

## **The Four Seasons on Mt. Adatara**

Mt. Adatara shows a different face with every season. The warmth of spring rises up the mountainside gradually, bringing forth delicate new leaves and blossoms in its wake. The earliest flowers to bloom include mayflowers and a rhododendron called *urajiro yoraku*, named for the flowers' resemblance to the filigree-like hanging decorations known as *yoraku* that adorn Buddhist altars.

Summer, particularly from late June through July, is peak flower season on the mountain. Dozens of varieties of rhododendron and azalea come into bloom, with colors ranging from pale yellow to bright crimson. Varieties of the *sarasa dodan* bush with its bell-like flowers are also common. At higher altitudes, hardy dwarf cornel and starflower bushes thrive amid the rocky terrain. Summer also brings chestnut tiger butterflies, which flit through the air on warm, still days.

Autumn descends from the peak to the foothills throughout October, with deeper colors at lower elevations. Japanese white pines produce needles that grow in distinctive clusters of five. Squirrels feast on the pine cones, leaving their cores under the trees. The mountain ashes and maple trees along the Mt. Adatara trail turn a brilliant red, while the *dakekanba* birch trees on the slopes of Mt. Tetsu to the north form a carpet of gold.

In winter, Mt. Adatara's slopes are blanketed in snow. Climbing the mountain during this season without an experienced local guide is not recommended, and the Adatara Mountain Ropeway is closed all winter, but many visitors come to the ski resort and admire the view from below.