

The Japanese Stone Pine

The Japanese stone pine (*Pinus pumila*), also known as the creeping pine, or *haimatsu* in Japanese, is a coniferous evergreen shrub that grows on mountainsides across Japan. It is a variety of pine that grows close to the ground to withstand strong winds and heavy snowfalls. Stone pines on Honshu, Japan's largest island, are usually found at elevations over 2,000 meters. Here at Mikaeridai Park, they grow densely around the lookout, at an elevation of only 450 meters. Other trees seen on the mountainside at this elevation include Erman's birch (*dakekanba*; *Betula ermanii*) and *miyamahannoki* (*Alnus maximowiczii*), a species of alder tree native to Japan and Russia.