

You said:

How long did the exhibition last?

Copilot said:

Copilot

The **first All-Japan Bonsai Exhibition (全日本盆栽展)** held at Hibiya Park in November 1928 ran for **one week**.

→ Specifically, it lasted **7 days** (from **November 1 through November 7, 1928**).

This week-long duration was typical of early large-scale bonsai exhibitions in Japan, which were organized as short public shows rather than long exhibitions.

You said:

Were there any special events during the week?

Copilot said:

Copilot

There is **no detailed surviving program or day-by-day schedule** for the first All-Japan Bonsai Exhibition (November 1928) that lists specific “special events” during the week.

However, based on how these early national bonsai exhibitions were organized—and on descriptions of closely related shows from the late 1920s—the week likely included several **typical featured activities** rather than a single headline event:

Likely activities during the week

- **Formal opening ceremony**
 - Early large exhibitions in Japan commonly opened with a **ceremonial first day**, often attended by organizers, invited guests, and sometimes dignitaries.
- **Judging and awards**
 - Exhibits were usually **evaluated by a panel**, with recognition given to outstanding trees.
 - Awards and distinctions were an important part of elevating bonsai as an art.
- **Demonstrations and instruction**
 - Visitors could observe **techniques such as pruning, wiring, and styling**.

- These demonstrations helped educate the public and new enthusiasts.
- **Public viewing and guided appreciation**
 - The main focus remained the **display of high-quality bonsai specimens** from across Japan.
 - Discussions and informal guidance on aesthetics were often part of the visitor experience.
- **Networking among practitioners**
 - These exhibitions functioned as key meeting points for growers, collectors, and editors (such as those connected with bonsai magazines), helping shape the emerging national bonsai community.

Key takeaway

➔ There is **no record of a specific named “special event” unique to that week** (like a lecture series with titles or guest lists).

➔ Instead, the exhibition week itself was the “event,” featuring **ceremonial opening, judging, demonstrations, and public display**, all of which were central to early bonsai shows.

If you’d like, I can try to track down period exhibition catalogs or newspaper notices that might reveal more precise programming details.

You said:

How many trees were displayed?

Copilot said:

Copilot

There isn’t a precise, well-documented figure preserved for the **number of trees displayed at the first All-Japan Bonsai Exhibition in November 1928**.

However, based on closely related early national exhibitions in Japan—including the later **Kokufu-ten (1930s)** and other late-1920s shows—the scale was typically:

➔ **on the order of about 80–100 trees**

Why this estimate is used

- Early large bonsai exhibitions were still relatively modest in scale compared to modern shows.
- For comparison, the first Kokufu-ten (1934), which grew directly out of these earlier exhibitions, displayed **fewer than 100 entries**.
- The 1928 Hibiya Park exhibition is generally understood to have been **similar in size and format**, featuring a curated selection of notable trees rather than hundreds.

Bottom line

➔ The exact number is not recorded, but the exhibition likely displayed **roughly around 100 bonsai (give or take a few dozen)** rather than several hundred.

If you want, I can try to track down a surviving catalog or contemporary newspaper listing that might give a precise count.

You said:

Were there any famous bonsai among them?

Copilot said:

Copilot

There is **no specific list of named individual trees** recorded for the first **All-Japan Bonsai Exhibition (November 1928)**, so we cannot point to particular “famous bonsai” by name from that show.

However, we can still say something meaningful and historically accurate about the caliber of the trees:

Were there famous bonsai?

➔ **Yes—but not in the modern, individually documented sense.**

- The exhibition was explicitly designed to gather “**representative notable trees**” (名木) from across Japan.
- It featured **some of the finest bonsai available at the time**, many of which would have been highly regarded within regional circles.

What kind of trees were shown?

While names of individual specimens are not preserved, contemporaneous sources and related exhibitions indicate:

- **High-quality, mature specimens**—not casual hobby pieces
- Classic Japanese species, especially:
 - **Pine (black pine, five-needle pine)**
 - **Juniper**
 - **Maple and other deciduous trees**
- Trees owned by:
 - Wealthy collectors
 - Professional growers (nurseries)
 - Early bonsai enthusiasts with established reputations

These were effectively the **elite bonsai of their day**, even if individual trees were not cataloged in a way that survives today.

Why don't we know specific “famous trees”?

- **Documentation was limited**
Early exhibitions often lacked detailed catalogs with specimen names.
- The concept of a **named, historic bonsai masterpiece** (like later Kokufu-winning trees) was not yet fully developed.
- Record-keeping focused more on the **event and the advancement of bonsai culture**, rather than preserving individual tree identities.

Historical importance

Even without named trees, the exhibition itself is important because:

- It **brought together top-tier bonsai nationwide** for the first time on this scale.

- It helped define what counted as a “**notable**” or **exhibition-quality bonsai**.
- It directly influenced later, better-documented shows like the **Kokufu Bonsai Exhibition (from 1934)**, where individual trees and award winners began to be recorded systematically.

Results from several minutes of questioning of [MS CoPilot Chat, 05/22/26 a.m.](#)