

September 2022

Cherry laurel, Common laurel, *Prunus laurocerasus* L.

from the Rosaceae family (rose family).

The cherry laurel is an evergreen shrub that can also develop into a tree as a solitary plant. It has long, lanceolate, coarse, dark green leaves. The racemose, white inflorescence appears from April to June. In late summer the fruits form, fleshy cherries up to 12 mm in size that turn from green to red to almost black as they ripen.

Chemical compounds: Cyanogenic glycosides, tannins.

The whole plant is poisonous, especially the leaves and the seeds.

The cherry laurel belongs to the neophytes, its original home is south-eastern Europe. Its strong growth makes it a popular, cheap hedge plant. It does not provide food for birds, only some thrushes eat its berries. It provides food neither to young birds nor insects. Due to its large presence in gardens, it drives out other hedge plants. Prunings from the cherry laurel rot slowly, and are often unauthorisedly dumped on forest edges. There, the cut plant can still germinate and revert to the wild.

Cherry laurel should no longer be planted in our gardens; instead, hawthorn, blackthorn, hazelnut and rosehip should be used to create hedges. These plants provide better conditions for insects and birds. And their flowers and fruits are a more beautiful sight than the monotonous plastic green of the cherry laurel.

