

nd Century Asian Forest

The name of this forest, which was established in the Yoshida area, was changed from “21st” to “22nd” Century to express the hope that international cooperation will continue among Asian countries. In autumn, visitors to the forest can enjoy the vibrant red color of the leaves of the dawn redwood trees (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) here. Around 400 dawn redwoods were planted in 1953.

Dawn Redwoods

Dawn redwood trees can grow to a height of over 30 meters. A key characteristic of the tree is its symmetrical leaves, which oppose each other in a zigzag pattern on stalks protruding from the stem. Though related to the giant sequoia and coast redwood trees of California, the dawn redwood differs in that it is deciduous, and its leaves grow directly opposite each other along the branches.

The trees are native to Hubei Province in China. Often referred to as living fossils, they were initially believed to have become extinct a million years ago. In 1941, Shigeru Miki, a Japanese botanist, identified some tree fossils as a new genus, *Metasequoia*. Then two years after that a Chinese forester collected samples of an unidentified species of tree discovered in present-day Moudao, Hubei province, and in 1948 researchers identified this as a living specimen of *Metasequoia*. In 1949, a young dawn redwood tree and seeds were brought to Japan and presented to the imperial family. Soon trees were distributed to other parts of the country.