

Wild Gingers

Fuji wild ginger / *Asarum fudsinoi* / Fujino kan'aoi / フジノカンアオイ

Amami-Oshima is a treasure trove of wild gingers, with eight known varieties on the island. This Fuji variety, the largest in Japan, is endemic to the island. The most common of the wild gingers that grow here, it is found along streams and other moist areas on the lower slopes of the mountains. These shade-loving plants grow at a very slow rate. The heart-shaped leaves are large, up to 20 centimeters long, with a glossy surface. The tubular flowers are light green to yellow inside, sometimes with purplish edges, and bloom between January and May. This wild ginger is listed as an endangered species.

Miyabi wild ginger / *Asarum celsum* / Miyabi kan'aoi / ミヤビカンアオイ

This is a small species of wild ginger that is endemic to Amami-Oshima, where it grows in the forest at higher altitudes. It has distinctive dull, often splotchy, dark green and brown leaves that are heart-shaped. Moss sometimes grows on its leaves due to the high humidity of their habitat. The flowers, which bloom from December to May, range in color from dark brown on the inside to bright green at the edges, with three pointed sections. The plant is listed as an endangered species.