

## Moss at Saihoji

Saihoji's gardens feature 120 varieties of moss, earning it the popular name of Kokedera ("moss temple"). The grounds have not always been this way and it is believed that the thick blanket of moss found here today accumulated gradually over time, especially during the Edo period (1603–1868), when the temple fell into disrepair. Temple records suggest that when Muso Soseki restored the temple, the tops of the islands in the Golden Pond were approximately the same height as the water level. One theory is that numerous floods over the years led to the ponds being dredged in order to lower the water level, with the removed sludge being piled atop the islands, increasing their height. With time, moss would have grown from that mud, furnishing the garden with its velvety, lush textures.