

Blooming early! Japan's famed cherry blossoms make unexpected appearance

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The hugely popular cherry blossom season draws tourists from around the world

The delicate blossoms of the cherry tree might be synonymous with the onset of spring in Japan—except this year they're also blooming in autumn, a weather forecasting company said Wednesday.

Experts told local media that the rare late blooms could be the result of this year's unusual weather, including a particularly active [typhoon](#) season.

Weathernews, a meteorological firm, said more than 300 people across Japan had reported cherry blossoms were blooming in their neighbourhood, in a survey conducted last week.

Local media spotted clusters of the famous pink and white blooms at several popular cherry blossom spots.

Hiroyuki Wada, a tree doctor at the Flower Association of Japan, speculated that unusual weather patterns could be responsible for the blooms' surprise appearance.

He told public broadcaster NHK that violent storms had stripped [trees](#) of their leaves, which usually release a chemical that inhibits blooming before [spring](#).

A series of unusually warm days after typhoons could also have confused the plants into flowering, he said.

"This has happened in the past, but I don't remember seeing something of this scale," he said.

Japan has been battered by a series of typhoons this year, including Jebi, which claimed 11 lives and shut down Kansai airport in September.

But Wada said the freak flowering should not affect the hugely popular cherry blossom season, which draws tourists from around the world and sees Japanese flock to hold 'hanami' picnics in the shade of the blooms.

"The buds that opened now won't blossom in the coming spring. But only

a small number of them are being observed. I don't think it will affect cherry blossom viewing (next year)," he told NHK.

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