

Prunus laurocerasus

COMMON NAME

cherry laurel

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Prunus laurocerasus L.

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Exotic

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

NVS CODE

PRULAU

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

HABITAT

Terrestrial. High rainfall or otherwise saturated soils (C. Ogle, pers. comm.). Found in plantations, around shelterbelts, roadsides, wastelands and in lowland areas (Webb et al., 1988). Relics of cultivation are very common in settled areas especially around old homesteads, domains and parks (Webb et al., 1988). Riverine forest (C. Ogle, pers. comm.). On an alluvial terraca (J. Barkle, pers. comm.).

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Evergreen, wide, spreading shrub or tree, to 10 m tall. The leaves are thick, oval to lance-shaped, with a slightly serrated margin, and are 10-15 cm long. Leaves occur alternately, on short, thick stalks, and have glandular depressions and hairs near the base. The upper surface is dark green, smooth and shining with obvious lighter green veins, the underside of the leaf is paler and less shining. Flowers are small (2-5 mm) and white, with five petals. They grow in bunches of 20-30. Flowering is from Aug-Sept. The fruit resembles black cherries, but grows in clusters like grapes. It is bird dispersed. Fruiting is from Nov-Jan.

SIMILAR TAXA

Evergreen, widespreading shrub or tree up to 10m high; leaves 90-150mm long x 30-50mm wide; leaves shining above with prominent paler veins, less shining below; flower stalks 100-120mm long with 20-30 flowers; 5 petals, greenish white to cream; fruit about 10mm long, ovoid, dark purple, smooth (Webb et al., 1988).

FLOWERING

August, September

FLOWER COLOURS

White

FRUITING

November, December, January

LIFE CYCLE

Perennial. Fruit probably eaten and spread by kereru (C. Ogle, pers. comm.).

YEAR NATURALISED

1958



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ORIGIN

SE Europe

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

POISONOUS PLANT

The kernels of the black fruit are poisonous if eaten.

MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/prunus-laurocerasus/>