

# Experience the delicacy and beauty of Benisashi Ume

## Benisashi Ume 100% straight juice Benisashi Ume juice powder



### ◆ *Prunus mume* fruit and “Umeboshi”

*Prunus mume* is an Asian tree species classified in the *Rosaceae* family of the genus *Prunus*, in the subgenus *Prunus*, akin to *Prunus salicina* (plum or prune) and *Prunus armeniaca* (apricot). It is called Japanese apricot in English and "ume" in Japanese. The tree is native to China and grows wildly in the southern part of the country, and it is thought to have been brought into Japan around 700 A.D. Its fruit has high organic acids content and has long been considered unsuitable to be eaten raw outside Asia.

In Japan, the *Prunus mume* fruits are most often pickled and dried. Such dried ume fruits are called “Umeboshi”, and the oldest Umeboshi on record is said to have cured Emperor Murakami’s disease around 950 A.D. Over time Umeboshi was used as food and condiment as well as for medicinal purposes, and the cultivation of ume became widespread nationwide around 1300 A.D. To this day, Japanese eat it with rice or as a common ingredient in rice balls.

### Benisashi Ume

Benisashi is a cultivar of *Prunus mume* which is cultivated largely in Fukui prefecture. The town of Wakasa produces 70% of the entire Benisashi Ume in Fukui. Its origin dates back to the Tenpo era (1830 - 1844) during the Edo period, when two local merchants named Heidayu and Suke-dayu started cultivation of their original *Prunus mume* cultivars. Over time, these varieties were improved to be the ultimate hybrid, "Benisashi".

Another superior *Prunus mume* cultivar is "Nanko" in Wakayama prefecture.

Compared to Nanko, Benisashi fruits are a little smaller and have the color of paler pink. However, they are more tasteful and juicy because of the characteristic smaller pits, fleshy meat and thin skin.

Pickled and dried *Prunus mume* are then dyed red using purple perilla herbs called *akajiso*. Benisashi manufacturers take extra care to make the fruit skin as thin as possible to realize the most brilliant red color, while protecting the skin surface. Benisashi is renowned to be the ultimate *Prunus mume* due to its intricate and time-consuming manufacturing process.

