

## “Beautiful Locales for Plum Blossom Viewing in Miyazaki” 『梅の名所』

A month has passed since New Year's, but cold days still linger on. Despite the cold, this time of year is considered to be spring according to the old Japanese calendar. Because of this, Japanese New Year's cards often use words containing the Chinese character for spring, such as *shinshun* (new spring) or *geishun* (welcoming spring). In Japan spring is often symbolized by cherry blossoms. While it is still too early for cherry blossom viewing, it is possible to see beautiful plum blossoms during this time of year. In this month's "Living In" we will be introducing plum blossom viewing spots within Miyazaki.

Plum Blossoms are...

- flowers that originate from China
- a member of the rose family
- alternatively known in Japanese as *harutsugekusa* (spring foretelling grass)



The Plum Blossom is designated as the national flower of Taiwan. As for Japan, Wakayama Prefecture, producer of *umeboshi* (preserved food made from the fruit of the plum tree), and Fukuoka Prefecture, home to Dazaifu Tenman-gu (the grave of Sugawara no Michizane, Heian period scholar, politician, and lover of plum blossoms), have designated plum blossoms as their prefectural flower.

**【Shintomi: Zaronbai】** Aza Yunomiya, Ooaza Nyuta, Shintomi Town

**Type:** *garyubai*

**Viewing Period:** From early-to-mid-February

Zaronbai is home to a 600 year old plum tree, which is registered as one of the 100 Largest Trees in Miyazaki Prefecture. This single tree has spread its roots and continued to increase its stocks to its current total of over 80. Plum Festivals will be held at Zaronbai on Sundays during the viewing period. There are various theories regarding the origin of the name Zaronbai (literally plum negotiation seat). One of the prevailing theories is that when the Sadowara and Takanabe clans disputed over the territorial rights to this plum tree covered area, it served as the seat for their negotiations.

**【Miyazaki City: Gecchibai】** Takahama, Takaoka-cho, Miyazaki City

**Type:** *garyubai*

**Viewing Period:** From mid-to-late-February

The plums grown in this area were originally known as *kosyaku* plums for having being grown in the garden of the Kosyaku Temple, but are said to have been given the named "*gecchibai*" (plums that know the moon) by the 19<sup>th</sup> Generation Lord of the Satsuma Clan, Shimazu Mitsuhsa, who was impressed by their beauty when he visited the area.

**【Miyazaki City: Korinbai】** Kaeda, Miyazaki City

**Type:** 4 types of plum blossoms (*koubai*, *koume*, *shirakaga*, and *bungoume*)

**Viewing Period:** From mid-January to early February

These plum blossoms can be seen at the Aoshima Nature Recreation Village in Miyazaki City. A Plum festival is held here every year in early February. A hiking course has also been established here. From the viewing platform atop the summit the lovely scenery, which includes the outskirts of Miyazaki City and the Hyuga Sea, can be taken in.

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If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact the Miyazaki International Foundation: (Phone) 0985-32-8457, (Fax) 0985-32-8512

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Thank you