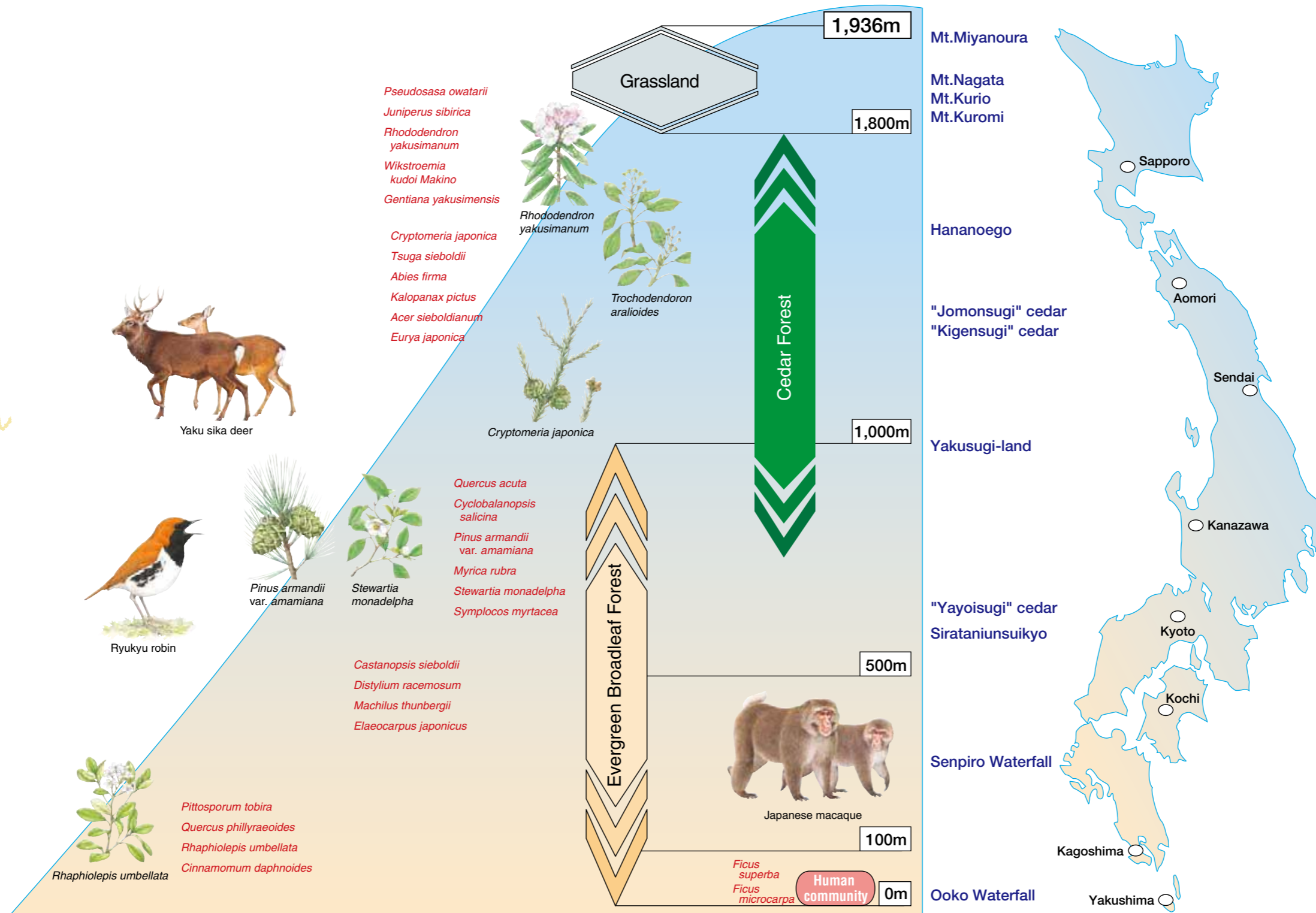


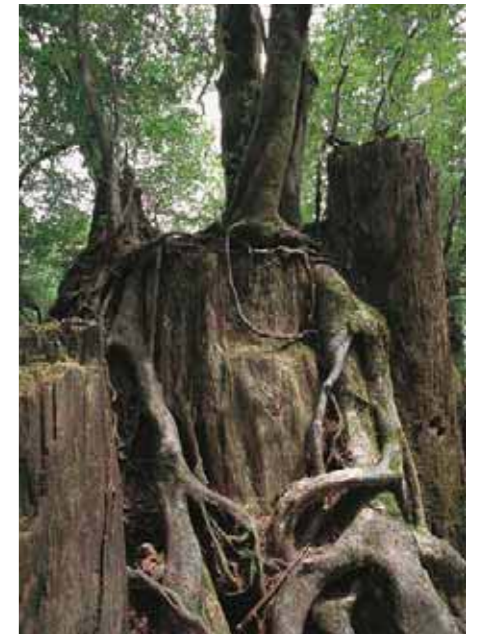
Yakushima



Vertical Distribution The forests of Yakushima extend up to an elevation of 2,000 m and typify the nature of Japanese archipelago that stretches about 2,000 km north to south.



Characteristics of Yakusugi
Japanese cedar trees are an endemic species of Japan, and among the trees found on Yakushima, those older than one thousand years are called Yakusugi.



Forest Regeneration
When sunlight reaches the forest floor, such as on fallen cedar trees, seeds dropped onto the tree stumps and logs may take root. The terms "stump regeneration" and "nurse-log regeneration" refer to a new generation of cedar that grows on a stump or fallen tree, respectively.

From Subtropical to Subalpine Zones

The Yakushima Island is a treasury of almost all kinds of Japanese vegetations. A large amount of subtropical plants such as Japanese superb fig and Chinese Banyan grow on the coastlines. The evergreen broadleaf forest with species such as Sudajii (*Castanopsis cuspidata*) and oak trees abounds in the area from the lowland to 1,000 m above sea-level, as seen in the temperate evergreen broadleaf forests in Tohoku to Kyushu districts. The coniferous forest with species such as cedar, fir, hemlock fir and Japanese cypress covers the large area of 700 m to 1,800 m above sea-level near the mountain peaks. The virgin cedar forest

is largely spread around the mountain peaks such as Nagata-dake, Miyanoura-dake and Kuromi-dake. The forest also contains a combination of evergreen broadleaf forest with species such as oak trees in the low altitude areas and cool-temperate deciduous forest with species such as castor aralia (*Kalopanax pictus*) and *Acer sieboldianum* in the high altitude areas.

Lastly the area near the mountain peaks of 1,800 m above sea-level consists of the bamboo grassland of Yakushimadake (*Pseudosasa owatarii*) and the subalpine scrub forest with

rhododendron (*Rhododendron yakusimanum*) and Sargent's Chinese juniper (*Juniperus sibirica* var. *nipponica*). Although juniper normally inhabits in the alpine regions of Japan, the plant grows in Yakushima where subtropical plants also exists. Yakushima is the southernmost island where cool-temperate and subalpine vegetations are developed in Japan. For that reason, Yakushima is the southernmost limit for many species growing in cold temperate zones. Furthermore, there are many plants occurred in Yakushima in the course of geological history, making the island abundant of endemic flora.

D'une région subtropicale à une zone subalpine

A Yakushima, tout le panorama végétal du Japon est concentré sur une seule île. L'on y trouve ainsi en bord de mer des spécimens subtropicaux tels que le *Ficus superba japonica* ou le banyan d'Okinawa. Près des sommets qui culminent à plus de 1,800m croissent des étendues recouvertes d'une variété de bambou, le *Pseudosasa owatarii*, et des arbustes subalpins tels le *Juniperus chinensis* ou le *Rhododendron metternichii*. Si ce dernier se rencontre dans tout le Japon en haute montagne, à Yakushima il côtoie des espèces subtropicales.

Yakushima est ainsi la limite sud de l'aire de répartition de nombreuses espèces végétales des régions froides.