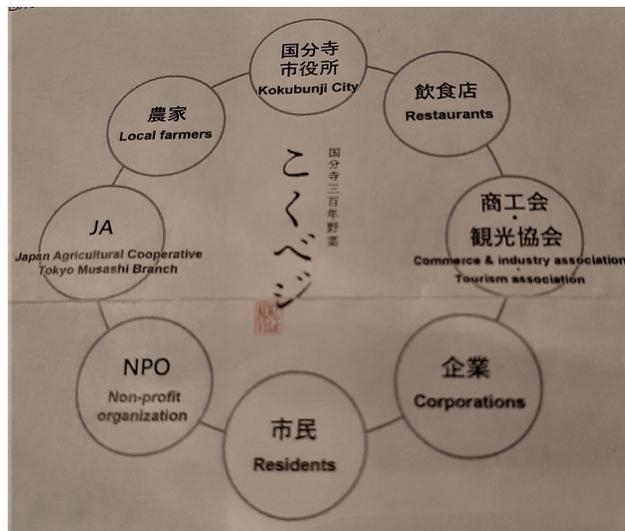
Kokubunji: "300 Years of Vegetables"

The KokuVege project was launched by Kokubunji City to promote local produce. There are currently 40 restaurants and 60 retailers participating, along with 10 farmers.

KokuVege connects farmers with individual buyers, retailers and restaurants:

- Constructing creative display booths at markets
- Organizing tomato and udo festivals
- Operating a market stand at Kokubunji station
- Reducing delivery costs for farmers by providing vans and youth training
- Offering KokuVege banners to member stores and restaurants to display

The project was initially funded through a national government program for neighbourhood revitalization. When KokuVege designed a logo for local strawberries, business improved by 30%.



KokuVege partnership model

Nakamura farm

One of the KokuVege farms is run by the Nakamura family. In addition to field crops, the Nakamuras have 600 m² of greenhouse space for growing strawberries. Mr. Nakamura demonstrated how the rows could be rotated for even sun exposure. In addition to a farm stand, produce is delivered to restaurants and retail outlets with support from KokuVege, who train youth to drive delivery vans. The Nakamuras also won a contract to produce tomatoes for the Tokyo Olympics.



The Nakamura farm was originally bigger, but the City expropriated some land to build a road (one apparently much wider than any of the surrounding narrow streets).

Another member of Nakamura family worked as an architect for the City to earn enough income before taking over the family farm. He chose to retire at age 50 in order to learn about farming from his father while he was still active. The photo below shows the family's traditional farmhouse structure with trees planted as windbreaks.





Preserving traditional Japanese vegetables

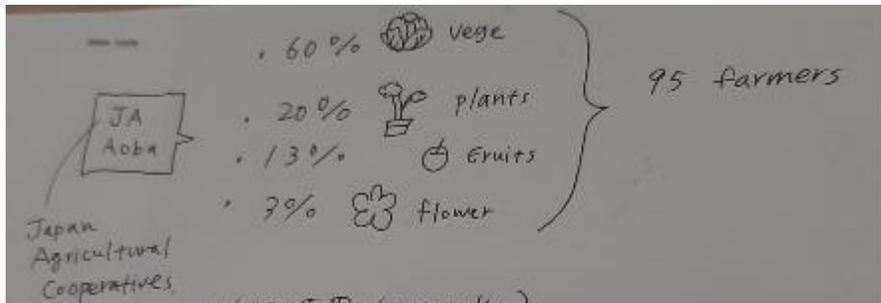
The Nakamura farm grows 30 tons of udo (also known as yama udo or mountain asparagus), a local vegetable with a slight taste of celery and fennel.

As udo needs darkness for growth and proper flavour, the Nakamuras originally grew it underground. When their land was expropriated, they started growing udo in boxes in a greenhouse.



JA Tokyo Musashi Agricultural Cooperative

JA Tokyo Musashi is one of 694 regional agricultural cooperatives in Japan. These cooperatives were started by the federal government to provide banking, insurance, marketing and advocacy to both farmer and non-farmer associate members. The cooperative has 95 farmer members. The Kokubunji branch has a permanent farmers' market and a rooftop demonstration garden with labels to identify rooftop-friendly varieties of trees and shrubs.





Other urban farms and allotment gardens in Kokubunji

