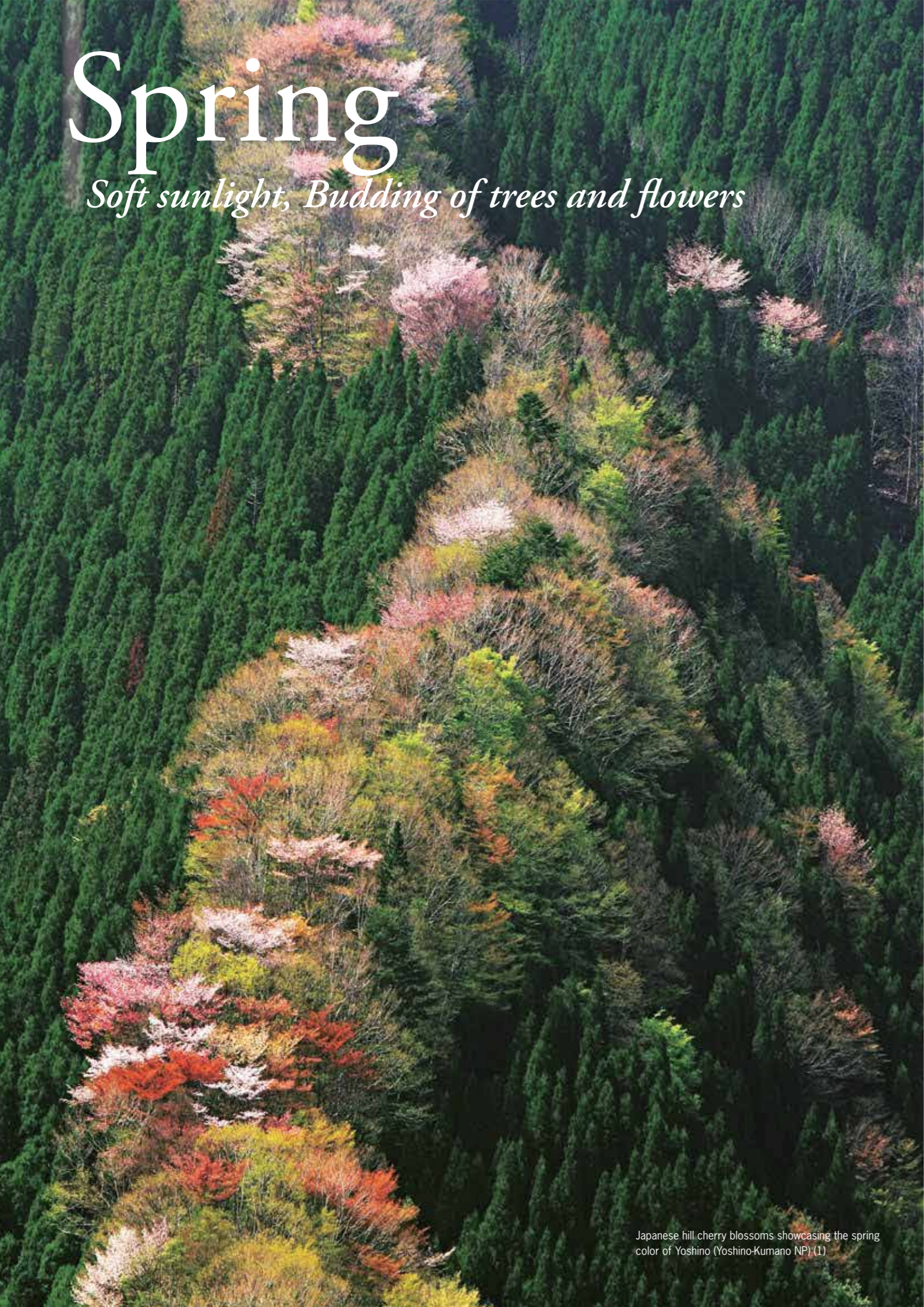


Spring

Soft sunlight, Budding of trees and flowers



Japanese hill cherry blossoms showcasing the spring color of Yoshino (Yoshino-Kumano NP) (1)



Asian skunk cabbage in Oze Marsh (Oze NP) (2)
Wild azaleas and the Kuju Mountain Range (Aso-Kuju NP) (3)



A cape in a sea mist, Okino-shima Island (Daisen-Oki NP) (4)

COLUMN Cherry blossom front

In late March, when cherry trees begin blooming in southern Kyushu and Shikoku, Japanese people start caring about 'Cherry blossom front', which forecasts expected dates for cherry blossoms. For the following a month and half, cherry blossom front moves slowly up to the north in the Japanese archipelago. People are anxious to view the gorgeous full blooming and are fascinated with the transient nature of flowers dying in a few days and a beauty in the way of falling petals.

