

Local Plants: *Ubame-gashi* (Oak; *Quercus phillyreoides*)

This evergreen plant can be considered either a shrub or a tree, depending on its height: some specimens reach as high as 10 meters. It grows slowly in warmer regions, including in the barren soil of coastal areas and mountainous cliffs, and stands strong even in locations that are buffeted by strong winds. The *ubame-gashi* oak is emblematic of the Tokushima coast, where it can be found in Naruto Park and elsewhere. Across Japan, its hard wood has long been used to produce charcoal, including a high-grade variety known as *binchotan*.

The leaves of the *ubame-gashi* oak are oval, sometimes elongated, and are serrated around the upper half. Around May a multitude of small yellow flowers bloom; the male flowers hang from the lower side of new branches, while female flowers bloom on the upper part of these new branches. The oval or spindle-shaped fruits turn brown and fall off the branch when ripe.