

## Earliest cherry blossoms in Japan city in 600 years

2nd April, 2021



Cherry blossoms in Kyoto, Japan have bloomed at their earliest date in 600 years. Researchers from Osaka University say blossoms in the city of Kyoto peaked on the 26th of March. The previous record for Kyoto was set in 1409, when the season reached its peak on the 27th of March. Data on cherry blossoms blooming in Kyoto go back 1,200 years. As far back as the year 812, officials at Japan's imperial court in Kyoto wrote details on the blooms in documents and diaries. Japan experienced much warmer weather in the first few months of this year. Meteorologists say this is because of climate change. They say many plants are flowering and blossoming earlier than normal because of global warming.

Cherry blossoms are an important part of Japanese culture. People keep a close eye on the news of blossoming times from forecasts made by the Japanese Meteorological Agency. The blossoms are called "sakura" in Japan. Many people plan trips to famous cherry blossom areas and spend hours having picnics under the sakura. The cherry blossoms also provide Japan with an important economic boost each spring. People come from all over the world to view them. Japan's Mainichi newspaper explained the importance of sakura. It wrote: "Sakura has deeply influenced Japanese culture for centuries. It has regularly been used in poetry and literature. Their fragility is seen as a symbol of life, death and rebirth."

Sources: [mainichi.co.jp](http://mainichi.co.jp) / [bbc.com](http://bbc.com) / [independent.co.uk](http://independent.co.uk)

### Writing

It is important to have fun and picnics when trees blossom. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

cherry blossoms / researchers / Kyoto / record / season / peak / weather / climate / important / culture / news / forecast / picnics / boost / trips / literature / life / death

### True / False

- a) Cherry blossoms last bloomed so early in the year 600. T / F
- b) The last record for early blooming cherry blossoms was set in 1409. T / F
- c) Officials in Japan wrote details about cherry blossoms in the year 812. T / F
- d) Meteorologists say climate change is not why cherry blossoms are early. T / F
- e) Japanese people keep a close eye on cherry blossom forecasts. T / F
- f) People in Japan spend hours having picnics under *sakura* trees. T / F
- g) Cherry blossoms are very bad for Japan's economy. T / F
- h) Cherry blossoms are a symbol of life and death in Japan. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                               |                        |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <b>bloomed</b>             | a. well known          |
| 2. <b>previous</b>            | b. usual               |
| 3. <b>experienced</b>         | c. watch               |
| 4. <b>meteorologists</b>      | d. frequently          |
| 5. <b>normal</b>              | e. flowered            |
| 6. <b>keep a close eye on</b> | f. uplift              |
| 7. <b>famous</b>              | g. weather forecasters |
| 8. <b>boost</b>               | h. earlier             |
| 9. <b>regularly</b>           | i. sign                |
| 10. <b>symbol</b>             | j. encountered         |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Why do you think cherry blossoms are so important in Japan?
- c) What do you think of picnics to view cherry blossoms?
- d) What flowers are a symbol of life and death?
- e) What flowers do you look forward to seeing in spring?
- f) What do you think cherry blossoms symbolize?
- g) What flowers around the world would you like to go and see?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

## Phrase Match

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 1. The previous record for Kyoto was      | a. of Japanese culture      |
| 2. As far back as                         | b. are flowering            |
| 3. documents                              | c. boost                    |
| 4. They say many plants                   | d. and diaries              |
| 5. blossoming earlier than normal because | e. eye on the news          |
| 6. Cherry blossoms are an important part  | f. set in 1409              |
| 7. People keep a close                    | g. picnics under the sakura |
| 8. spend hours having                     | h. of global warming        |
| 9. an important economic                  | i. a symbol of life         |
| 10. Their fragility is seen as            | j. the year 812             |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of cherry blossoms?
- Why do people love cherry blossoms?
- What are your favourite blossoms?
- What do you know about the Japanese city of Kyoto?
- What blossoms and flowers are important in your country's culture?
- How important are flowers?
- How is climate change affecting plants?
- What three adjectives best describe cherry blossoms?

## Spelling

- medbolo at their earliest date
- blossoms in the city of Kyoto edepka
- The eruivspo record
- offcsiail at Japan's imperial court
- doutmcnes and diaries
- this is because of tacleim change
- blossoming times from afrcsseto
- an important omieocnc boost
- explained the aomtrcinpe of sakura
- fdelcinnue Japanese culture for centuries
- used in poetry and rateeirult
- Their fgrtaiyl is seen as a symbol

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. h	3. j	4. g	5. b
6. c	7. a	8. f	9. d	10. i

## Role Play

### Role A – Cherry Blossoms

You think cherry blossoms are the best blooms. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their flowers. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): roses, sunflowers or lotus flowers.

### Role B – Roses

You think roses are the best blooms. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their flowers. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): cherry blossoms, sunflowers or lotus flowers.

### Role C – Sunflowers

You think sunflowers are the best blooms. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their flowers. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): roses, cherry blossoms or lotus flowers.

### Role D – Lotus Flowers

You think lotus flowers are the best blooms. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their flowers. Also, tell the others which is the worst of these (and why): roses, sunflowers or cherry blossoms.

## Speaking – Blooms

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| • Cherry blossoms | • Lilies        |
| • Roses           | • Daffodils     |
| • Orchids         | • Plum blossoms |
| • Lotus flowers   | • Sunflowers    |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	F	e	T	f	T	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.