

Destruction and Regeneration

It goes without saying that volcanic eruptions can be dangerous and massively destructive. In particular, when lava or pyroclastic flows (clouds of super-hot gas and volcanic matter) escape from a volcanic vent, they incinerate all vegetation in their path. Increased ground temperatures near the vents also damage root systems and harm local flora. One view of a recently active volcano such as Mount Tarumae (left, top) shows how the ground in the area was burned clear, leaving a whitish scar on the side of the mountain. Yet in time, plants and shrubs begin to regenerate, and over decades, forests start to grow back. Much of the plant life in this national park is the result of long-term regeneration after some kind of volcanic activity in the distant past. You can see forests still recovering today on Mount Tarumae and Mount Usu.