

Japan

A Tour for the Alpine Garden Society

A Greentours Itinerary

Days 1 & 2

To Tokyo

We'll depart in the afternoon and after an overnight flight will arrive into Tokyo the next afternoon and head straight to a nearby hotel to recover from the journey.

Days 3 – 5

Sado Island

We'll be immersed immediately in modern Japan as we'll catch the Shinkansen (Japanese Bullet Train) to Niigata, before reaching Sado Island by Jetfoil. On Sado Island we'll walk in woodlands where both *Magnolia salicifolia* and *Magnolia hypoleuca* bloom. *Rosa rugosa* forms shrubberies amongst which we can find *Diphylleia grayi* and lovely *Lilium maculatum* and there's fabulous *Hemerocallis middendorffii* var. *exaltata* as well. The gorgeous blue recurved tubular blooms of *Clematis stans* line pathways where we'll find the foamflower *Tiarella polyphylla*, purple and yellow *Aquilegia buergeriana*, and the coralroot-like orchid *Oreorchis patens*.

Days 6 - 8

Numayama Toge Pass & Ozegahara Marsh

Ozegahara is a lovely place, where pools and bogs have woodland and the mountain framing it, the whole traversed by a winding boardwalk from which we can see some of the bogs most famous plants, notably *Iris laevigata* and the elegant aroid *Lysichiton camtschatcense* which forms large colonies here. *Rhododendron multiflorum*, once included in *Menziesia*, lines woodland paths that lead down to the bogs, *Clintonia udensis* and white *Anemone flaccida* there too. Amongst the white tufts of *Eriophorum vaginatum* we'll find the Bog Rosemary *Andromeda polifolia* as well as the yellow monkey flower *Mimulus sessilifolius*, these joined by two larger yellow *Ranunculaceae*, *Trollius japonicus* and *Caltha palustris* var. *nipponica*

We'll make two longish walks (one is 11km and the other 7km) into the wooded mountains that rise above the bogs. This is an exceptional area for flora. No less than three species of *Trillium* inhabit this wonderland, pink *Trillium smallii*, vinous *Trillium apetalon* and the lovely white *Trillium tschonoskii*. Both *Paris tetraphylla* and *Paris verticillata* bloom in the shade whereas areas where the sunlight penetrates the woodland floor have drifts of *Pteridophyllum racemosum* topped by sprays of purest white flowers. Mossy dells have *Gentiana thunbergii* var. *minor* and the delicate

Coptis trifolia as well as the equally delicate little *Helonias orientalis*, a strange member of the lily family with little pink stars for flowers. Lovely *Cerasus nipponica* var. *nipponica* should be blooming alongside *Viburnum furcatum*, and under these are the pink urns of *Epigaea asiatica*, and the even more classically urn-shaped *Asarum sieboldii* flowers nestling at the base of their elegant heart-shaped leaves.

Days 9 – 11 Hakuba & Oyomi Bog

Deepest blue *Iris laevigata* is found with another blue Iris, *Iris sanguinea*, growing alongside a board walk through the lovely Oyomi Bog. Above this sublime habitat Hakuba-jiri's famous snowy valley holds *Anemone flaccida* and the bright pink *Primula jesoana* var. *jesoana* which has yellow centres to the flowers. This majestic mountain scene is home to beautiful and delicate *Schizocodon soldanelloides* which forms little mats topped by small umbels of bright pink blooms. We'll have our first meeting with the *Glaucidium palmatum* here and the whorled blue heads of *Lagotis glauca* look great with the mountainous backdrops. In woodlands here we can find *Convallaria majalis* var. *keiskei* and the elegant white-flowered *Paris japonica*. Tall *Senecio pierotii* and the rather spectacular tall pink orchid *Neolindleya camtschatica* flower amid the pink shrub *Weigela hortensis* and the cherry *Padus grayana* which has sprays of white blooms.

Days 12 & 13 Utsukushigahara & Hakone

We'll pass back through Tokyo en route to Odawara and the famous spa at Hakone-Yumoto. Woodland and meadow here are home to the gorgeous maroon and yellow *Aquilegia buergeriana* and the lovely tubular pinkish-lilac bells of *Campanula punctata*. The striking pink foamy heads of *Spiraea japonica* form a framework in which to admire *Clematis japonica*, *Rosa hirtula*, and the white sprays of *Hydrangea hirta*. Shrubberies consist of *Deutzia crenata*, *Cornus kousa* and the spectacular *Magnolia hypoleuca*, all shower the shrubberies with white blooms and under them are the striking pink sprays of *Astilbe thunbergii*. Above are the slopes of Mount Hakone and from the lake at its foot there are me memorable views of Mount Fuji. Hakone's slopes are in places coloured pink by *Filipendula multijuga* and in damp flushes are *Viola verecunda*, elegant *Iris ensata* var. *spontanea*, the local butterfly orchid *Platanthera hologlottis*, and the maroon and butterscotch marsh helleborine *Epipactis thunbergii*.

We'll also visit Utsukushigahara where we can see both orange-red and pinkish forms of floriferous *Rhododendron molle* subsp. *japonicum*. *Malus toringo* is an unusual apple with trilobed leaves, and growing under them are *Iris sanguinea* and *Cephalanthera longibracteata*

Day 14

Miura Peninsula

Hakone is also a great base to explore the botanically rich Miura Peninsula where *Lilium auratum*, *Arisaema serratum* and *Astilbe simplicifolia* will be among the highlights.

Day 15

departure

or...

Hokkaido Extension

Day 15(am)

To Wakkanai & Rebun Island

We'll take a flight to Wakkanai on the edge of Soya Bay right at the northernmost tip of Hokkaido and will then travel by ferry to Rebun Island where we'll still have plenty of time to go out and explore from our hotel.

Days 15(pm) – 17

Rebun Island

The northernmost part of Japan's memorably scenic archipelago, the island of Hokkaido, has more in common with Siberia, and at its very northern tip is the remarkable landscapes of Rishiri-Rebun-Sarobetsu National Park, Japan's most northerly national park. This protects two islands and part of the peninsula, an area of spectacular and unique landscapes. The impressive volcanic cone of Rishiri-Fuji dominates the scene from the island of Rebun-to, where we'll be based. We'll spend our time exploring what is known in Japan as the 'Floating Island of Flowers', the island famous for its shows of summer flowers that includes alpine species at unusually low altitudes and a rich array of meadow, bog and forests plants.

Rebun-to is home to the rare *Cypripedium macranthos* var. *rebunense*. They will be on the edge of their flowering period... but we can certainly hope to see a few of their stunning creamy pouches. In the same habitat we will look for *Primula farinosa* subsp. *modesta* var. *matsumurae*. In the shade of the Sakhalin Firs we'll find the orchid *Oreorchis patens*, Ferny-leaved *Pedicularis chamissonis* var. *rebunensis*, and the impressive Cobra Lily *Arisaema serratum*, and hope that the clustered chocolate bells of *Fritillaria camschatcensis* will still be blooming. However it is the colourful meadows that will amaze with stands of yellow *Thermopsis lupinoides*, as its name suggests looking like a yellow lupin, and massed displays of the wonderful Siberian Lily *Lilium pensylvanicum* with their large orange blooms. There are masses of large blue

flowered *Geranium erianthum*, the whorled white heads of *Pedicularis schistostegia*, the orchid *Dactylorhiza aristata*, and wonderful golden *Trollius ledebourii* var. *polysepalus* in abundance.

Day 18

Sarobetsu Wetland & Wakasakanai coast

Back on the mainland we'll spend a day in the Sarobetsu Wetland. This is a huge peat bog, the result of six thousand years peat accumulation in the Sarobetsu River Basin. Famed as a stopover for migratory birds the vast peat bog is also home to rich and very special flora. *Ericaceous* plants such as Bog Rosemary, Cranberry and *Ledum palustre* subsp. *diversipilosum* thrive and the nutrient poor conditions are ideal for insectivorous Round-leaved Sundew. Larger plants such as the large yellow daylily *Hemerocallis esculenta*, and the bright blue *Iris laevigata* make a spectacular show and other fine plants we can expect include the starflower, *Trientalis europaea*, *Lysimachia thysiflora*, *Thalictrum aquilegifolium* var. *intermedium*, and the spectacular *Veratrum stamineum*.

Day 19

Departure

To Book a on this Holiday please fill in the booking form which you can download from www.greentours.co.uk (also found in the Greentours brochure) and post/fax to Greentours, PO Box 148, Buxton SK17 1BE, UK. Tel/Fax +44 (0)1298 83563. After booking your place you'll receive a confirmation letter and a detailed information pack will be dispatched twelve weeks prior to departure. Flower and bird checklists are available.