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TEACHING TUESDAY

KAKI

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The kaki, or Japanese persimmon, has been cultivated in Japan for over 1000 years and are typically in season from late autumn into the winter. They are one of the few fruits native to Japan, and are a popular confectionery, as well as being used to make traditional wagashi sweets.

Red-orange in color, kaki are crisp and similar in size to apples. Despite this, they maintain a strong citrus taste and should only be consumed when ripe. There are two types of ripe kaki: non-astringent, or sweet kaki, and astringent, or bitter kaki. The sweet kaki are flatter in shape, while the bitter ones are longer and more spherical.

Certain prefectures, like Nara and Gifu, even have their own traditions based around kaki. Nara Prefecture was one of the first to make kaki edible by drying them, and even has an entire museum dedicated to the different types of kaki. Gifu Prefecture has the scenic Zuirin-ji Temple, also known as the Kaki Temple, which is famous for its confectionery dried kaki. Still popular today, kaki grow throughout the country and are something everyone can look forward to as the seasons change.