

Local Plants: *Mochitsutsuji* (Big Sepal Azalea; *Rhododendron macrosepalum*)

This evergreen shrub grows in low mountainous regions and hilly areas on the islands of Honshu and Shikoku. The *mochitsutsuji* name comes from the sticky surface of the stem and calyx, resembling the stickiness of *mochi* rice cakes. The height may vary considerably, between roughly 60 centimeters and 2 meters, with oval or elongated leaves clustered together at the ends of its branches. In April to June, at the same time as new shoots appear, light red-purple flowers bloom beside the leaves. The flowers feature a funnel-like shape with a distinctive red-speckled pattern on the upper part of their interior, called a nectar guide, that attracts insects.