

## **Ogasawara Coffee**

Coffee cultivation in Ogasawara began in 1878 with the planting of coffee trees on Chichijima, and the handful of coffee farms on the island today can all trace their roots to those first trees. During World War II, the civilian population was forced to leave the islands, and the coffee trees were abandoned. After the war, the United States used the islands as a base, and very few residents were allowed to return to the islands until 1968, when control of Ogasawara was given back to Japan. As people worked to reclaim their overgrown land, a man named Nose Akio discovered that new coffee trees had grown from those planted by his family before the war. The young trees had survived on their own in the central part of the island, which was mostly unaffected by the war.

Testing has confirmed that Nose's trees are descendants of the original coffee trees planted in the late nineteenth century. They are Typica trees, a variety of Arabica coffee—the most widely grown coffee in the world. There are only a few coffee farms in Ogasawara, and the harvesting and production is done by hand. Unlike larger operations that struggle against disease, the biggest threats to the coffee trees in Ogasawara are seasonal typhoons. The storms blow through the islands during the late summer and early autumn and can easily destroy not only the annual harvest but the trees themselves.