**Animal and Plant Life in the Ponds and Wetlands**

**Animals**

• Japanese Fire-bellied Newt (*Cynops pyrrhogaster*)

An amphibian reaching 10 centimeters in length, notable for its mottled ventral pattern of bright red-and-black skin, which contains a dangerous tetrodotoxin. If accidentally handled, wash point(s) of contact thoroughly.

• Japanese Relict Dragonfly (*Epiophlebia superstes*)

About 5 centimeters long, with wings of 3 centimeters. A relict species, or “living fossil,” and the only surviving member of the once-widespread Epiophlebiidae family.

• Scarce Large Blue Butterfly (*Phengaris teleius*)

Forewings measure 18–24 millimeters. Caterpillars produce a sweet nectar and are adopted into ant nests, where they feed upon ant broods before pupating. Critically endangered as of 2019.

**Wetland Plants**

• Japanese Water Iris (*Iris ensata* var. *spontanea*)

Perennial. Bold purple with yellow stripes on the falls; usually blooms in June. The wild ancestor of many modern iris cultivars grown worldwide.

• Kiseruazami Thistle (*Cirsium sieboldii*)

Perennial. Blooms from August to October, producing magenta flowers with a characteristic droop. Its Japanese name of “pipe thistle” (*kiseruazami*) comes from its resemblance to a *kiseru*, a traditional Japanese tobacco pipe.

• Fringe Sedge (*Fimbristylis dichotoma*)

Annual. Sprouts red-brown spikelets from July to November. Some attribute the native name, which can be read as “sky-piercer” (*tentsuki*), to these skyward-pointing flower heads.

**Plants in or near ponds**

• Pondweed (*Potamogeton fryeri*)

A perennial pondweed with broad, glossy, floating leaves of dark green tinged with red. Small yellow-green flowers bloom between April and June. The characters used to write “pondweed” (蛭蓆) mean “the leech’s resting-mat.”

• Beaksedge (*Rhynchospora fauriei*)

Perennial. In the Chūgoku region, this grass-like sedge grows only at elevations of 400 meters or greater. Red-brown spikelets appear from July to September. Its Japanese name (*ōinu no hanahige*) suggests it is a particularly large species in the genus of sedge called “dog’s moustache” (*inu no hanahige*).

• Fringe Sedge (*Fimbristylis subbispicata*)

Perennial. A sedge that grows in mountain wetlands, with stems of 30 to 40 centimeters that produce only a single spikelet. The native name, *yamai*, means “mountain rush.”