

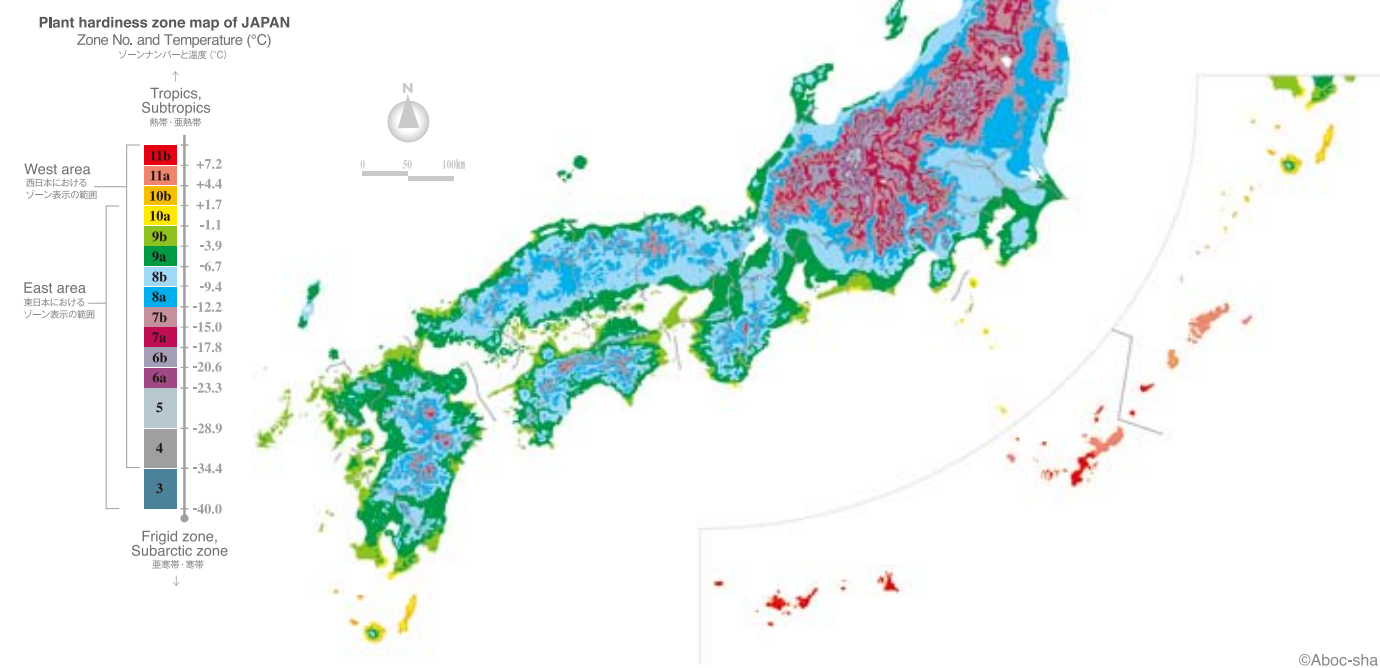
2. The Climate of Japan

Japanese flowers and plants are diverse because of geography and climate.

2.日本の気候風土
～日本の地理的・気候的特性による日本産花きの多様性～

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.



日本はユーラシア大陸の東端、太平洋の西端に位置し、東北から南西に 2000km に伸びる弓状の火山列島で、国土の中央には 2000 ～ 3000m の山脈があり、非常に起伏に富んだ地形をしています。日本の気候の大部分は温帯ですが、亜寒帯から亜熱帯の地域もあり、年間降水量が地域により 1000 ～ 3000mm と幅広く、このような地理的・気候的特性から、より明確な四季となっています。また、温室などの施設整備も進んでおり、年間を通じて世界で最も多様で高品質な花きが商業的に生産・流通しています。

また江戸時代は、数百の地方都市で各々が行財政を管理運営する時代であったため、地域の条件に適した農林産物の育種改良に生産者が積極的に取り組む伝統が生まれ、現在、花きの個人育種家が 1000 名以上にも達しています。

3. The Flower Culture of Japan

3.日本の花文化

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.



自然を愛でて生きてきた日本人が花について初めて書き残したのは8世紀ごろに書かれた「万葉集」でした。これは日本の詩を集めた最古の詩集で、花や自然について詠まれた歌が多く載っています。文学だけではなく、美術品や着物、工芸品の模様としても植物が多く取り入れられました。

仏様への供物として発祥したと言われる花を飾る文化は15世紀頃にいけばなという形で体系化され、現在にまで脈々と受け継がれています。

日本人の花の楽しみ方は、元々は野原から野生の花を摘んで身近に愛でるだけでしたが、中国から庭園文化が伝わると、徐々に人の手で美しい花を栽培して楽しむ文化が始まりました。

日本に於いても花を楽しむ文化は長く社会の特権階級のものでしたが、社会の騒乱が収まり、政治が安定した江戸時代（西暦 1603 年～ 1868 年）からは庶民にも花を育て愛する余裕が生まれ、花を愛して育てる文化は社会全体の日本の特徴となりました。それが現代の日本にも続いているのです。