

## **Enjoying the Flora and Fauna**

Hikers will come across all kinds of plant and animal life, some of which is indigenous to or found only in Japan.

## **Trees and Other Plants**

The trees and other plant species that populate the forests of Chubusangaku National Park vary by area and altitude.

### **Japanese Beech (*Fagus crenata*)**

The Japanese beech, or *buna*, is a deciduous tree native to Japan and can grow at altitudes of up to 1,400 meters. Its ability to absorb and store rainwater in its trunk and roots helps prevent erosion, and the evaporation of water through its leaves acts as a natural cooler and climate modifier. The tree's leaves turn yellow in autumn.

### **Japanese White Birch (*Betula platyphylla*)**

The white birch, or *shirakaba*, is found throughout the mountains at altitudes of around 1,500 meters and can be recognized by its white, flaky bark and lime-green leaves that turn golden yellow in autumn.

### **Siberian Dwarf Pine (*Pinus pumila*)**

Dense fields of Siberian dwarf pine (*haimatsu*) can be found at high altitudes near the tree line throughout the park, creating a safe haven for the Japanese rock ptarmigan.

### **Japanese Larch (*Larix kaempferi*)**

The Japanese larch, or *karamatsu*, is the only deciduous coniferous tree native to Japan. It comes into leaf early in spring, and its needles turn bright yellow before being shed in autumn.

### **Japanese Rowan (*Sorbus commista*)**

The Japanese rowan's name, *nanakamado*, is made of two words meaning "seven" and "oven," from the belief that it is such a slow-burning firewood it can be used in an oven seven times. Also known as mountain ash, it bears small white flowers in spring, followed by brilliant red berries and leaves in autumn.

## **Veratrum**

Veratrum, or *kobaikeiso*, is a toxic flowering plant recognizable by its straight stems with multiple white blossoms. It is found in areas of damp soil and blooms every few years in midsummer.

***Angelica pubescens***

Called *shishiudo* in Japan, this is a native plant with delicate white blossoms resembling fireworks that emerge from its tall stems in July and August.