Sweet cherry

Prunus avium

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Family
Rosaceae (rose)

Also known as
Mazzard

What does it look like?
Deciduous, spreading, suckering tree (<5-12m tall) with tall trunk. Thin, oval leaves (30-150 x 25-70 mm) with toothed edges are hairless above, and undersides are hairy when leaves are young, becoming hairless as they mature. White, occasionally double, flowers (11-19 x 8-17 mm) aren't fragrant, and are in clusters of 2-4 (Sept-Nov). Cherry fruit (8-17 mm diam, 30 mm in cultivation) develops Nov-Feb, is dark red, usually sweet but can be bitter.

Photo: Trevor James

Are there any similar species?
Other cherry (*Prunus*) species, especially *P. campanulata*, *P. serrulata*, *P. laurocerasus*, *P. lusitanica*

Why is it weedy?
Tolerant of cold, low rainfall, mod shade. Suckers, long-lived, forms dense stands, tall. Seeds long-lived, widely dispersed.

How does it spread?
Birds carry seed medium distances, and suckers locally. Soil movement.

Photo: Trevor James

What damage does it do?
Impacts on native plants. Forms dense stands in open and disturbed habitats, prevents native plant germination and growth.

Which habitats is it likely to invade?
Disturbed forest and shrubland.

What can I do to get rid of it?
1. Physical removal - pull seedlings, dig out small plants or excavate larger areas.
2. Cut and paste (all year round) - Cut the stem/trunk as close to the ground as possible and cover the entire stump with herbicide as soon as possible after cutting. Apply metsulfuron gel (10g/l strength)
3. Basal spray stems up to 20cm diametre with X-Tree Basal. Ensure the base is thoroughly covered at ground level.
4. Drill or frill - Drill downward sloping holes around the circumference of the trunk about 8-10 cm apart, or Frill (make deep cuts into the sapwood at regular intervals around the base of the tree, taking care not to ring-bark the plant). Fill the holes or saturate the cuts with metsulfuron-methyl 600 g/kg at a rate of 20-50g/L.
5. Foliar spray - Apply metsulfuron herbicide (600g/kg active ingredient) (knapsack 0.5g/L, or Gun and hose 20-35g/100L) plus organosilicone penetrant (3ml/L) to thoroughly wet all parts of plant. Note: Metsulfuron overspray will kill other (desirable) broadleaf plants and has residual activity in the soil which aids in killing below ground parts.

Photo: Trevor James

CAUTION: When using any herbicide or pesticide, PLEASE READ THE LABEL THOROUGHLY to ensure that all instructions and directions for the purchase, use and storage of the product, are followed and adhered to.

What can I do to stop it coming back?
Large suckers best treated via stump swab, small via spraying. Follow up monthly until all gone.