

# Eight Views of Nippon

*Robert G. Nicholson*

**Visiting ancient gardens in Tokyo and mountaintops on Hokkaido and Honshu, temple gardens and national parks, and far-northern islets, a botanical pilgrim finds the whole of Japan to be one vast “green Mecca”**

To travel in a country as botanically rich and as horticulturally storied as Japan was a goal I had carried for years. Now, after my recent first visit to that green Mecca, I realize what an open-ended ambition it was, for I could never have found all of the native species I sought or visited all the gardens worth seeing during my three-week stay in Japan.

Of all the world's countries, Great Britain and Japan have attained the greatest prominence in horticulture. Their peoples nurture a deep love of plants, and neither will tolerate an excuse not to garden. After all, one can always garden in a window box or single pot, as city dwellers of both countries often do.

Great Britain presents the “garden crawler” with the dilemma of choice, for there are scores of first-rate botanic gardens, parks, and cottage gardens to decide among. A visitor to Japan faces a similar problem, but has a compounding problem as well: compared to Britain or even the eastern United States, Japan has a staggeringly diverse native flora, one that still contributes new and untried plants to horticulture, ranging from alpine to tropicals, a flora that makes Japan one of the greatest “natural gardens” on earth.

In September of 1986, I had the good fortune of going to Japan, to collect plants for the

Arnold Arboretum. Although I undertook the trip primarily to collect woody plants, Gary Koller, the Arboretum's managing horticulturist, did draw up a list of targeted rare species for me before I left.

During the course of the three weeks, I collected from eighteen sites, about half of them mountains in the range of six thousand to nine thousand feet (approximately 1,800 to 2,750 m). I visited three of the four main islands of Japan and, between bursts of collecting, visited some of the fabled gardens created during the fifteen hundred years of Japanese landscaping.

After landing at Tokyo's Narita Airport, I needed to spend a day or two in Tokyo adjusting to the ten-hour difference in time. Tokyo, formerly called Edo, is the present capital of Japan but was not a city of importance until 1863, when it became the new capital. It does have some fine gardens but none with the long and time-worn elegance of those in Nara, Japan's first capital, or of those in Kyoto, long the seat of Japanese culture.

Even though my visit did not come at the best time for viewing gardens, a number of gardens were recommended to me. One in particular—Rikugi-en—stood out.

## **I: Rikugi-en, the Garden of Poetry**

Rikugi-en is literally called the Garden of Poetry, Rikugi signifying the six classifications of poetry in Japan and China. Completed in 1702, the garden was designed by

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*Opposite: A yukimi lantern in the Rikugi-en Garden, Tokyo. All photographs accompanying this article were taken by the author.*

Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu, a minister of the Shogun. It is a prime example of a circuit garden, with a main path following the contours of a large central lake, one that is dotted with islands of cloud-pruned black pine. From this main path a number of smaller paths wind into the patches of woods on the edges of the garden, often surprising with specimen plants or dappled views back toward the central waters.

One outstanding specimen was a large, fifteen-foot (4.5-m) plant of *Enkianthus perulatus*, usually seen only as a shrub in the United States. The garden originated as a feudal estate, but in the 1870s it came to the hands of a member of the rising financial aristocracy, a Baron Iwasaki. He respectfully restored the garden to its original drawing and descriptions. In 1938 the Iwasaki clan do-



*Cobblestone path in the Rikugi-en Garden, Tokyo.*

nated this fine garden to the City of Tokyo.

In addition to its outstanding plant material, such as huge specimens of *Ginkgo biloba* and *Acer buergerianum*, the garden features a number of quintessentially Japanese characters. Stone lanterns dot the garden, both the tall Taima-ji style and the more-squat, four-legged Yukimi type. A bridge, made of large, ten-foot slabs of stone take one over a pool filled with vividly mottled *koi* and large painted turtles, both creatures well settled into their role as the park's beggars.

What distinguishes the garden is its meticulous upkeep and its balanced interplay between the shadowy woods and the bright expanses of clipped lawn. These lawns are actually a recent feature in Japanese landscaping, having been borrowed from the West only in the last century or so. Upon the bright-green lawns are positioned tightly pruned, mounded plants of the dark-green Japanese black pine, *Pinus thunbergiana*. From across the pond, these pines look like large stones, or even islands on a calm sea of green.

## II: Daisetsuzan National Park

Given that I would be a month in Japan, I felt it best to start collecting in the North, where seeds would ripen early, and to work southward during my stay. The first collecting was to be on Hokkaido, the northernmost big island, in the Daisetsuzan National Park.

Before collecting, I made a short, helpful visit to the Sapporo Botanical Garden, long an ally of the Arnold Arboretum. In Sapporo, I was shown a row of massive red oaks lining a city street. Beneath one of the oaks was a sign stating that the trees had been started from seed sent to Japan by the Arnold Arboretum in the late 1800s! Since it was the Garden's centennial year, I presented its director, Tatsuchi Tsujii, with gifts from the Arnold Arboretum—a *Magnolia virginiana* grown from native Massachusetts seed and a photograph of Kingo Miyabe, the Garden's first director,

which E. H. Wilson had taken during his stay in 1917.

Dr. Tsujii had arranged for seed-collecting permits for me, and within a day I was on the flanks of Mount Asahi, at sixty-two hundred feet (2,290 m) Hokkaido's highest mountain.

Mount Asahi has an excellent alpine zone that can be reached by cable car, so I began collecting in the alpine zone and walked my way down. At fifty-three hundred feet (1,620 m) was a series of small alpine ponds around which grew *Geum pentapetalum*, *Empetrum nigrum* var. *japonicum*, *Bryanthus gmelinii*, *Phyllodoce aleutica*, and *Rhododendron aureum*. This last species is a prostrate dwarf with pale-yellow flowers. Prior attempts with the plant in Boston have proven unsuccessful. Perhaps the cooler summers in such places as Maine would mimic its native climate better than that of Boston.

The larger shrubby species in this area were limited to *Pinus pumila*, the Japanese stone pine, and *Sorbus matsumarae*, a bushy mountain ash with vivid-red fall color. The flora on this mountain terminates at about

fifty-nine hundred feet (1,800 m), the soils thereafter being affected by sulfurous steam from an active band of fumaroles.

Looking back down from this height, I saw that the ponds looked like chips of mirror set into a clipped carpet of low, green plants, each species contributing its own unique texture.

A mile-long trail connected the upper terminus of the cable car to the beckoning hot-spring spas below. As if to further my appreciation of this custom, a drenching rainstorm took its cue, turning the path into a stream-bed.

Despite the rain, this trail offered some of the trip's best collecting as it connected alpine, subalpine, and boreal forest zones over its short distance. At about forty-nine hundred feet (1,500 m), I collected *Tripetaleia bracteata*, a close relative of the Georgia plume, *Elliottia racemosa*. It was growing at a much higher elevation than I expected.

About halfway down Mount Asahi, in a forest of *Abies sachalinensis* and *Picea jezoensis*, the trail cut through a series of level areas that formed wet meadows. There



Meadow on Mount Asahi, Daisetsuzan National Park.

I found a daylily, *Hemerocallis middendorfii*, a hosta, *Hosta rectifolia*, and masses of *Lysichiton camtschaticense*, a member of the Araceae with an affinity to skunk cabbage. With long, elliptic, two-foot (60-cm) leaves and an inflorescence consisting of a yellow spadix subtended by a pure-white spathe, this hardy plant would be a bold addition to marshy plantings or pondside gardens. I collected a large lot of seeds in the hope that some would germinate.

### III: Rishiri and Rebun, Islands of Flowers

Rishiri and Rebun are two islands that have long held a special fascination for plant lovers. They lie off the northwestern corner of Hokkaido and are only fifty miles (80 km) from Russia's Sakhalin Island. Rishiri is the

larger of the pair and betrays its volcanic origins by its stunning profile, a sharply tapered cone that rises fifty-seven hundred feet (1,749 m) above sea level. (Imagine, if you will, a six thousand-foot island off the coast of Boston!) Access to the islands is gained by ferry from Wakkanai, an active fishing port. It is a beautiful, bracing ride, brimming with Japanese tourists eager to visit the Islands of Flowers.

The two islands are most noted for their high number of endemic species, particularly of woodland and alpine plants. Since it is a prime collecting area, permits are limited to few seed collectors, but I was able to arrange permission through the gracious efforts of the Sapporo Botanic Garden.

To reach the summit from the port takes



*The alpine zone of Rishiri Island.*

five to six hours of brisk walking. As with any rapid change in elevation, the floral diversity also changes quickly, and a good selection of material can be acquired in a day or two.

In the lowest zone of the island is found a mixed forest of deciduous trees such as *Acer mono* var. *mayrii*, *Corylus heterophylla*, *Ulmus davidiana* var. *japonica*, and *Phellodendron amurense* intermingling with *Picea glehnii* and *Picea jezoensis*. Two of the better collections were *Magnolia hypoleuca*, a plant related to our native *Magnolia macrophylla*, *Magnolia tripetala*, and *Magnolia ashei*, along with *Skimmia japonica* var. *repens*, a low-growing shrub of the citrus family found growing in the dense shade of a *Picea* forest. As I continued upward, the terrain became steeper, and the woody flora became more stunted. After passing through a belt of *Abies sachalinensis* intermixed with *Betula ermanii*, the woody flora diminished in size and frequency.

The upper third of the mountain is dominated by two species—*Pinus pumila*, the

Japanese stone pine, and *Sasa kurilensis*, a waist-high, thin-stalked bamboo that forms massive, impenetrable pure stands.

The pine is one of the Japanese plants which I found most interesting, as it is a natural dwarf, rarely growing more than seven feet (2.1 m) high. It tends to form densely branched, impenetrable stands and is generally the last conifer seen before reaching the alpine zone. Its range is from mid-Honshu northward and varies greatly in its altitudinal distribution. E. H. Wilson reported it from ten thousand, six hundred feet (3,250 m) on Honshu, but Yushun Kudo wrote that it occurred at sea level, growing in sand dunes on Russia's frigid Sakhalin Island. Here it grows on the sea beaches and their immediate vicinity in association with such plants as *Empetrum nigrum*, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*, *Loiseleuria procumbens*, *Linnæa borealis*, *Artemisia norvegica*, and *Fritillaria camtschatcensis*. Wilson also reported that cones were rarely found, and this was true. The cones evidently are carried away by squirrels and



*Pinus pumila* (right) and *Sasa* sp. on Rishiri Island.



*Sasa* sp. on Rishiri Island.

other rodents, as I saw numerous seedlings in clumps, indicating that the animals probably store the seeds.

The foliage of *Pinus pumila* ranges from blue-green to grey-blue, and one cultivar, 'Dwarf Blue', is a fine dark blue. Because of the density of these attractive needles, the low spreading architecture, its hardiness (Zone 3), and its possible salt tolerance, *Pinus pumila* would seem to be an ideal plant for foundation, seaside, or mass plantings. It is, unfortunately, rarely found in nursery catalogs because its seeds are scarce and because it is difficult to graft.

Beyond the *Pinus pumila*-*Sasa* zone, Rishiri's craggy peak is home to a varied alpine flora. *Sedum cauticum*, *Rhododendron camtschaticum*, *Oxytropis rishiriensis*, *Achillea alpina*, and a ground-hugging species of *Salix* I've yet to identify grow among the rocks in chunky, volcanic soil. By the time one reaches this zone it becomes appar-

ent that Rishiri cannot be done in a day. Climbing time up and back down takes at least eight hours, and there are many plants to consider along the way. As it turned out, I stayed too long at the top and had to travel the downward path through Rishiri's black silhouette forest by the light of a poet's moon.

#### IV: Ryoan-ji Temple Garden

Half a dozen landmarks—"must sees"—usually are indelibly linked to a country, and failure to visit at least one of them is a traveller's sacrilege. A visit to one of these well worn stops is likely to produce mixed feelings: you feel part of a herd and often have a sense of *déjà vu*, having seen the attraction a hundred times in photographs. Ryoan-ji Temple in Kyoto is such a site. This famous garden, composed only of five groupings of fifteen stones set in a flat expanse of raked sand, has stretched the definition of "garden" for five centuries.



*The garden at Ryoan-ji Temple.*

The garden dates from the Muromachi Period (1394–1572) and is the premier example of a particularly Japanese style of garden, the Karesansui, or Dry Landscape. Gardens of this style represent streams, lakes, shallows, and rivers by suggestion, using coarse sand, pebbles, and stone to define an imaginary body of water. The style had its beginnings in the Kamakura Period (1186–1335) but usually as part of a greater garden scheme. It was not until the middle of the Muromachi Period that dry gardens stood as singular, separate entities, made to be viewed from one spot, usually a raised veranda, and with entry into the space restricted. Dry gardens were constructed as aids to meditation, as sources of inspiration for the monks of the Temple.

Ryoan-ji probably was built late in the Fifteenth Century. Its designer is still a subject of scholarly debate, although the name of Soami, a painter and tea master, usually comes to the fore. It is often thought that the stark black-and-white paintings of the Sung Period in China, of which Japanese painters of the time were aware, may have inspired this minimalist trend in garden architecture.

The garden is a part of a large temple complex set on the side of a verdant hill in northwestern Kyoto. As it is the main attraction, a steady flow of tourists is directed by signs through the temple grounds to the garden. Although some writers suggest that the garden is best viewed during early morning, when wet and misted, I found it equally satisfying in the bright, clear sun. Incredibly, and only in this retreat garden, a loudspeaker system was barking a quick taped explanation of Zen tranquillity to tourists in Japanese. No better symbol of modern Japan could be found.

The garden's design is inexplicably powerful and produced within me feelings of tranquillity and wonder. Its stones rest in five groups (five and two to the left half; three, two, and three to the right), but the placement

within the rectangular bed is so perfectly wrought an impenetrable harmony results. It is probably one of the few gardens in the world that resists second guessing. The only plants that "intrude" into this garden design are the moss that has established itself at the base of each grouping and the treetops that rise beyond the buff brown, tile-topped walls. Neither was part of the original design. If we define a garden as a place of plants, then Ryoan-ji barely qualifies. It seems to be the progenitor of the current concept of "environmental sculpture" or of sculpture gardens. For comparison, I would offer Carl André's "Stone Field Sculpture" in Hartford, Connecticut. Built in 1977, it consists of thirty-six ordered boulders on a triangular plot and was met with outrage when "unveiled." It stands more as an abstraction, perhaps symbolizing islands on a sea, a floating world. Today's landscape architects who strive to expand the concept of garden should look to the five hundred-year-old Ryoan-ji before proclaiming too loudly their new "minimalist concepts."

#### V: Ritsurin Garden

The port city of Takamatsu, situated on the large southern island of Shikoku, is the locale of Ritsurin, one of Japan's finest gardens. Composed of a network of strolling paths interwoven through a system of streams and ponds, Ritsurin is a prime example of the Kaiya-shiki type of circuit landscape gardening. It offers a constant unveiling of views both intimate and expansive.

Ritsurin is a comparatively recent garden, having been constructed over a span of eighty years starting in the late Seventeenth Century, during Japan's Edo Period (1603–1867). The Edo Period was a time of relative prosperity and peace during which the feudal lords vied for honor among themselves through the quality of the grounds surrounding their castles. Ritsurin was such a place. It was



*Ritsurin Garden, one of Japan's finest. Two hundred years old, it is located in Takamatsu, a port city on the large southern island of Shikoku.*

started by Takatoshi Ikoma, the Lord of Sanuki, but eventually came to Yorishige Matsudaira, the first Lord of Takamatsu. His clan controlled the garden for the next two hundred twenty-eight years, until 1875, when it became a public park after the Emperor Meiji issued a proclamation encouraging such conversions.

The object of the garden's design is not unlike the Gardenesque style championed in the late 1700s by the Englishman Humphrey Repton. Both seek to incorporate a variety of plant material—arborescent, shrub, and perennial—into a design embracing natural forms rather than constricting them into contrived geometrical patterns.

It is a representation of nature, following the example of the local regional scenery but constructed with considerable poetic license. The viewer feels that he is walking

through a dark woodland in some sections, while in others the vista presented imitates the view from a high hill or mountain. Water and views across water are major features of the garden, with six major ponds and numerous streams incorporated into the design. Sited between two ponds is Kikugetsu-tei, an expertly crafted teahouse that dates from the feudal period. Visitors are allowed to unshoe and take tea, and while sipping, it was a dilemma to choose between studying the beautiful craftsmanship of the building or the view of the rocks and ponds outside the sliding panels.

The finest view of Ritsurin, and one of the best in any Japanese garden today, is from the top of a small, manmade hill in the southeastern corner of the garden. One looks over the tops of manicured black pines (*Pinus thunbergii*) across the breadth of Southern Pond. It

is bisected early on by a simple yet stately arched wooden bridge. The ends of this bridge are attended by finely cloud-pruned pine, making it look as though it were rising from the mists. Looking beyond the bridge, one sees a small island dotted with clusters of mound-pruned azalea: plants imitating stone formations. As the pond narrows, the eye is drawn farther, on to a formation of three rocks rising from the surface of the waters, looking like far-distant islands. The water's end is sited with a specimen tree of *Pinus parviflora* and the simple, minimal, refined teahouse. The gaze is finally drawn past the pond, past the teahouse, to the slopes of Mount Shiun, whose flanks come sharply down to the garden's edge. The pine-covered hill appears as a virtual curtain of boughs.

It is a masterfully constructed composition, one that successfully draws the eye across the entire expanse of the garden, past its boundaries, up the side of the mountain to the sky above. This view of Ritsurin is a prime example of *shakkei*, "borrowed scenery" or

"captured landscape." The designer consciously frames and incorporates a distant view into the design of the garden. This nullifies the feeling of garden boundaries and gives Ritsurin the feeling of an unbounded piece of heaven.

#### VI: Mount Tsurugi

From Takamatsu I continued eastward by rail to Tokushima, a city renowned in Japan for Awa Odori, a festival of crazy dances. Wanting to get into the interior mountains, I inquired about transportation. On the advice of the local tourist bureau, I boarded a train line which paralleled the Yoshino River, with instructions to disembark at Waki. Here a connecting bus into the mountains could be caught. Language barriers prevented my understanding that this bus would take me only half way, and that a surprised hitchhiker would be deposited in sparsely settled hill country. A few rides with local truck drivers took us over switchbacks that squirmed upward. One driver was a small fellow of five



The view from Mount Tsurugi. The windswept tree probably is a species of *Tsuga*.

feet and one hundred pounds, but he sped his ten-ton truck forward with an infective confidence. The terrain was extremely steep and heavily forested with *Cryptomeria japonica*, which, when harvested, was transported down the sharp slopes on a cable system.

During one layover between rides, I was happy to find *Acer carpinifolium*, an odd maple with an elliptic leaf like that of ironwood. I also found *Hydrangea sikokiana*, a shrub with highly incised leaves.

One final ride took me to the village at the base of Mount Tsurugi, at sixty-four hundred feet (1,956 m) Shikoku's second-highest mountain. As it offers a three hundred sixty-degree view, it is a popular hiking spot and as is often the case in Japan, this popularity is confirmed by the presence of a convenient chair lift up a good portion of the mountain. My primary goal on this peak was *Abies vietchii*, the common fir of central Honshu, a species whose taxonomy is a bit muddled. It grows in the subalpine zone with such species as *Tsuga diversifolia* and *Abies mariesii*.

On Shikoku, however, a short-needle variant occurs that some botanists regard as *Abies shikokianum*, the Shikoku fir. Regardless of its proper designation, it is one of the most southerly populations of fir in Japan and may be of use in our southern states, as well as in New England.

The mountain's chair lift, refuge of the tired and lazy, gives a subtle punishment to plant collectors. You are sped by plants, covered with seed, a mere two meters below your feet. Passed over were *Hemerocallis*, *Rhododendron*, and—to the side—massive trees of *Kalopanax pictus*.

Once off the lift, I began walking upward through the narrow subalpine forest. Here were such trees as *Fagus crenata*, *Tsuga sieboldii*, *Pinus pentaphylla*, and the Shikoku fir. Its black-purple cones were easy to spot, and in a short while I had made a good collection of seeds.



*The path in Koraku-en, the Lord of Okayama's stroll garden on Honshu Island.*

Beneath the trees grew such plants as *Deutzia gracilis* and *Spiraea blumei* var. *pubescens*. Bamboos growing there included *Sasa ishizuchiensis* and *Sasa hirtella*.

As I neared the top of the mountain the trees became stunted and windblown, often assuming a flat-topped, leaning posture. Silvery white spires, the remains of long-dead trees, stood as monuments to a lost battle against cold and wind.

The summit itself was a broad dome covered only by short bamboos and grasses. From here I could see the terrain I had crossed—sharp ridge upon sharp ridge, looking like walls thrown up to hold the island's secrets from intruders.

## VII: Koraku Garden

Departing the island of Shikoku, I ferried again to the main island, Honshu, for a last few days of collecting, but before returning to



*The Crow Castle of Ikeda Tsunamasa, Lord of Okayama. Koraku-en Garden was constructed across the river from the castle, beginning in 1687.*

the woods I visited one final garden. Koraku-en, in the city of Okayama, is said to be one of Japan's three best large gardens. Like Ritsurin, it dates from the feudal era, having been originally started by Ikeda Tsunamasa, the Lord of Okayama, in 1687. The garden was constructed across the river from his distinctive black castle, The Crow Castle, and was reached by footbridge. It was intended as a "stroll garden," but incorporated into the expansive design were many intimate beauty spots and pavilions for tea and composing poetry.

The overall effect of the garden is one of sunny openness, with most large trees or dense plantings confined to the edges, while the central portions consist of large expanses

of lawn or low plantings of rice. As with most Japanese gardens of this size, ponds and streams are a major design device, the ponds offering us long, open views, the streams allowing for a playful interplay of path and water.

Though impressed by many of the longer views, I was more taken by certain features of the garden than by the overall design itself. A favorite was a simple eight-plank bridge (*yatsushashi*) over a small marsh of irises. Each plank intersected the next at a different angle, so that, in crossing the zigzag, you were presented with eight fresh views of the surrounding garden. Simple, ingenious, and playful, it also created a linear interplay with the irises below—a flat, simple, abstract framing device contrasting with the fresh green, vertical leaves.

Stone lanterns, originally a functional fixture of tea gardens, were used frequently in other style gardens as well, often simply for decoration. At Koraku-en, one oddly shaped lantern caught my attention. Rather than having a tall column with a square, light compartment, this lantern was a squat, hollow, stone circle set on two legs and topped with a hat-like triangular roof. Set onto lawn alongside a crystal, serpentine stream, I could only imagine the beautiful scene at night, with the light of the lantern gilding the water's ripples and its enigmatic outline aglow from a distance.

One tree I was excited to see on the garden's edge was *Torreya nucifera*, an uncommon conifer of the yew family. It is a large evergreen tree, more pyramidal in habit than yew but with the same overall texture. Its needles, though, unlike those of *Taxus*, have sharp, piercing tips. Some species of *Torreya* are native to Florida and California, but their seeds are rarely available. This specimen was well endowed with seeds, half a pound of which I gathered for propagation trials.

**VIII: Mount Yatsugadake**

A final field day was spent in the Japanese Alps of central Honshu. I had come to one mountain complex in particular, Mount Yatsugadake, in order to collect seeds of two rare spruces, *Picea maximowiczii* and *Picea koyami*. Up to this point I had been disappointed by the general seed-set in Japan that fall, but on this mountain I was to find a multitude of plants with good seed-set.

These two spruces are currently in the Arboretum's collection but date from a 1917 collection by E. H. Wilson. I had hoped to get some fresh seed to rejuvenate our holdings of these uncommon species. A well defined trail was crowded with Japanese hikers, all dressed in gear that reflected the seriousness with which they approached hiking.

The lower reaches of the mountain yielded



*Pinus pumila* and *Empetrum* sp. on Mount Yatsugadake.

seeds of a number of interesting perennials and deciduous trees. I found a species of *Hosta* and a species of *Halenia*, as well as one of *Hemerocallis*. Many of the perennials will have to be grown on for identification, as most keys rely on floral characteristics. *Acer japonicum* and an azalea, *Rhododendron japonicum*, also appeared in this vegetation zone, along with *Lindera obtusiloba*, a spice-bush with excellent fall color.

I soon entered a coniferous belt dominated by the hemlock, *Tsuga diversifolia*, although a solitary plant of *Thujaopsis dolobrata*, a conifer endemic to Japan, also grew in this zone. It was a low-growing, spreading plant and confused me at first, as I thought I had found a heavily mutated plant of *Chamaecyparis obtusa*. Beneath the hemlocks grew plants of an evergreen rhododendron, *Rhododendron metternichii*, and a member of the Diapensiaceae, *Shortia soldanelloides*. The only other time I had seen *Shortia* was also in a hemlock grove, in Marion, North Carolina. The hemlocks on Mount Yatsugadake began to intermingle with *Abies veitchii*, and here I found the only spruce I would see that day. There were only half a dozen plants, all less than eight feet (2.5 m) in height and barren of cones. These I keyed out to be *Picea maximowiczii*. At one point, I was startled by a man with a basket and knife, a mushroom hunter. Like mushroom hunters everywhere, he was reluctant to let me know what he was doing, as I, too, might be stalking the same game.

I continued up through the forest and broke through the arborescent species onto a ridge of rocky pumice, where I found the shrubby *Pinus pumila*, along with crowberry (*Empetrum nigrum* var. *japonicum*) and a low-growing form of *Vaccinium*. On the downside of the ridge was a gorgeous mossy forest of firs, *Abies vietchii* and *Abies homolepis*, "underplanted" with *Rhododendron metternichii* and *Vaccinium* spp.

### ... And the Sight of Fuji

I collected seeds and cones and returned back up to the rocky ridge. From these mountains I had hoped to get a long view of Fuji, which for the entire trip had been obscured by fog. Hokusai, the painter, had once done a series of woodblocks titled "Views of Mount Fuji." My final mountain view of Japan, in the direction of Fuji, was one of thick fog swirling through groves of green firs and blue stone pines.

I left the mountain never having had my own view of Fuji, yet I was not in the least disappointed. For a plant collector, I thought, it probably would have been just another view.

### Epilogue

Many of the seeds I collected germinated very well, often in excess of our needs. To help defray the costs of the collecting trip, we are offering a selection of perennial and woody-plant seedlings for sale to Friends of the Arnold Arboretum. Friends may obtain a price list by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to:

Japanese Seedling Sale  
The Dana Greenhouse  
The Arnold Arboretum  
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130-2795

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Robert G. Nicholson writes often for *Arnoldia* and other horticultural publications. When not attending to his duties in the Dana Greenhouse or on the grounds of the Arnold Arboretum, he ranges the world in search of interesting plant materials.

### Corrections

Through a lapse in proofreading, the binomials of two plants mentioned in Richard Warren's review of *Native and Cultivated Conifers of Eastern North America: A Guide*, by Edward A. Cope (*Arnoldia*, Volume 47, Number 1, Winter 1987, pages 27 to 29), were misspelled. The binomials, both of which appeared on page 27, are correctly spelled *Pinus ayacahuite* and *Cupressus macrocarpa*, respectively.