

# Cherry laurel

*Prunus laurocerasus*

## Family

Rosaceae (rose)

## Where is it originally from?

South East Europe

## What does it look like?

Evergreen, spreading shrub or tree (<10 m) often with multiple short trunks. Thick, leathery, narrowly oval to lance-shaped leaves (75-180 mm x 23-55 mm), with slightly serrated and curved-under margins and pointed tips, have shiny upper surfaces with pale veins, paler and less shiny undersides, and short stalks (1 cm long). Spikes (8-12 cm long) of small fragrant blossoms (20-30 per spike) with five round, spreading, greenish white to cream petals (Aug-Sept) are followed by grape-like clusters of fruit resembling dark purple to black cherries (Nov-Jan).

## Are there any similar species?

*Prunus laurocerasus* can be distinguished from other cherries and cherry laurels (e.g. *P. lusitanica*) by being evergreen, having flowers on long spikes rather than small clusters, and its leaves having few, short and distantly spaced teeth only towards the tip.

## Why is it weedy?

Large species which creates dense, long-lived thickets. It seeds freely and is poisonous.

## How does it spread?

Seed is bird-dispersed. Vegetative spread is by suckering from the root system.

## What damage does it do?

Forms dense stands in open and disturbed habitats preventing the regeneration of native species.

## Which habitats is it likely to invade?

Riverine forest, disturbed forest and shrubland, alluvial terraces, plantations, shelterbelts, roadsides, wastelands.

## What can I do to get rid of it?

1. Dig out seedlings and small plants (all year round): Mulch or dispose of at refuse transfer station.
2. Stump swab: metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (100ml/L).
3. Bore and fill (all year round): drill downward angled holes every 5 cm around the trunk, fill each hole with 2ml metsulfuron methyl 600g/kg (20g/L) or 20ml of a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted).
4. Frilling (all year round): Make deep cuts into the sapwood at 5 cm intervals around the base of the tree (do not ringbark) and immediately saturate cuts with metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (20g/L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (undiluted).
5. Overall spray (summer): metsulfuron-methyl 600g/kg (5g/10L) or a product containing 100g picloram+300g triclopyr/L (6ml/L)

## What can I do to stop it coming back?

Monitor the site for any regrowth and seedlings for two years. If possible, search for and eliminate the source of the infestation. Where appropriate, plant local native trees or shrubs to produce shade.



[www.weedbusters.org.nz](http://www.weedbusters.org.nz)



Photo: Carolyn Lewis



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