

A Wide Variety of Plant Life

The Goishi Coast, like most of the Sanriku shoreline, is blessed by its location where two ocean currents converge—the warm Kuroshio arriving from the south, and the Oyashio bringing colder water from the subarctic north. Their confluence creates nutrient-rich seas that support a wide variety of fish and other marine life. On land, the phenomenon produces warmer winters and cooler summers, making the area an ideal habitat for diverse plant life from both harsher and milder climatic zones.

Japanese water iris (*nohanashobu*; *Iris ensata* var. *spontanea*)

This wild variety of water iris has reddish-purple petals with yellow spots. It grows naturally in ponds throughout most of northeast Asia, but is also cultivated. A patch of these irises flourishes near the parking lot at Ebisuhama Beach.

Nippon daisy (*hamagiku*; *Nipponanthemum nipponicum*)

The Nippon daisy is a plant closely identified with the Sanriku coast. This hardy shrub can be seen on the cliff faces of Ramboya Gorge, where it endures strong winds and tides and blooms in the autumn. As the plant matures, its stem becomes as hard as wood.

Kohamagiku (*Chrysanthemum yezoense* Maekawa)

This autumn flower is found slightly inland along the Sanriku coast. A member of the chrysanthemum family, it blooms in late autumn.

Yellow daylily (*zenteika/nikkokisuge*; *Hemerocallis middendorffii* var. *esculenta*)

Despite its English name, this perennial plant is not a lily, though the flowers have a similar shape. The flowers, which are orange with a yellow tint, bloom in the summer, opening in the morning and withering the evening of the same day.

Thunberg lily (*sukashiyuri*; *Lilium maculatum*)

These lilies are often found growing on rocks and sandy soil along the Sanriku coast. The blossoms face upward, which is unusual for lilies, and a gap at the base of the petals prevents rainwater from accumulating.

Japanese lady bell (*tsuriganeninjin*; *Adenophora triphylla* var. *japonica*)

From summer to autumn along the Goishi Coast, these small, bell-shaped flowers of light purple or white can be seen hanging downward on their stems. The Japanese name comes from the appearance of the flowers and the large roots: *tsurigane* means “hanging bells” and *ninjin* means “ginseng.”

Asian fawn lily (*katakuri*; *Erythronium japonicum*)

Colonies of this plant, whose flowers bloom in spring, are found up and down the Goishi Coast. For the seven or eight years they take to flower, the plants have only one leaf. With their delicate, upswept petals, they are sometimes called the “spring fairies” of the forest.

Helleborine (*kakiran*; *Epipactis thunbergii*)

This member of the orchid family is found in sunny wetlands, where it blooms in summer. The flowers are small but striking, with persimmon-colored petals. Clusters of helleborine grow in the area around Goishizaki Lighthouse.

Sword-leaved helleborine (*sasabaginran*; *Cephalanthera longibracteata*)

This orchid has long, slender leaves and several small white flowers at the top of the stem. Its Japanese name refers to *sasa*, a dwarf bamboo that has similarly shaped leaves. A related flower, *Cephalanthera falcata*, or *kinran* in Japanese, blooms at the same time.

Juniper (*hamahaibyakushin*; *Juniperus chinensis*)

This coastal evergreen shrub grows like a creeper on the rocks along the coast. Its low, horizontal profile helps it resist strong winds. It is one of the representative coastal plants of the Sanriku region.

Goldband lily (*yamayuri*; *Lilium auratum* Lindl.)

This summer-blooming plant is often seen along the Goishi Coast. It grows for five years before flowering, and the older the plant, the more flowers are produced. The flowers emit a sweet scent that becomes more intense in the evening.

Japanese camellia (*yabutsubaki*; *Camellia japonica*)

This wild species of camellia is the official flower of the city of Ofunato. Locally, it is used mainly for ornamental purposes, but also for cooking, making tea, and dyeing, as

well as for fertilizer and charcoal. Japanese camellias are a ubiquitous part of daily life in the Sanriku region.

Onambangiseru (Aeginetia sinensis Beck)

This tiny purple flower grows as a parasite on the roots of grasses, with no leaves and no photosynthetic process. Its Japanese name means “smoking pipe,” and refers to the way the flowers bloom at the end of a long, horizontal stalk.

Mimigata-tennansho (Arisaema limbatum)

The eye-catching, reddish vertical tube that grows from this plant is not a flower, but a bract—a modified leaf that differs from the plant’s foliage leaves. These are called “Buddhist bracts” in Japanese, as the edge of the tube droops like one of the long earlobes on a statue of Buddha.

Gooseneck loosestrife (okatorano-o; Lysimachia clethroides)

The small, star-shaped white flowers of this plant bloom in tapered clusters along the stem. The stems tend to droop in a graceful curve, hence the descriptive English name as well as its Japanese name, which means “tiger’s tail.”

Linden viburnum (gamazumi; Viburnum dilatatum)

The seasonal variations of this large deciduous shrub range from many small white flowers in early summer to jewellike bright red berries and multicolored leaves in autumn. The large, round leaves are covered with a fine fuzz.

East Asian eurya (*hisakaki*; *Eurya japonica* Thunb. var)

The glossy leaves of this evergreen shrub are thick and leathery, while the bell-shaped cream-colored flowers, which bloom from early spring, hang downward on short stems.

During the flowering season, the promenade just outside the Information Center is filled with their distinct scent. The branches and leaves are used in religious rituals on the Massaki Peninsula.