

## The Trees of Miyazaki

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, many people are choosing to stay at home. A lot of people in that kind of situation cheer themselves up by looking at the plants and trees outside the window or while taking a stroll. The Phoenix Palm, a common sight around Miyazaki, is actually one of the official symbol trees of the prefecture.



In this month's *Living In Miyazaki*, we will share some information on three types of tree that are officially designated as Prefectural Trees of Miyazaki.

### Phoenix Palm

Originally from the Canary Islands, this tree is strong against pests and diseases, and lives for a very long time, which is where it is said to have earned its name. Around the start of the Taisho era (1912-1926), they were first planted in Tenjinyama-kōen in Miyazaki City. Later, Shotaro Iwakiri, the founder of Miyazaki Kotsu, who later went on to be known as "the father of sightseeing in Miyazaki", started planting them all along the Nichinan coast in 1936, creating the tropical scenery we know and love today.

(Designated as a Prefectural Tree in 1966)

### Yamazakura



A type of wild sakura (cherry blossom) tree native to mountainous areas. Loved by people since the distant past, in the spring, together with the young leaves, white or light crimson blossoms adorn their branches. They generally live for 2-300 years, and since ancient times, a great many Japanese poems have been composed about these venerable sakura. There are even poems about them in *Yamazakura no uta* ("Songs of Cherries Wild and Fair"), by Bokusui Wakayama, the famous poet from Hyuga in Miyazaki. According to the Japan Meteorological Agency, the sakura in Miyazaki are scheduled to bloom in late March this year.

(Designated as a Prefectural Tree in 2003)

### Obisugi (Obi Cedar)

These trees have been cultivated in the region of Obi (in central Nichinan) for around 400 years. If you visit Obi Castle, the famous sightseeing spot in Nichinan, the main gate (*Ōtemon*) there was restored in 1978 using 100-year-old *obisugi*. Pass through the gate, and you will find four cedars in the corners of a square walled garden. By visiting (合わせる – *awaseru*) all four (四 – *shi*) cedars (杉 – *sugi*), it is said to bring good fortune and happiness, since by combining the Japanese words it makes the auspicious homonymous phrase しあわせすぎ – *shiawase-sugi* (lit: "an abundance of happiness")



(Designated as a Prefectural Tree in 2003)

What kinds of trees and plants are there around where you live? We hope you are all able to relax and enjoy a change of pace in the tranquil, lush greenery and wonderful Miyazaki scenery!

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions regarding this column, please contact the Miyazaki International Foundation (MIF):

TEL : 0985-32-8457 FAX : 0985-32-8512 Email [miyainfo@mif.or.jp](mailto:miyainfo@mif.or.jp)

Also, if you ever have any questions or concerns about daily life in Miyazaki, please feel free to get in touch with the Miyazaki Support Center for Foreign Residents:

TEL : 0985-41-5901 FAX : 0985-41-5902 Email [support@mif.or.jp](mailto:support@mif.or.jp)