

A Colorful Cornucopia: Autumn in Urabandai

Autumn brings shorter days and cooler temperatures to Urabandai. The Japanese black bear (*Ursus thibetanus japonicus*) feeds on nuts and fruits to store enough fat for hibernation in the cold months ahead. The bears forage for nuts like beech, oak, and chestnut, as well as the fruit of plants including the hardy kiwi, chocolate vine, crimson glory vine, and Japanese rowan.

Tangled branches and twigs high up in trees are the work of bears, who climb up and pull in branches to eat their fruit and leaves. The nuts and berries abundant in autumn also sustain the population of stoats, squirrels, and other small mammals. Red berries like the Sargent viburnum (*Viburnum sargentii*) suit the diet of avian species including waxwings (*Bombycillidae*), dusky thrushes (*Turdus eunomus*), and brown-eared bulbuls (*Hypsipetes amaurotis*).

As the leaves change, the lush greens of the landscape are replaced with hues of red and gold. This palette offers a striking contrast with the spring and summer months, and the fiery foliage brightens the scenery of areas like Lake Hibara and the Nakatsugawa Valley.