

Nature in Yokoyama: Forest

The forest around Yokoyama View Point is mostly broadleaf evergreen trees, which thrive in the mild climate that results from the warm Kuroshio Current. Over the centuries, residents further shaped the forest in this region to meet their needs, creating a *satoyama*—a woodland area managed for resources and sustainability.

The most common tree in the Yokoyama forest is the **ubame-gashi oak**. Residents have favored this evergreen oak since ancient times for its hard, dense wood, which is ideal for making the hard charcoal known as *binchotan*. The **ring-cupped oak** (*ara-kashi*), on the other hand, was used for firewood. The acorns from these oaks also nourish squirrels and other animals in the forest.

Other trees and shrubs along the walking trails include:

- **Japanese cheesewood** (*tobera*): An evergreen shrub with white flowers
- **Red bayberry** (*yamamomo*): In spring, its new leaves are reddish; in early summer, it bears red fruit
- **Hinoki cypress** (*hinoki*): Felled for timber, most famously at Ise Jingu Shrine; in past centuries, people building a new house would plant a few hinoki saplings to replenish the forest's resources
- **Harlequin glorybower** (*kusagi*): A deciduous shrub with white flowers accented by pink calyxes; its leaves give off a pungent smell when damaged