



Some Violets of Eastern Japan

Daniel H. Wiczorek & Kazuya Numazawa



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69 – 79 inclusive

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated, first of all, to my partner, Kazuya Numazawa. He always keeps my interest in photography up and makes me keep striving for the perfect photo. He also often makes me think of the expression “when the going gets tough, the tough keep going”. Furthermore – he was the one who initially gave me a reason to be interested in violets. Next, I want to dedicate this to Chad in New York, for his encouragement to publish a book of Japan photos. After that I want to say thank you to Steve and Tim in Oregon – they both gave encouragement to us and they said – many times, through the years, that we should create a book of photos of Japan. Thank you.

FOREWORD

This work shall attempt to show the violets (*Viola* sp.) which we have identified with enough confidence so that we have been comfortable to add them to our “life list” of violets we have seen. This book does not represent a comprehensive listing of the violets which can be found in eastern Japan, nor is it intended to be a comprehensive guide to identification, it merely shows an interested reader some violets which can be seen without spending a great deal of money.

We considered several different methods to display the violets in this book. We tried arranging them by color, but quickly realized that several species come in various colors – so that idea went by the wayside. Then we considered trying to show them by region – that idea was also very quickly rejected as many if not most species occur in more than one region. What we finally decided upon was just to show them in pure alphabetical order.

How many species of violets will you find here? Well, there are 87 photos, but some of them show different colors, different angles or overview shots of the same species. It seems like there are probably about 50 species, but then again some of you may not count like that because some of the pictured violets are actually subspecies, forms and/or varieties of a species. So, count how you wish, but there are 87 photos.

We hope that these photos will show you something which excites your imagination and makes you want to get out in the forest and on to the mountains to see some violets!

Oh, by the way, we are going to be purposefully vague about some locations because we do not like plant thieves and we do not support those activities. We know they exist, and we loath them.







We will list the regions (see map – page 1) where we found these violets for the first time. For the location codes we will use (T) for the Tohoku Region, (K) for the Kanto Region and (C) for the Chubu Region. You will find this code immediately after the Japanese name of each violet. This location does not indicate that the violet can ONLY be found in this region, it only indicates where we first found it.

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For a complete listing of Violets which you can find in this book please see the Index.

Regions & Prefectures of Japan

Hokkaido		Kansai	
Tohoku		Chugoku	
Chubu		Shikoku	
Kanto		Kyushu	

Regions visited in this book are:

Tohoku, Chubu and Kanto

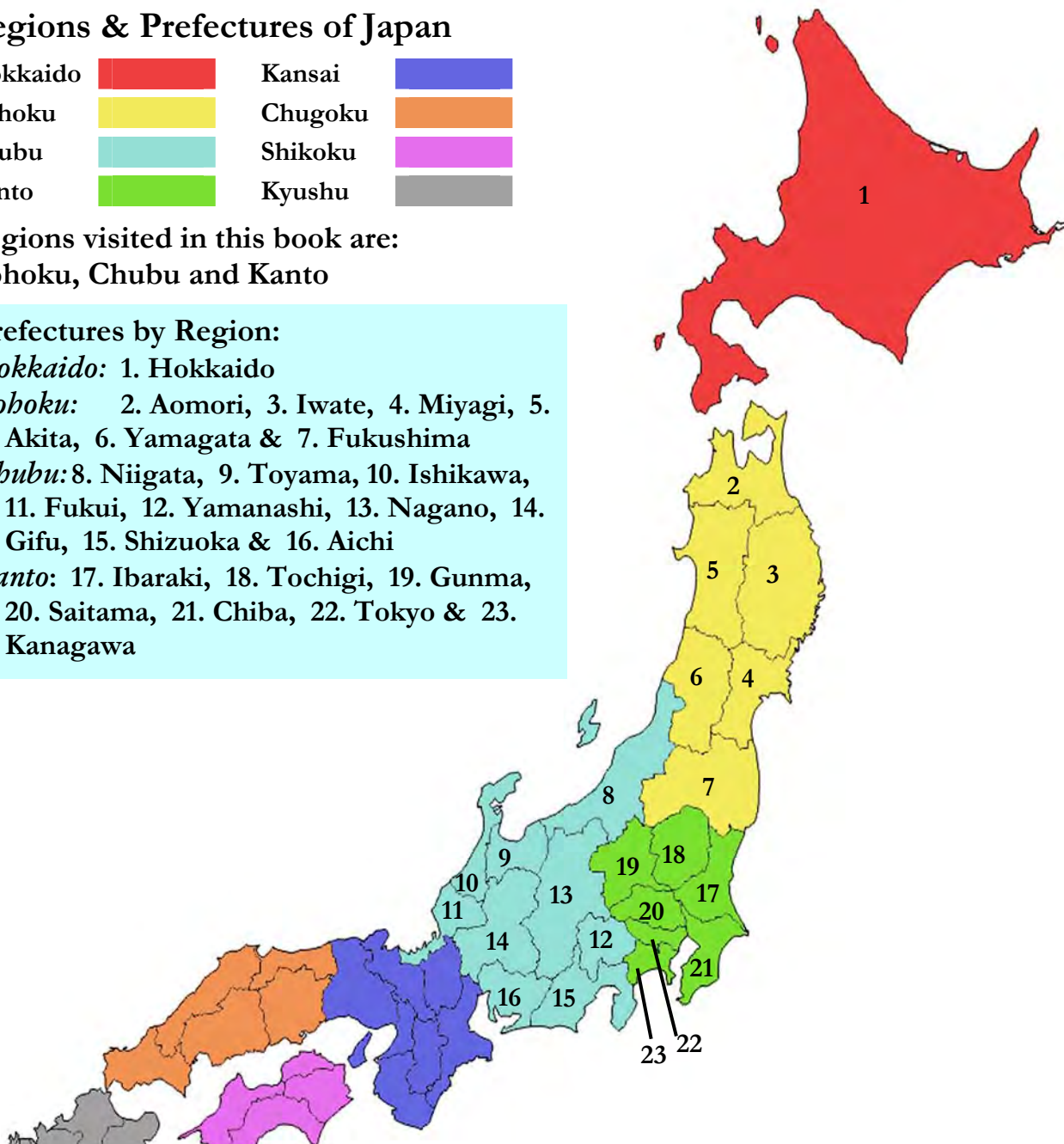
Prefectures by Region:

Hokkaido: 1. Hokkaido

Tohoku: 2. Aomori, 3. Iwate, 4. Miyagi, 5. Akita, 6. Yamagata & 7. Fukushima

Chubu: 8. Niigata, 9. Toyama, 10. Ishikawa, 11. Fukui, 12. Yamanashi, 13. Nagano, 14. Gifu, 15. Shizuoka & 16. Aichi

Kanto: 17. Ibaraki, 18. Tochigi, 19. Gunma, 20. Saitama, 21. Chiba, 22. Tokyo & 23. Kanagawa





Viola betonicifolia var. *albescens* (アリアケスミレ) (K)

When we first found this species we thought that it was merely a different colored *Viola mandshurica*. We find it in the same areas and the leaves are very similar to *Viola mandshurica* too. It was not until a while later that we realized that it was a different species. We find this mostly along the road near **Nogawa Park** in **Mitaka, Tokyo**.



Viola biflora (キバナノコマノツメ) (T)

We first found this violet possibly at **Mt. Chokai**, on the boundary between **Yamagata** and **Akita Prefectures**, in 2005. We found it again in 2008 at **Mt. Gassan**, in **Yamagata Prefecture**. We have also found it in **Oze National Park** and at **Mt. Yatsugatake**. **Oze National Park** straddles **Fukushima, Tochigi, Gunma** and **Niigata Prefectures**. **Mt. Yatsugatake** is in **Nagano** and **Yamanashi Prefectures**. (Also see overview photo, page 65)



Viola biflora f. *glabrifolia* (ジョウエツキバナノコマノツメ) (T, C, K)

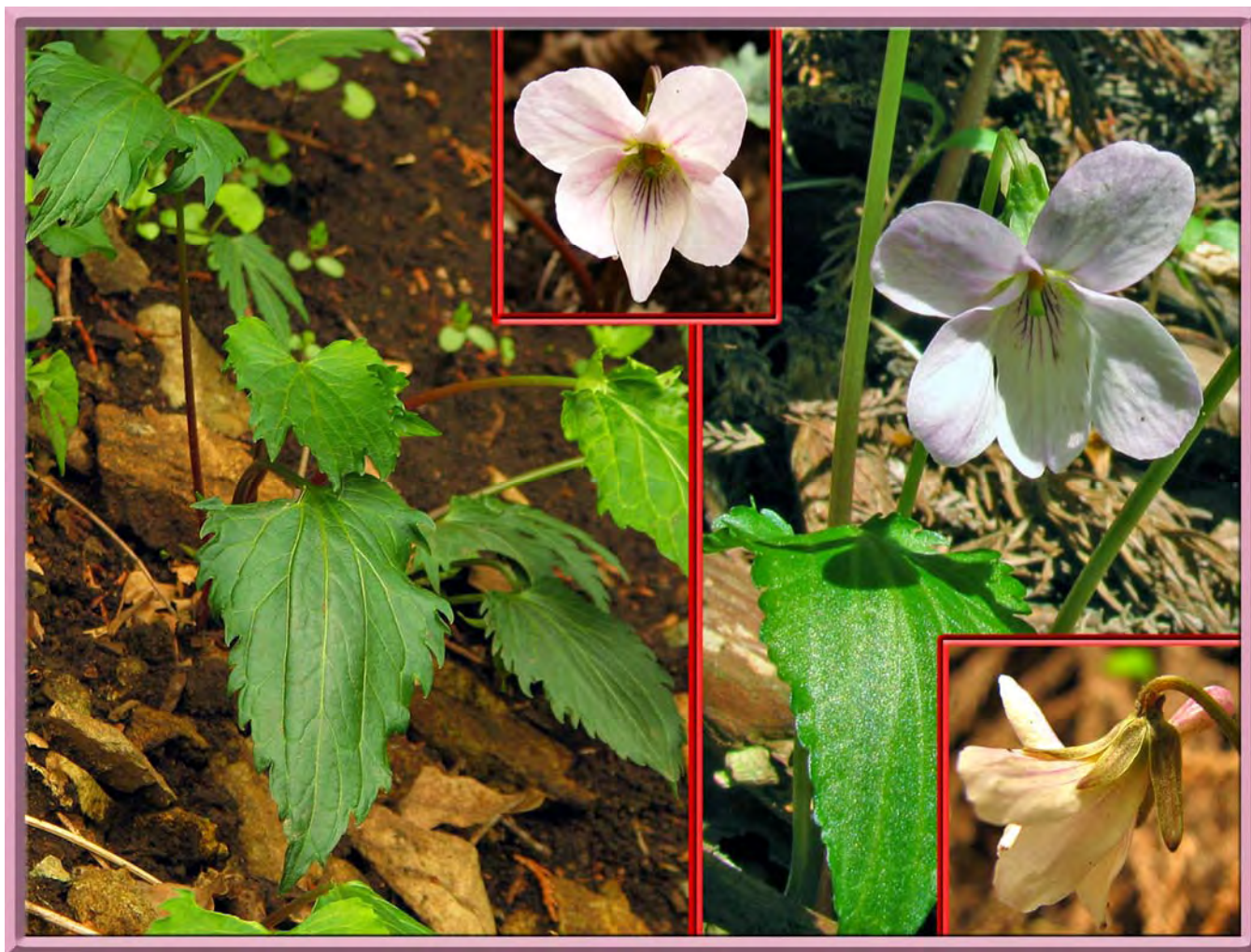
This is quite a recent addition to our life list of violets we have found. We found it only in 2010. It was found in **Oze National Park** on **Mt. Shibutsu**. We are not absolutely 100% sure that we have identified it correctly, but we are sure enough (99.5% sure) so that we added it to our “life list”.



Viola bissetii (bissetii) (ナガバノスミレサイシン) (K)

This violet has been on our list for a long time. It is a very common species around our spring haunts in the mountains west of **Tokyo**. We find this at **Mt. Takao**, **Mt. Mitake** and virtually every mountain location in **Western Tokyo**. We have seen it range in color from this virtually pure white specimen to a light blue. (Also see overview photo, page 66)

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Viola eizanensis var. *simplicifolia* (ヒトツバエゾスミレ) (K)

The only location where we have found this species was on **Mt. Narukami**, in **Gunma Prefecture**. We made a special trip there when we read on the internet that it was blooming at that location. We did not have to hike very far on the **Mt. Narukami Trail** before we found our first occurrence of it. The leaves are much simpler than the leaves of the normal *Viola eizanensis*.



Viola faurieana (テリハタチツボスミレ) (T)

This species, like *Viola crassa*, is new to our life list this year (2011). It seems to be a thin-leaved version of normal *Viola grypoceras*, as the Japanese name suggests, and therefore it is surprising that it is not considered a variety or subspecies of *V. grypoceras*. We found this species in **Akita Prefecture**, on **Mt. Akita-Komagatake**. It was only in one relatively small area and for that reason it is probably best if we not give the precise location where we found it.



Viola grypoceras (#1) (タチツボスミレ) (K)

This species is the most common violet we see in the **Tokyo Area**. It is so very common that it was the very first violet on our life list and nowadays we merely say “*grypo*” when we are walking along in the spring and making sure that we identify most of the violets which we pass. It is nice to see this violet because it always indicates that violet season is beginning. When we see this one we start getting excited and wondering what new species we will find this year. (Also see overview photo, page 76)



Viola grypoceras (#2) (タチツボスミレ) (K)

Here is an additional image of *V. grypoceras*. This image shows more detail so that you can study it a bit closer than the previous image. In this image you can see the flower spur and you can also see the leaves. You should note that in the upper right photo the leaves are more rounded than they are in the main photo. You can expect to see quite a bit of variation in the leaves of this species. (Also see overview photo, page 76)



Viola grypoceras f. *purpurelocalcarata* (オトメミレ) (K)

The only time we have ever found this species was in April 2009 in a semi-secret location in **Western Tokyo**. Immediately upon sighting it we knew we had found a new species for our life list. The flower was absolutely snow white, except for the purple colored flower spur, a rather amazing color to find in a violet which is very similar to *V. grypoceras*. We took several photos of it and when we arrived home in the evening we immediately went for the violets book to try and identify it.



Viola grypoceras f. *variegata* (アカフタチツボスミレ) (K)

This species is extremely similar to *V. grypoceras* – the difference is the variegated leaves, the red veins. This species is not as common as the normal *V. grypoceras*, but it is fairly common and it has been on our life list for several years. It took us a while to realize that we were looking at something which was actually different from *V. grypoceras* in our early days of violet hunting. It can be found in the **Tokyo Area** without much difficulty. (Also see overview photo, page 73)



Viola birtipes (サクラスミレ) (K)

We did not find this species until 2009. We had searched for it for a couple of years before that, but we were not successful. We found it on a descent of **Mt. Kumotori** in **Western Tokyo** in the month of May. We found it again at a location which we will not disclose in **Far Western Tokyo** in May 2010. It has a pretty large sized flower compared to other violets around the **Tokyo Area**. We always remain impressed when we find this species.



Viola hondoensis (アオイスミレ) (K)

Notice how round the leaves of this species are. This makes it relatively easy to identify. We identified this species at least as early as 2006. It can be found on several slopes of **Mt. Takao (Takao-san)**, **Mt. Mitake (Mitake-san)** and any number of places in **Western Tokyo**. The flowers are always nearly pure white, except, of course, for the dark colored veins. (Also see overview photo, page 74)



Viola japonica #1 (コスミレ) (K)

Viola japonica is a species which comes in several colors, and for that reason we are showing three separate images of it. This is probably the most beautiful specimen we have ever found. The light blue image, on the facing page is a nice color too, but not as spectacular as the image shown on this page. The 2nd image on the facing page – the white flowered specimen is one which we find just about every year on one of the several slopes of **Mt. Takao (Takao-san)**. We won't tell you which particular trail we find it on, we don't want this specimen to disappear.

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Viola japonica #2
(コスミレ) (K)

Viola japonica #3
(コスミレ) (K)





Viola kamtschadalarum (オオバタチツボスミレ) (T, C, K)

This species was only added to our life last year – 2010. We found it in **Oze National Park**. **Oze National Park** lies in **Fukushima, Tochigi, Gunma** and **Niigata Prefectures**. It is a large violet – in every respect – the leaves are large, the flowers are large and the plant itself is tall. It is an impressive species to find. We have only found it in **Oze National Park**, although surely it can be found in other locations too.



Viola keiskei (マルバスマイレ) (K)

We find this species at several different locations in **Western Tokyo** – around **Mt. Takao (Takao-san)** and also around the slopes of **Mt. Mitake (Mitake-san)**. It is not difficult to find – we first positively identified it in May, 2007. We have found earlier photos in our collection labeled “*Viola keiskei*” but looking at those photos now makes us laugh because those photos were not properly identified. Interesting how one’s knowledge grows at such a rate.



Viola kusanoana (オオタチツボスミレ) (T)

This species has been on our life list since 2008. We went to Kazuya's hometown in **Yamagata Prefecture** in May, 2008 and within 10 minutes of leaving the house for a hike we had found four new violets. This species – *Viola kusanoana* – was one of those species. Notice how perfectly white the flower spur is and also notice the length of it. In addition, this violet is also a beautiful blue color. We were very excited to discover it within just a few minutes of the door of Kazuya's home.



Viola mandshurica (スミレ) (K)

Here is an image showing the purple flowered *Viola mandshurica*. This purple flowered violet is so amazingly purple that it seems like it could aptly be named “**purple violet**”, which is what we often labeled the photos of it in our early days of violets photography. This species is common right in the city of **Tokyo** and in the parks near our house in **Mitaka**. Note the hairy flower and also the flower stem.



Viola maximowicziana (コミヤマスミレ) (K)

This species is one of the last, or maybe the very last, to blossom in the spring. It can be found at many locations in **Western Tokyo – Mt. Takao (Takao-san), Mt. Mitake (Mitake-san)** and several other locations. It is generally found in the very darkest locations and therefore it's difficult to get good photos of. One thing you should note about this species is how very pubescent the leaves are. (Also see overview photo, page 75)



Viola mirabilis var. *subglabra* (イブキスミレ) (C)

This violet is special for us. We only know of 2 places where it can be found. Therefore, sorry to say, we will not specify exactly where you can locate it. It is a fairly large violet – both the flower and the leaves. It is often a very delicate pink color, as can be seen in the leftmost image here. The leaves are soft and delicate – this entire plant has a look of grace and beauty to it.



Viola obtusa (ニオイタチツボスミレ) (K)

Viola obtusa is a very beautiful violet. The first time we positively identified it was in April 2007. It is not so common and not so rare. It can be found in several places in **Western Tokyo**, but it is never found in abundance in an area. One will find a few plants in a small depression in the ground or something like that, but not a great number spread over a larger area. Maybe that is what is referred to as “scattered about”.

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Viola tokubuchiana var. *takedana* f. *variegata* (フイリヒナスミレ) (K)

The first note we have about this species is from the spring of 2007. As you can see, the leaf variegations are very white in color, adding an effect to this violet which makes it stunningly beautiful. We do not often find the variegated form of this species and when we do find it we get quite excited. We have found it only in **Western Tokyo** as of this writing, but surely it occurs in other locations as well. (Also see overview photo, page 82)



Viola vaginata (スミレサイシン) (T)

This is the 3rd of the 4 new violets we found when we went to Kazuya's hometown in **Yamagata Prefecture** in May, 2008 (see *V. kusanoana*). Since then we have found this violet in a few other locations, but all of those locations have been in the **Tohoku Region**. The flowers of this violet are pretty much always this beautiful blue color, the leaves are delicate and heart shaped. Sometimes the roots are exposed and show this to be a long-lived species – assuming that they put on one “ring” in one year. (Also see overview photos, pages 83 and 84)



Viola variegata var. *nipponica* (ゲンジスミレ) (C)

The only time we have ever found this violet was in May 2009. We found it in the mountains near **Kawaguchi Lake**. We searched for it again in 2010, but we visited the area about 1 week later in 2010 than we did in 2009 and we did not find a trace of it in 2010. We were very excited to find it and we certainly hope that we will find it again someday. If you are fortunate enough to find this species then you should certainly consider yourself lucky.



Viola variegata var. *variegata* (フイリゲンジスミレ) (K)

WOW! What a find! The only time we have ever found this species in the wild was in April 2006. It is a **Chinese species** which somehow found its way to Japan, possibly brought by a person who went to that country, or possibly brought in the stomach of a bird. However it found its way here, we were amazed to find this species. It is so very beautiful with its variegated upper leaves with purple undersides. We wonder if we will ever again find it in the wild. We found it in **Western Tokyo**.



Viola verecunda (ニヨイスミレ) (K)

Our life list shows this as an addition in April 2008 although we most likely found it a year or two earlier than that. It is a relatively common species in **Western Tokyo** on some of the slopes of **Mt. Takao** and also at other locations which we do not want to divulge. The flowers are always pure white and they are quite small. This species can sometimes be found in very large patches in certain areas. (Also see overview photo, page 85)



Viola verecunda f. *violacens* (ムラサキコマノツメ) (T, C, K)

The only time we have ever found this species was in June 2010 on a visit to **Oze National Park**. At the time we were not 100% sure that we had found a new species for our life list, so we took several photos of it and spent some time identifying it when we returned home. It was found growing in a very damp location in the **Oze National Park** marsh – not a location which we would consider a common one to search for violets in.



Viola violacea (シハイスミレ) (K)

We identified this in April 2007 in **Western Tokyo**. At the time we first found it we were very amazed. The location it was found is a secret because it is not a place where one would expect to find this violet. It was in a relatively small wooded location and we imagine that in a few years it will probably be bulldozed and turned into a housing tract, although we hope not. This is a very small flowered violet and it is also very purple. (Also see overview photo, page 86)



Viola violacea var. *makinoi* (マキノスミレ) (K)

We call this species the “*hands-up violet*”. Why? Note the position of the leaves – they are all standing pretty much straight up. The underside of the leaves, you will note, are very purplish-brown. We first identified this species in April 2007 in the **Okutama Lake Area** of **Western Tokyo**. We won’t tell you the precise location though, sorry. We were surprised to find it. We were eating lunch and while looking around we noticed this purple flower – we investigated and this was what it was! (Also see overview photo, page 87)



Viola yazawana (ヒメスミレサイシン) (C)

We identified this species only in May 2009. We were once again, in the mountains near **Kawaguchi Lake** in **Yamanashi Prefecture**. We have only found it that one time. It seems that the flowering season of this species is similar to *Viola collina* – and is also very short. We suspect that if you do not find this species within a day or 2 of its flowering, then you will have to wait until next year and try again. Good luck in your searches.



Viola yedoensis (ノジスミレ) (K)

This species, like *Viola confusa* ssp. *nagasakiensis*, we have found only at **Koishikawa Botanical Garden**, in **Tokyo**, and it should not be found in this area. It is quite pretty and relatively large flowered. We have made some assumptions that it was planted, either accidentally (as an unwanted import which was brought in on some other species) or on purpose. We generally only find one or 2 plants per season, so it is very far from common even in the Botanical Garden.



Viola yezoensis (ヒカゲスミレ) (K)

This species, along with *Viola yezoensis* f. *discolor*, was one of the violets which first got us excited about violets it seems. We found this large flowered violet in the **Mt. Takao** area of **Western Tokyo** way back when we first started photographing spring flowers. With its white flower and purplish veins of the flower it is very pretty and in the spring around **Mt. Takao** it is relatively easy to find. We first added it to our life list in 2005.



Viola yezoensis f. *discolor* #1 (タカオスミレ) (K)

This is commonly known as **Takao Violet** – can you guess why? It’s due to the fact that it is very common on several of the slopes of **Mt. Takao**, in **Western Tokyo**. Note that the scientific name is the same as the previous violet plus a “discolor” added as a form. The “discolor” refers to the purplish color of the leaves. This is a large flowered violet and it also has large leaves. We added this species to our life list in 2005 and possibly this was the first violet on that list! (Also see overview photos, pages 88 and 89)



Viola yezoensis f. *discolor* #2 (タカオスミレ) (K)

Here is a 2nd photo of this amazing species of violet. In this photo you can easily notice how large the flowers are, how large the leaves are and also note the purplish veins of the flower. Such an amazingly beautiful violet. People come from far and wide to find this violet in the spring. (Also see overview photos, pages 88 and 89)



Viola yezoensis and *V. yezoensis* f. *discolor* (ヒカゲスミレ & タカオスミレ) (K)

In this amazing photo you can easily compare the leaves of *V. yezoensis* and *V. yezoensis* f. *discolor*. We have never seen a photo opportunity like this again. The two plants growing side by side is not something one even hopes to find.

Natural Hybrids of Various Violets



Viola kusanoana x *Viola rostrata* (イワフネタチツボスミレ) (T)

This is the 4th and final one of the 4 new violets we found when we went to Kazuya's hometown in **Yamagata Prefecture** in May, 2008 (see *V. kusanoana*). This is, of course, a cross of *Viola kusanoana* and *Viola rostrata*. The flower spur is shorter than that of *V. rostrata*, but longer than that of *V. kusanoana*. There are also other differences, but this book is not intended as a definitive guide to identification so we'll leave it at that.



Viola rossi (rossii) × Viola bisseti (bissetii) (ナガバナアケボノスミレ) (K)

This hybrid has the flower of *V. rossi*, but less pink in color, while the leaves are curled like those of *V. rossi*, but toothed like those of *V. bisseti*. We first found this in a location which we will not divulge and we have never found it in another location. We find quite a few strange violets in this location in **Western Tokyo**.



Viola x *pseudo-makinoi* f. *concolor* (ミドリミツモリスミレ) (K)

This is the hybrid of *Viola violacea* var. *makinoi* and *Viola sieboldi*. We will most certainly not divulge the location where we found this rare hybrid. We certainly consider ourselves very fortunate to have seen it though. We'll give you only one hint – it was found in **Western Tokyo**.



Viola x *taradakensis* var. *eizalacea* (カワギシスミレ) (K)

This specimen is the hybrid of *Viola violacea* var. *makinoi* and *Viola eizanensis*. We will not divulge the location of this specimen. We have been very fortunate to have found this same specimen for 3 years in a row – it has not been stolen by plant thieves. We know of 2 plants of this species, but unfortunately one of them is in a very dry location and has not been in bloom for 2 of the 3 years we have found it.

Until this point we have shown you detailed views of the violets which are on our life list of violets. Now we'll begin to show you a few selected photos which show overviews of the environment where some of these violets may be found. Unfortunately we don't have so very many of this type of photos, we always seem to concentrate our efforts on showing the details.

Some Violets of Eastern Japan



Here is an overview of *Viola biflora* and its habitat in the grass at a relatively high elevation on Mt. Shibutsu in Oze National Park.

Here is an overview of *Viola bissetii* in its natural habitat in the mountains of **Western Tokyo**.



Here is an overview of *Viola brevistipulata* in its natural habitat on a hillside in Niigata Prefecture.



Here is an overview of *Viola chaerophylloides* f. *sieboldiana* in its natural habitat near Mt. Takao.



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Here is an amazing overview of *Viola selkirkii* in its natural habitat on one of the slopes of Mt. Akita-Komagatake.

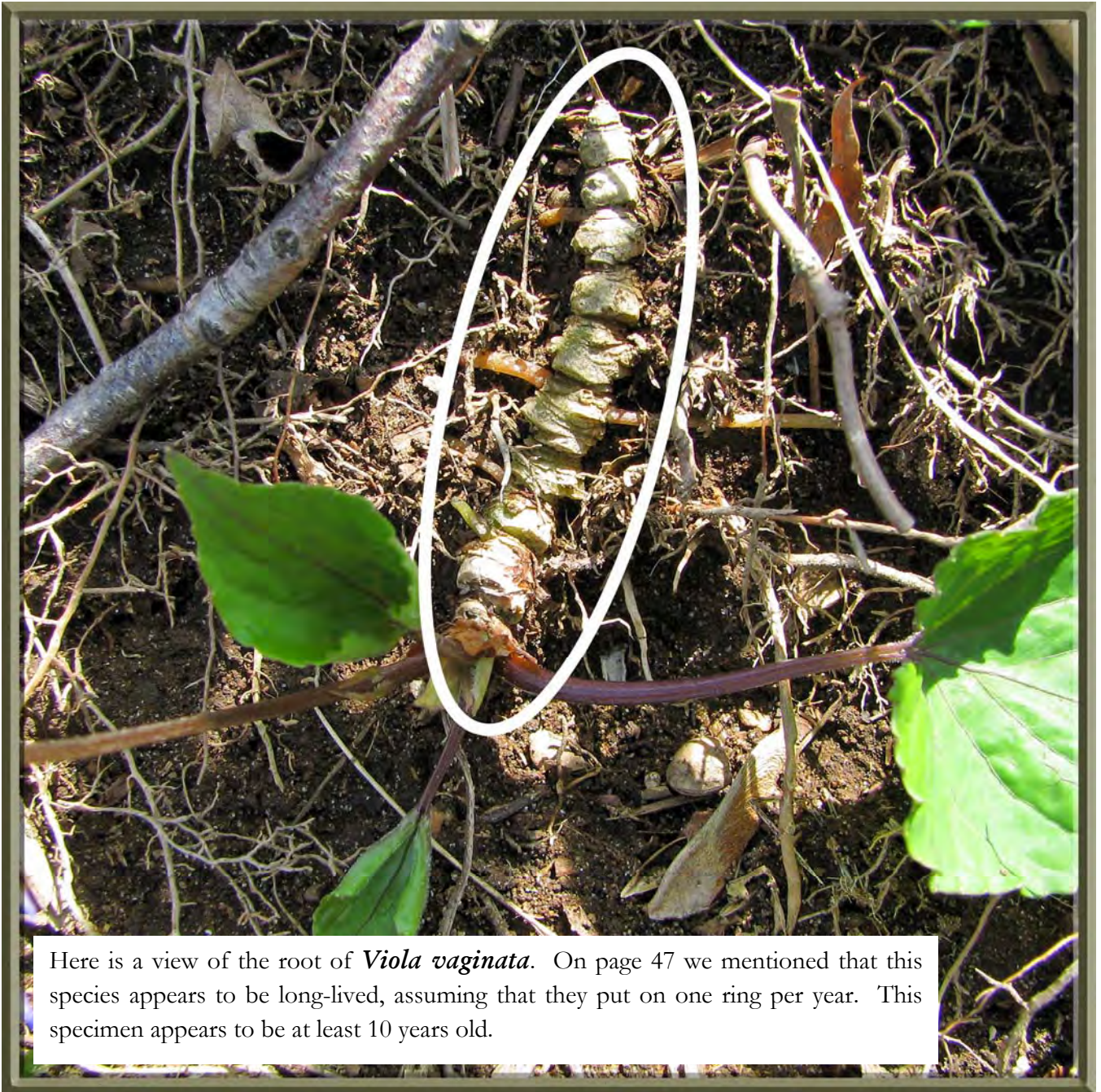




Here is an overview of *Viola sieboldi* in its natural habitat in the forests of **Western Tokyo**.

Here is an overview of *Viola tokubuchiana* var. *takedana* f. *variegata* in its natural habitat in Western Tokyo.





Here is a view of the root of *Viola vaginata*. On page 47 we mentioned that this species appears to be long-lived, assuming that they put on one ring per year. This specimen appears to be at least 10 years old.

Here is an overview of *Viola vaginata* in its natural habitat in **Yamagata Prefecture**.



Here is an amazing field of *Viola verecunda*
growing in a park in **Yamagata Prefecture**.



Here is an overview of *Viola violacea* in its natural habitat in **Western Tokyo**. Note the acorn for scale.



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Here is an overview of *Viola violacea* var. *makinoi* in its natural habitat in **Western Tokyo**. Note the “hands-up” orientation of the leaves.



Here is an overview of *Viola yezoensis* f. *discolor* in its natural habitat in **Western Tokyo**. Such a beautiful specimen.



Here is the final overview photo. This is another example of *Viola yezoensis* f. *discolor* in its natural habitat in **Western Tokyo**.



That was the final photo we want to show you of violets which we have found. We hope that you enjoyed looking at these photos and learning about some of the violets which can be found in the Tohoku, Kanto and Chubu Regions of Japan. If you ever want to come and visit Japan and search for some of these species you may feel free to contact us through our respective websites – <http://danwiz.com> is Daniel's website and Kazuya's site can be found at <http://studiesofplantsandwildlife.blogspot.com> or alternately, <http://www2.blogger.com/profile/02622643778290337101>. If you are reading this several years after it is published we cannot guarantee that these websites will still exist, but as long as we live we hope to maintain them. There is an e-mail link on <http://danwiz.com>. You can leave a comment on Kazuya's Blog and ask him to contact you.

Daniel maintains a special web page showing violets which they have added to their life list. This can be found at <http://danwiz.com/Violets/Violets.php>.

The End

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About the Authors:

Daniel Wiczorek was born in 1947 in Ionia, Michigan. He graduated from the University of Michigan with a B.S. in Forestry in 1969. He moved to Oregon to work in the field of forestry in 1971. That was followed by a move to Alaska in 1975, where he continued his career in forestry. After about a 14 year career in forestry, Daniel decided to do something different and he served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in The Philippines from 1985 – 1987. Upon completion of his Peace Corps service he returned to Alaska, where he attended the University of Alaska – Fairbanks and received an M.B.A. in 1991. This was followed by a move to South Korea in 1992, where Daniel taught English to Korean people wishing to improve their English Language skills. Daniel's next stop was in New York City, where he worked as temporary staff at Deutsche Bank from 1998 – 2001. He left NYC in March 2001 and moved on to his present home in Mitaka City, Tokyo, Japan. He is teaching English in Japan and at this time he's been teaching as a career for about 17 years. He has been hiking, climbing and doing photography since he was about 12 years old.

Kazuya Numazawa was born in 1979 in Shinjo in Yamagata Prefecture, Japan. He was raised in Funagata Town in Yamagata Prefecture. He graduated from Tokyo University in 2005. Since that time he has worked in several fields, but primarily in Cram Schools around the Mitaka Area.

Daniel and Kazuya met in 2001 and they have been hiking, mountain climbing and doing photography together since that time.

