2. The Climate of Japan
Japanese flowers and plants are diverse because of geography and climate.

Located on the eastern edge of Eurasia and the western rim of the Pacific Ocean, Japan is a bow-shaped, volcanic island chain that extends 2,000 km from the northeast to the southwest. In the center of the country’s rich, rugged terrain stands a 2,000-to-3,000-meter high mountain range. While a large part of Japan’s climate is temperate, there is a range of regions from subtropical to subarctic. Annual rainfall also varies from 1,000 mm to 3,000 mm according to the region. These geographical and climatic characteristics contribute to the distinct seasons.

In addition, the progressive development of greenhouse and related facilities contribute to the year-round commercial production of the world’s most diverse, high-quality flowers and plants. Furthermore, the political and financial infrastructure of the Edo Era initiated advancements in forestry and agricultural breeding processes suitable to the varied regional conditions. In each of the hundreds of local municipalities of that time, the tradition to proactively advance floriculture was born. That tradition resulted in the over 1,000 individual breeders producing flowers and plants throughout contemporary Japan.

3. The Flower Culture of Japan

Through the ages, the people of Japan have admired nature. The 8th-century literary work "Manyoshu" or "Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves" contains the first known reference to the Japanese appreciation of flowers. Readers of this oldest known poetry collection in Japan can discover numerous descriptions of nature and flowers. Evidence of reverence for nature appears not only in literature but also in visual art and design.

Kimono textiles and various kinds of traditional Japanese crafts incorporate images of flowers and plants. The culture of decorating with flowers appears to have originated as offerings to Buddha. This practice evolved into the art of Ikebana in the mid-15th century and has been passed down to modern times. Flower admiration in Japan began with picking wildflowers. With the introduction of gardening techniques from China, the culture of growing beautiful flowers for enjoyment developed.

Cultural appreciation of flowers was only common among the privileged aristocratic class in the chaotic times preceding the politically stable Edo Era of the 17th to 19th centuries. As social mayhem subsided, the general public gained the freedom of time and resources to develop a deep admiration for flowers. Political unification gave birth to the development and popularization of Japanese floriculture. Japan’s love of flowers continues to this day.