

## **What Is a Natural Monument?**

Natural Monuments are animals, plants, minerals, and geological features identified as having high scientific value at a national, prefectural, or municipal level.

## **Yakeishiyama Park**

The Komenoyama Fault runs through the Ōmuta area, and the slippage along the fault line created this cliff and exposed seams of coal. Today, Yakeishiyama Park encompasses the entire vertical fault, which extends 10 kilometers from north to south and has a width of 200 to 300 meters. The fault line is clearly visible on the left when ascending the stairs from the parking lot to the observation point. A 40-million-year-old coal seam, which is between 30 and 50 centimeters wide and 10 meters long, is visible on the western side of the fault, near the parking lot. This is the only place in Kyushu with views of both a vertical fault and an exposed coal seam.

The bounty of exposed coal like that found at Yakeishiyama Park is why Ōmuta has been known for its coal mines for hundreds of years. The first discovery of coal in the Ōmuta area was in 1469, at nearby Mt. Tōka. The fault was designated a Natural Monument by Fukuoka Prefecture in 2006.

### **Tsuchiana Japanese Hackberry**

The Japanese hackberry (*Celtis sinensis* Pers.) is a deciduous tree seen in Honshu, Shikoku, and Kyushu, as well as in other parts of East Asia. The average hackberry is 20 meters tall with a trunk circumference of 3 meters. The Tsuchiana tree is much larger—it was most recently measured to be 24 meters tall and has a trunk with a 5.5-meter circumference. From branch tip to branch tip, it stretches 27 meters east to west and 18 meters north to south. The owner of the land on which the tree stands believes it is over three centuries old.

The tree was designated a Natural Monument by Fukuoka Prefecture in 1979 as the only Japanese hackberry of its size in the prefecture. It is

named after the surrounding Tsuchiana district. Ōmuta designated it an Important Tree for the Landscape in 2016. This symbol of the community is best viewed from the north. It flowers from April to May.