



FEATURES

Gyoiko-zakura trees are characterized by petals that are light green with pink lines.

Rare Pale Green Gyoiko-zakura Cherry Blossom Trees

In Shimane Prefecture's Umann City, there is a row of cherry blossom trees where one can enjoy the rare spectacle of green flowers blooming. We spoke with a person in charge at the Umann City Tourism Association to learn more. (Text: Kurosawa Akane)

Gyoiko-zakura cherry blossoms can be enjoyed near Mitoya Riverbed Park

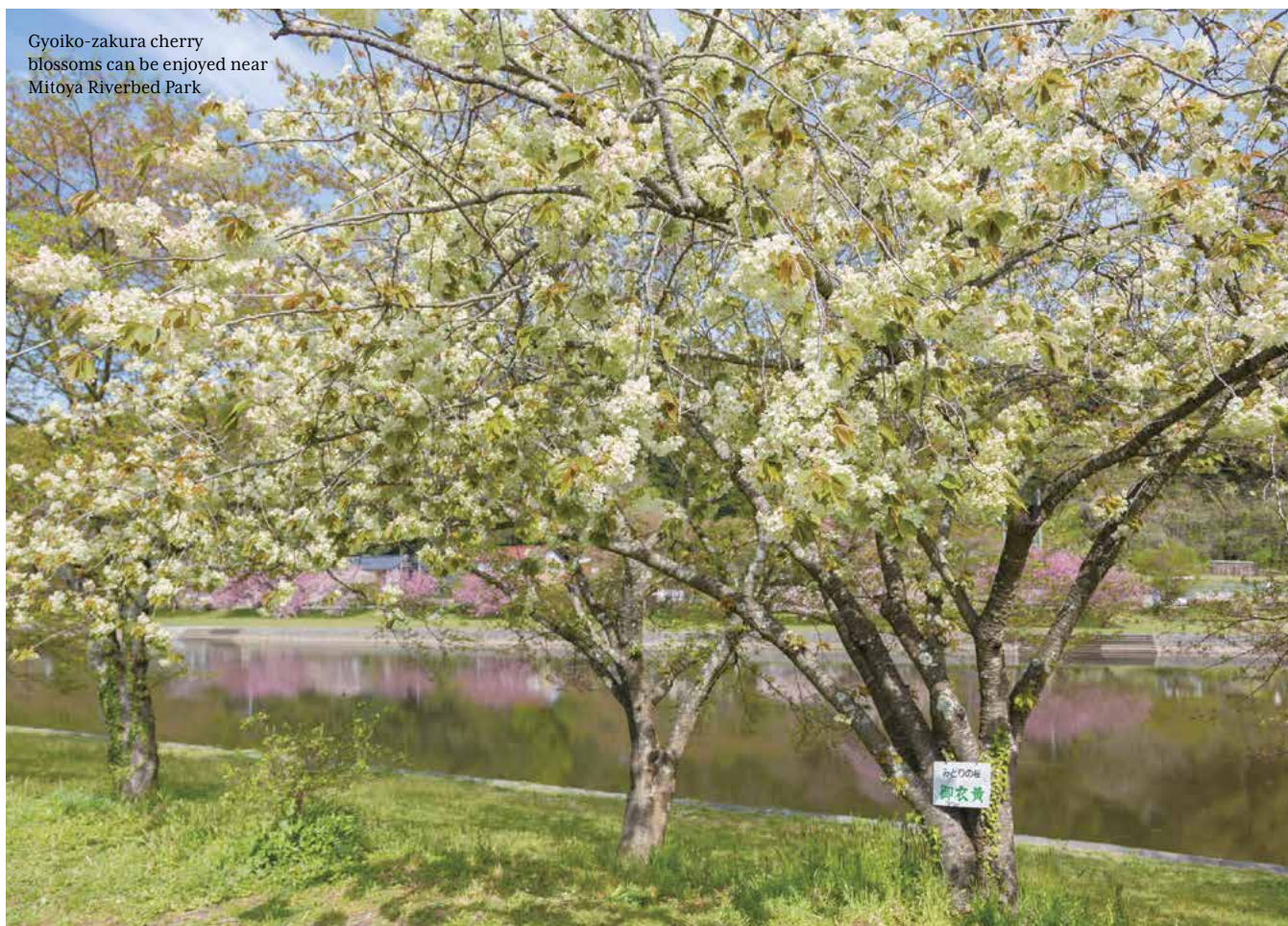




Photo: Uman City

With half-bloomed Gyoiko-zakura, the flower color remains a deep shade of green.

U nnan City, in eastern Shimane Prefecture's Chugoku region, features a picturesque two-kilometer cherry blossom avenue lining both banks of the Mitoya River, near the ruins of Mitoya Castle along National Route 54. Among these blossoms are the Gyoiko-zakura, known for their green flowers. The name comes from the color of this flower, resembling light green. In ancient times, the costumes worn by nobility were referred to as “gyoi.” It is said that the name derives from a color similar to *Moegi*¹ light green, used for the “gyoi.” Suyama Miho from the Unan City Tourism Association explains: “Approximately 70 years ago, the Gyoiko-zakura trees were transplanted from Yoshino Town in Nara Prefecture. This variety of Yae-zakura features light green petals with faint pink lines, with each flower typically bearing 10 to 15 overlapping petals. Approximately 120 of these trees are planted in the Mitoya Riverbed Park and the Mitoya Castle Ruins Park on the opposite bank, offering a rare opportunity to witness cherry blossoms exclusively in shades of green.”

During the early stages of blooming, the flowers are a deep green, gradually lightening as they start to open, with pink lines appearing at the center towards the end before they fall. The best viewing time is typically around late April each year.

“Gyoiko-zakura, a late-blooming variety of cherry blossom, typically blooms about two weeks after the many Somei-yoshino cherry trees in the same area. In 2022, the combination of Gyoiko-zakura and Somei-yoshino cherry blossoms attracted around 30,000 visitors to this popular hanami (cherry blossom viewing) destination. Because the peak blooming period of the Gyoiko-zakura occurs later than that of the Somei-yoshino, visitors can enjoy a leisurely view-

ing experience. Additionally, the cherry blossoms are illuminated at night for added enjoyment,” explains Suyama.

Unan City boasts numerous cherry blossom viewing spots, embodying a profound appreciation for these delicate blooms. Within the city, specialized professionals known as ‘sakuramori’ are appointed to oversee the care of cherry blossoms, focusing on the preservation of old trees and the cultivation of new growth. Additionally, the city actively supports cherry blossom preservation and cultivation efforts through the Unan City Sakura Association and various local community groups. Together with its citizens, the city is dedicated to creating a beautiful environment adorned with cherry blossoms.

The green color of Gyoiko-zakura is incredibly calming and a leisurely visit to this town during cherry blossom season is highly recommended. 🍀

1. A Japanese traditional color. Refers to a bright yellow-green color resembling the young leaves of sprouting plants in early spring.



Photo: Uman City

Gyoiko-zakura cherry blossoms with a refreshing and elegant feel