

Briefs: Mold threatens Japanese cherry trees

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A contagious mold disease known as witches' broom is reportedly threatening Japan's emblematic "sakura" cherry trees.

A survey by the Flower Association of Japan indicates the mold has been reported in at least 18 prefectures, the Kyodo news service reported Monday. The disease makes cherry trees unable to produce flowers and sometimes kills them in about 10 years.

The association said its survey, conducted in 28 of the nation's 47 prefectures from July 2004 to December last year, found cherry blossom trees at 25 sites in 18 prefectures were infected with witches' broom.

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