

Ryugabuchi Pool

The water in this tranquil pool underneath Tengu Falls appears a bright shade of blue, especially on clear days when the sun lights up the surface. This color is the result of clear water low in minerals flowing over the relatively light-colored rock that makes up large sections of the riverbed in Kikuchi Gorge. The name Ryugabuchi means “dragon’s pool” and comes from a local legend that tells of a dragon lurking in the deep water. Uphill from here along the longer walking path, in the shade provided by zelkova and maple trees, grows a type of spider lily known as *kitsune no kamisori*—literally, “Fox’s razor” (*Lycoris sanguinea*). The plant’s tufts of long thin leaves with sharp edges that appear in early spring are thought to resemble straight razors, on which foxes could trim their fur while roaming the forest. The orange flowers bloom in August, after the leaves have all wilted.