

Release of a New iPhone App “*Twit Bonsai*” (English version)

Saitama Promotes Its Enjoyable Event with the Public-Private Cooperation

The promotion of local economy takes place with the theme of Bonsai, Saitama City’s traditional art.

The English version app is released for the overseas Bonsai fans.

The Omiya Bonsai Art Museum of Saitama City designs an app with multiple functions that promotes the charm of Saitama City

We at the Saitama Convention & Visitors Bureau (Saitama City, Saitama Pref., the chief: Takeshi Shimizu) are pleased to announce the release of a new iPhone app “*Twit Bonsai* -Ver2 -” (English version) on June 20. *Twit Bonsai* has been produced as part of the Bureau’s promotional activities for local tourism and convention-related events in Saitama City and the surrounding areas. With the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum (Saitama City, Saitama Pref.) as a supervisor, the production of the app has taken place with the public-private cooperation as well as the support of well known bloggers living in the area. The Japanese version, which has been downloaded by approx. 50,000 people so far, was released earlier on April 26.

About “*Twit Bonsai*”

The theme of this app is ‘Bonsai’, one of the traditional arts of Saitama City. It contains a Bonsai rearing game, in which users can nurture their own Bonsai, while visiting attractive spots in Saitama City. The users can learn the charm of Saitama City through the game and visual materials like the ‘Gallery’, with the design supervised by the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum. The app also provides discount information for facilities, shops and their coupons and other local information about Saitama, which attracts both tourists and local people.

Specification of “*Twit Bonsai*”

- URL for download: search for “*Twit Bonsai*” at iTunes store for download.
- Download fee: free of charge
- Participation fee for local companies, facilities, shops: free of charge
 - *this applies only to those in Saitama City and the surrounding area.
- Contents offensive to public order and morals are not accepted.
- System requirements: iPhone 4, iPhone 3GS. Requires iOS 3.1 or later
 - *Limited use of functions (including the GPS function) for iPod Touch
- Official website: http://zaq.ne.jp/twit_bonsai/e/
- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/twitbonsai>

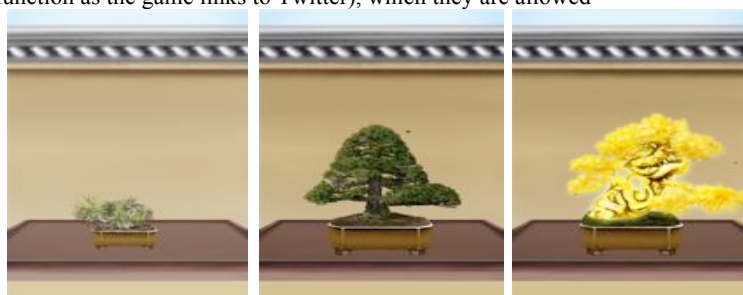


Main contents

▼ Bonsai Rearing Game

This fun Bonsai rearing game offers eight different Bonsai to choose from, where the users can grow their own Bonsai by watering it or removing dust while obtaining original characters/items at designated sightseeing spots in Saitama City. Moreover, the users can grow their Bonsai quicker by talking to their Bonsai (using the ‘twitting’ function as the game links to Twitter), which they are allowed

to do only once a day. The game provides the opportunity to experience the charm of slow growing Bonsai, which shows the natural rhythm of its growth. The game also has ‘secret’ Bonsai, with designs that are related to Saitama City.



▼ Download the items/characters at sightseeing spots

Using the GPS linked function, the users can download the original characters to decorate their Bonsai after checking-in at designated spots in Saitama City. The characters include ‘NU’, the city’s PR character, and other well known items from the city such as locomotives, eels and soccer can be also downloaded. Your visit to Saitama City will be double the fun with the function.



Characters available for download

■ Characters available with the GPS function

- Figure of NU the Tsunaga Dragon (Ohmiya Sta. Tourist Information Center)
- Figures of steam locomotive of class 150 (can be activated at the Railway Museum)
- Magical nutrition (available at Bonsai Shiki-no-ie)
- Phantom Suiseki (available at the Bonsai Museum)

■ Items available in the process of Bonsai nurturing

- Soccer Bonsai (the item of ‘secret’ Bonsai)
- Urawa Unako chan (can be used at a higher level in the game)



Tsunaga Dragon:
NU”



Steam locomotive
of class 150



Urawa Unako chan
by Takashi Yanase

▼ The app promotes local business

The app provides the users with special discount information for customers from local shops – such as “one free beer”, “give away available” and “free drink service for a lunch order”- which are offered by local companies, facilities and shops. We currently have ten businesses that have filed their application since the last week’s launch, and more shops are expected to join in. We hope the app will be used by locals and visitors and will give good stimulation to local businesses, which have been in a tough condition since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

(*information distribution of cooperative local shops in Saitama City can be done for free)

With the aim to draw more overseas visitors to the city, the app has been released in an English version as the Ver2. The app, available at iTunes Store, promotes the charm of Saitama City to worldwide Bonsai fans.

▼ Introduction of the Omiya Bonsai Art Museum of Saitama City: the app introduces valuable Bonsai at the gallery and other artworks at the Bonsai Museum.



About the Saitama Convention & Visitors Bureau

The Saitama Convention & Visitors Bureau is a public service corporation, which was established with the authorization of the Kanto District Transport Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport, for the purpose of the advancement of tourism and convention business, enhancing culture, furthering international mutual understanding and contributing to the development of the local community in Saitama City and the surrounding area.

News Release
New iPhone App/local
promotion



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- Major businesses: promotion of tourism, convention events, planning and advertisement.
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