

Plants of the Marsh

Kushiro Marsh is home to an array of rare flora. One of the rarest plants is the *yachibozu*, which are sedges that look like a bald head, hence the name *yachibozu* which means “marshland monk.” In autumn, the plant’s leaves wither and droop, and while in most cases warm temperatures and microorganisms would lead to decomposition, in the marshland’s low temperatures and humidity microorganisms are not as active. Thus, on many *yachibozu* the leaves remain in their withered state. In winter, water freezing within the earth forces the plant roots upward, and in spring meltwater accumulates at the base of the plant, washing away the soil from around the roots. Finally, new leaves and stalks grow from among the dead grass. This process is repeated each year, causing the plant to eventually reach heights of 40–50 cm.