

FEATURES

Various Varieties of Cherry Blossoms in Japan <Part 1>



Photo: PIXTA



Photo: Kanazawa City Hall



Photo: PIXTA



Photo: Uman City

Above left: Chishima-zakura produces light pinkish-red flowers as its leaves unfold. Above right: The cherry blossoms of Shogetsu-ji Temple, beloved as a symbol of Kanazawa

Below left: Shidare-zakura alongside the steam locomotive that used to operate on the Nicchu Line displayed along the three-kilometer-long cherry blossom walking path Below right: Gyoiko-zakura trees are characterized by petals that are light green with pink lines.

The cherry blossom—the iconic flower of Japan. The country is home to ten wild species of cherry trees, including the Yamazakura mountain cherry, which is said to climb to over 100 different species of wild variants and cultivars in total. In fact, the Somei-Yoshino cherry, the most popular variety in Japan today, is actually a relatively new cultivar introduced in the mid-19th century. This issue of *Highlighting Japan* goes beyond Somei-Yoshino, introducing famous sites known for specific cherry tree varieties from ancient Japan; the Kumano cherry, first new wild species of cherry trees discovered in 100 years “Kumano-Zakura”, and masterpieces of Japanese paintings depicting ancient Japanese cherry varieties.

