

Seasons of Yokoyama: Autumn

Autumn does not truly reach Yokoyama until November, when the encroaching cold finally overcomes the mild climate and the effect of the warm Kuroshio Current. Although the forest is mostly evergreen, a few deciduous trees and shrubs display red and gold autumn foliage.

As the haze and humidity of summer fade, the sky seems to recede, filled with drifting cirrocumulus clouds. Migratory birds pass by overhead, among them the flocks of **gray-faced buzzard-eagles** (*sashiba*) heading south for the winter. Closer to the ground, **chestnut tiger butterflies** (*asagi-madara*) make their way through the park to warmer climes.

A few plants blossom in autumn, like the **leafy lespedeza** (*maruba hagi*) that blooms with tiny pink flowers. These bushes line much of the walk from the Visitor Center to Yokoyama Tenkū Café Terrace. Autumn is also when the many varieties of oak in Yokoyama drop their acorns. Discerning collectors might find more than half a dozen distinct varieties.

Sounds carry further in the cool, still autumn air, and the chirping of **katydids** (*kirigirisu*) and **crickets** (*koorogi*) forms a chorus as evening falls. Autumn is also the breeding season for **deer** (*shika*), when the calls of bucks echo through the nearby forest.