

Toyota's Japan hybrid sales top one million

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Toyota, the front-runner in [hybrid cars](#) that use two power sources -- a [gasoline engine](#) and another source such as an electric motor -- launched the Prius, the world's first mass-produced hybrid car, in 1997.

The world's biggest automaker later expanded use of its hybrid system to mini-vans, SUVs and rear-wheel-drive sedans.

Currently, nine Toyota-produced hybrid passenger vehicle models and three hybrid commercial vehicle models are sold in Japan and a total of eight passenger hybrid models overseas.

Sales of hybrids have been brisk in recent years because of high gasoline prices and increasing public awareness of global warming.

Last year, Toyota recalled 437,000 Prius and other hybrid vehicles to repair a flaw in the braking system, as part of around 10 million recalls worldwide that have tarnished its previously stellar reputation for quality.

However the [Prius](#) has retained the top spot in sales in Japan for the past year, according to the Japan Automobile Dealers Association.

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