

## **Ureshino Tea: An Overview**

Tea seeds were first planted in the Ureshino area in the mid-fifteenth century by Chinese residents who found the climate and terrain suitable for tea cultivation.

### *Botanical Characteristics*

The tea plant is a woody shrub that typically grows to a height of 2 meters. The leaves, which are commonly between 5 and 7 centimeters long, are dark green, glossy, oval, and pointed at the tip, with serrated edges. Fragrant white flowers bloom between October and November but are sometimes nipped in the bud to encourage the growth of new shoots, allowing for several harvests per year. The flowers, which have five petals, grow to between 2 and 2.5 centimeters in diameter. The symbol that represents tea plantations on maps in Japan is taken from the fruit, a triangular capsule containing three seeds.

### *Conditions for Tea Growth*

A subtropical and moderately humid climate is ideal for the cultivation of the tea plant. The soil should be slightly acidic, with a pH value between 5.4 and 5.8, and the ideal annual rainfall is 45 to 50 inches (1,140 to 1,270 mm). If the temperature falls below 11°C, frost may severely damage the crop by destroying minerals and vitamins naturally found in high concentrations in the soil. Dry weather also makes the tea plant vulnerable, particularly during a drought.

### *Components of Tea*

Tea contains antioxidants and caffeine, which produce its astringency. Vitamins A, B, C, and E, plus free amino acids such as theanine, contribute to the flavor. Antioxidants, which dissolve during the brewing process, are most prevalent in teas that have a strong, bitter taste.

Antioxidants are credited with a range of health benefits, such as preventing cancer, suppressing blood cholesterol levels, and reducing blood pressure, as well as antibacterial and antiviral properties. Caffeine, which makes up between 2 and 4 percent of the content of brewed tea, increases alertness and may stimulate the metabolism and

the central nervous system. The amino acids in tea may also reduce blood pressure and regulate brain and nerve functions.