

Botanists have so far identified approximately three hundred species of wild orchids across Japan. Of these, four have become extinct since record-keeping began, and 70 percent (roughly two hundred varieties) are currently in danger of extinction. Because their flowers are so beautiful, orchids are often gathered in the wild, leading to a steady decrease in their numbers. As a result, there are now regulations and ordinances in effect, including the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, the Natural Parks Act, and the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, which regulate the collecting of such plants from the wild. The orchid family has the greatest number of entries among the flora specified as rare domestic wild plants in the Species Preservation Act.

This is not only a domestic problem. Wild orchids are endangered all over the world, and international regulations, such as the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), also known as the Washington Convention, specifically restrict the cross-border transport of all orchids.