

## Sumitomo Forestry Starts Development of a concept garden called *Hagukumi*

—Featuring a Variety of Stimulating Design Elements to Engage the Five Senses and  
Promote Physical Engagement for Healthy Growth—

Sumitomo Forestry Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Akira Ichikawa; Head Office: Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo), in conjunction with 100% subsidiary Sumitomo Forestry Landscaping Co., Ltd. (President and Representative Director: Kanpei Tokunaga; Head Office: Nakano-ku, Tokyo), provider of urban landscaping services and exterior gardening and landscaping services for detached houses, has commenced development of a concept garden known as *Hagukumi* designed to stimulate the five senses and promote physical engagement for children.

A variety of design elements is used to encourage physical interaction by children and stimulate the five senses within a familiar garden setting, as part of the broader objective of designing homes that naturally encourage curiosity and creativity.

### ■ Background

In interviews with existing tenants (primarily young families) conducted by Sumitomo Forestry in fiscal 2011, many respondents expressed a desire for garden areas which they could use together with their children (as opposed to simply looking at) and outdoor spaces where it was safe for children to play. Having identified this need in the market, Sumitomo Forestry has been working with Sumitomo Forestry Landscaping to develop gardens designed specifically for families with young children.

Families with young children buying their first home constitute the largest slice of the new home market at present, particularly the children of baby-boomers and the subsequent generation. For them, the needs of children and the burden of housework are major considerations when buying a new home. The popular *mamato* home, launched by Sumitomo Forestry in June 2011, offers considerable custom design and a variety of innovative features that help to minimize the workload associated with housework and parenting. The Sumitomo Forestry group is committed to developing comprehensive residential solutions for young families that are designed to promote child development and nurture the bonds between family members while providing relaxed and comfortable living spaces.

### ■ Basic Concept

The name *Hagukumi* is a portmanteau on the Japanese words *hagu* (“hug”) and *hagukumi* (to nurture or raise a child). The key design concept behind the *Hagukumi* garden is the theory, espoused by Osaka Chiyoda Junior College Professor and Kobe University Emeritus Professor Katsuyuki Hiroki, that the development of the five senses plus motor coordination forms the basis for all subsequent development of children. In the human development process, practical cognition (cognition acquired through the five senses by movement of the limbs that stimulates the sensory organs) forms the basis for subsequent development of theoretical cognition (the use of text and symbols to convey abstract ideas and concepts). Free play is generally considered to be the best means of promoting practical cognition. For the *Hagukumi* garden, Sumitomo Forestry has consulted child development experts and observed children at play in kindergartens as the basis for developing design elements intended to encourage play behaviors that engage the entire body.

Professor Hiroki notes that the growth of the child is predicated on receiving parental approval for his own interests and concerns. Thus it is important that adults are able to observe children at play in the garden.

## ■ 12 Design Elements of the *Hagukumi* Garden

The *Hagukumi* garden offers up to 12 different design elements that encourage curiosity and creativity and promote healthy growth. The choice of design elements is governed primarily by the needs of the family and the amount of space available for the garden.