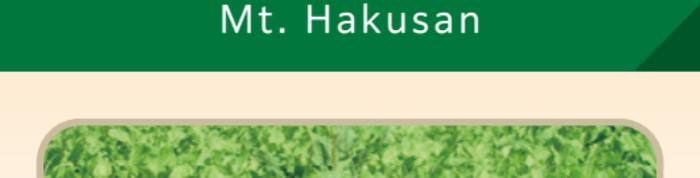




Plantain Ascending the Mountain

Current Distribution on Mt. Hakusan

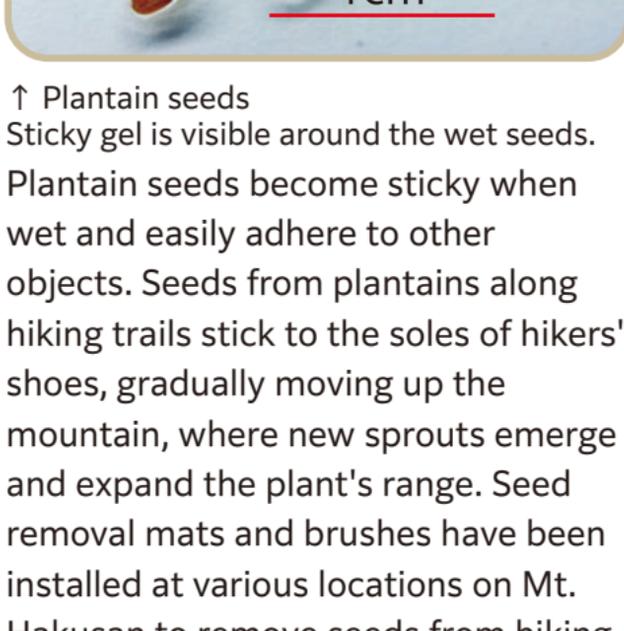
The hardy plantain survives being trampled and can grow even in hard-packed soil where other plants cannot. It is also referred to by the Chinese characters "Obako" ("carriage-front-grass") and said to have been derived from the fact that it grows abundantly along roadsides frequently used by vehicles (including horse-drawn carriages).



Plantains Infesting Mt. Hakusan

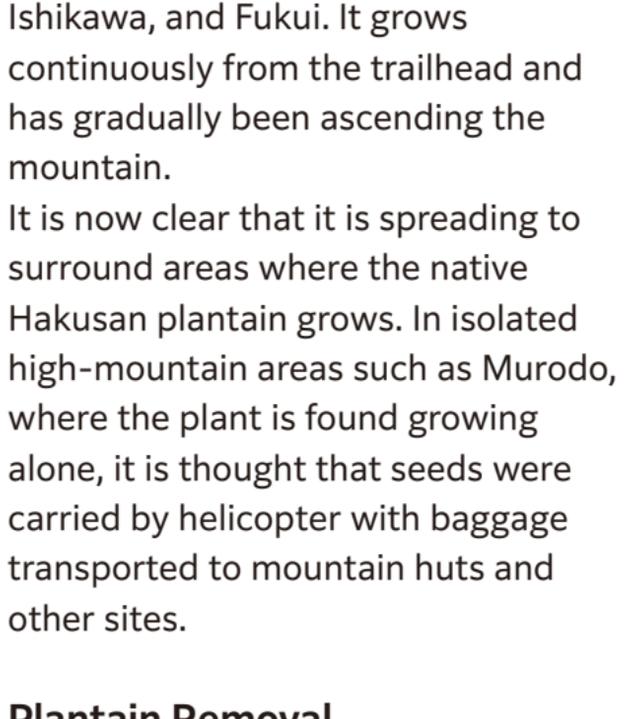


↑ Plantain colony completely covers the ground



↑ Plantain grows alongside a hiking trail

Plantain Seeds



↑ Plantain seeds
Sticky gel is visible around the wet seeds. Plantain seeds become sticky when wet and easily adhere to other objects. Seeds from plantains along hiking trails stick to the soles of hikers' shoes, gradually moving up the mountain, where new sprouts emerge and expand the plant's range. Seed removal mats and brushes have been installed at various locations on Mt. Hakusan to remove seeds from hiking boots.

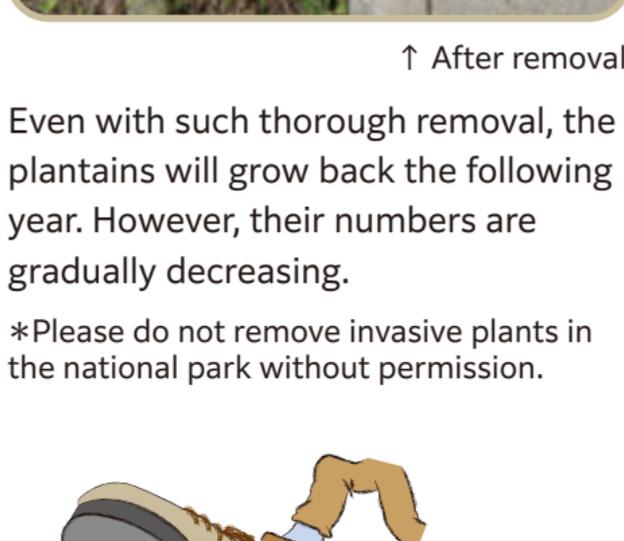
Plantain Distribution

The plantain is the most widespread invasive plant species on Mt. Hakusan. Its presence has been confirmed in all four prefectures into which Hakusan National Park extends: Gifu, Toyama, Ishikawa, and Fukui. It grows continuously from the trailhead and has gradually been ascending the mountain.

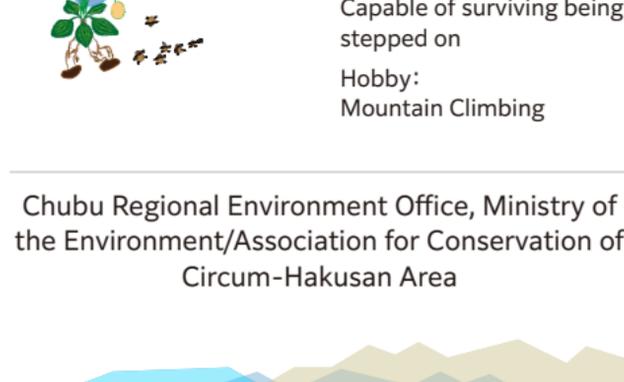
It is now clear that it is spreading to surround areas where the native Hakusan plantain grows. In isolated high-mountain areas such as Murodo, where the plant is found growing alone, it is thought that seeds were carried by helicopter with baggage transported to mountain huts and other sites.

Plantain Removal

Volunteers are manually removing plantains one by one all over Mt. Hakusan. They remove the plantains using a weeding hand tool called a "nekiri," digging about 1 cm into the soil to remove the upper portion of the growing point (where the next year's sprouts emerge) and above.



↑ "Nekiri" weeding tool used to remove the plantains



↑ Plantains before removal



↑ After removal

Even with such thorough removal, the plantains will grow back the following year. However, their numbers are gradually decreasing.

*Please do not remove invasive plants in the national park without permission.



Plantain Man
Special skill:
Scattering seeds
Capable of surviving being stepped on
Hobby:
Mountain Climbing

