

Flowering Plants

From mid-April through late October, a variety of plants bloom in Mt. Sanbe's ecosystems. Ponds, grasslands, beech forest, and even the mountains' summits are each home to flowering species that have adapted to their own corners of the wilderness.

In early spring, just as leaves are appearing in the beech forest, the forest floor becomes scattered with the pale purple petals of violets and the white, star-shaped blooms of mountain wood sorrel. Soon after come the yellow flowers of spicebush and the striped, pitcher-like blooms of *Arisaema serratum*, a type of jack-in-the-pulpit. Sweet woodruff, sometimes included in potpourri for its pleasant scent, sends out clusters of white flowers.

In May and June, purple rabbit-ear irises appear in the ponds around Mt. Sanbe. The dainty pink trumpets of *Weigela hortensis* (*taniutsugi*), a type of honeysuckle, and the creamy stars of Chinese dogwood flowers add their colors as summer arrives. In the surrounding grasslands, Japanese azaleas erupt in clusters of salmon-colored blooms.

By midsummer, many new flowers appear in the forest. Nettle-leaved hydrangea and linden viburnum both put forth lacy white clusters of flowers. Kousa dogwood blooms are also white, but much larger in size. A particularly graceful blossom belongs to a dogwood relative, *Alangium platanifolium* var. *trilobum*, whose curled white petals and long stamens resemble tiny wind chimes.

Autumn brings the bold reds and yellows of changing leaves to the forest palette, but flowering plants continue blooming even as the weather grows cooler. Trumpet spurflower, for example, produces stems with slender, blue-violet blossoms similar in color to the blooms of nearby climbing gentian.

In the grasslands, many flowering plants reach full bloom in autumn. Of the seven flowers traditionally associated with autumn in Japan, six grow in Sanbe's grasslands: bush clover, silvergrass, kudzu vine, large pink, yellow patrinia, and balloon flower.