

## **Mt. Takamaru**

Mt. Takamaru (1,438 m) holds an untouched sanctuary of Japanese beech trees that stands in contrast with the surrounding planted Japanese cedar forests and is perfect for hiking.

### **Community Forest Preservation**

During World War II, the government ordered that the beech trees of Mt. Takamaru be cut down to make fighter plane propellers. The community resisted because water retained by the beech forest helps sustain its agriculture, and so the beech trees were saved. In 1977, responsibility for preserving Mt. Takamaru and developing the region was transferred from Yaeji residents to the town of Kamikatsu. A 99-year outsourcing agreement was signed to help conserve this natural resource for the future, and in 1977 the forest was designated Tokushima Prefecture's first Nature Conservation Area. Today, community members show their reverence to the forest every May 5th by climbing up Mt. Takamaru and parading a portable shrine from Tosho Jinja Shrine through the forest.

### **Untouched Forest Hike**

The trailhead is accessible by car, and the hike from trailhead to summit takes about one hour. The views going up are striking, and the trail follows a gentle slope up to the mid-mountain beech forest before continuing upward to the peak. The hike offers an up-close look at the wild beech trees, some of which are as tall as 30 meters, as well as a wide variety of wild plants and forest birds.