

Local Plants: *Yabutsubaki* (Japanese Camellia; *Camellia japonica*)

This evergreen shrub grows widely across Japan, from coastal woodlands, where it is most common, up to mountainous regions, and reaches a height of 5 to 6 meters. The Japanese camellia has long been treasured for its tough wood, which is utilized in furniture-making and architecture, as well as for the oil extracted from the seed of its fruit, which is used in beauty products. The oval leaves, which are more or less elongated, have a glossy sheen.

In November to December or February to April, red flowers appear beside the leaves, toward the tips of the branches. The flowers vary in color, ranging from white, to pink, variegated, to red. The spherical fruit are some 2 to 3 centimeters in size. Ash from the wood of the Japanese camellia is used in fabric dyeing as a high-quality color fixative.