PLANT FACT SHEET

Prunus laurocerasus L.

GENUS *Prunus* **FAMILY** Rosaceae

COMMON NAMES Cherry laurel

EDIBLE PARTS AND USES

Edible parts: Fruit, Seeds, Leaves

CAUTION: The leaves can contain prussic acid. This is removed by boiling and changing the water.
The fruit are eaten raw and used in jam.
The thick glossy leaves have a flavour like bitter almond and are used in cooking. They flavour dessert puddings. They can be used for tea.

DESCRIPTION

An evergreen shrub or tree. It grows 5-10 m high and spreads 6-9 m wide. It is a broad spreading tree. The bark is grey-brown and smooth. The leaves are oblong and 20 cm long by 6 cm wide. The leaves are alternate. They are glossy dark green above and pale green underneath. They are leathery and pointed. They have small wavy teeth. The leaf stalks are thick. The crushed leaves have the smell of almonds. The flowers are small and white. They are 8 mm across. They occur in erect heads 12 cm long. These are in the axils of leaves. The flowers have a scent. The fruit are small cherries which turn from red to black. They are 1.2 cm across.

HABITAT

It is a temperate plant. It is native to S.W. Asia and E. Europe. It is frost hardy. It is tolerant of shade. It grows on most soils except chalk soils. It suits hardiness zones 7-10. Tasmania Herbarium.

NOTES

There are about 200 Prunus species. Wild types can be invasive.

PICTURES



Credit: Food Plants International (Bruce French)



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