

## Nature in Yokoyama: Flowers and Fungi

The Yokoyama forest is filled with flowering plants that bloom at different times of the year. Collecting flowers or plants in the Yokoyama View Point area is not permitted, but visitors are welcome to admire them from the walking trails.

One of the best-known flowers of Yokoyama is the **three-leaved azalea** (*koba no mitsuba-tsutsuji*). This deciduous rhododendron bush blooms with bright pink flowers along the walking trail from the Yokoyama Visitor Center to the Ago Bay View Point each April and May. A **cherry blossom** (*sakura*) grove and a **hydrangea** (*ajisai*) garden can also be found in the Sozo-no-Mori area.

Other flowers in the Yokoyama area include:

- **Japanese pink lily** (*sasayuri*): White or pale pink blossoms from June to July
- **Japanese swertia** (*senburi*): Tiny white blossoms in autumn; they bloom close to the walking trail, where the canopy overhead is thinner
- **Balloon flower** (*kikyo*): Blue blossoms in summer
- **Hime-kohone**, a species of Japanese splatterdock: Yellow blossoms in summer

**Mushrooms and other fungi** play an important role in the forest, breaking down organic matter into nutrients that other creatures can use. They are most common in the wetter months between June and September but can appear at any time of year.

Mushrooms commonly found in the Yokoyama area include:

- **Earthstar**: Known as “earth chestnuts” (*tsuchi-guri*) in Japanese, with distinctive star-shaped collars
- **Shelf fungus**: Various members of a fungi family known as “monkey seats” (*saru no koshikake*) in Japanese due to their shape
- **Turkey tail**: Known as “tile mushrooms” (*kawara-take*) in Japanese