# **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) 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

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

adhered to.

Monitor the site for any regrowth and seedlings for two years. If



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Photo: Carolyn Lewis



Photo: Carolyn Lewis

possible, search for and eliminate the source of the infestation. Where appropriate, plant local native trees or shrubs to produce shade.



Photo: Trevor James