

High Elevation Plants

Flourishing above the timberline

The alpine zone (2,700 meters and upward) of the Minami Alps is home to numerous varieties of wild plants. The flower-filled alpine meadows found above the timberline at Kusasuberi on Mt. Kitadake, as well as on the three mountains collectively known as Arakawa Sanzan, rank as some of the most famous sights in Minami Alps National Park. The commonest flowers in the park's alpine meadows are the yellow *Shinano-kinbai* (*Trollius japonicus*) and the white *Hakusan ichige* (*Anemone narcissiflora*).

Other flowers that hikers should look out for are the Japanese buttercup (*Ranunculus kitadakeanus*) and *miyamakinbai* (*Potentilla matsumurae*), both of which are a vivid yellow; *Kitadake-so* (*Callianthemum hondoense*), eyebright (*Euphrasia*), and the eight-petal mountain avens (*Dryas octopetala*), all of which are white; and Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium caeruleum* ssp. *yezoense* var. *nipponicum*), the Mt. Hakusan geranium

(*Geranium yezoense* var. *nipponicum*), and Japanese campion (*Silene keiskei* var. *akaisialpina*), which are pink and purple.

Since the late 1990s, the flowers of these alpine meadows have come under threat as the pressure of numbers has forced the sika deer (*Cervus nippon*) up into the alpine zone in the spring and summer months in search of food.