Ymddiriedolaeth Natur
Gogledd Cymru
North Wales
Wildlife Trust

GARDENERS' TOOLKIT

PLANT PROFILE

Cherry laurel

INVASIVE

FACTS | ID | TAKE ACTION | TIPS | MORE PROFILES

Species description

Scientific name:
Prunus laurocerasus

Native to:
Balkan Peninsula, western Caucasus and northern Iran.

Photo: NWWT Lisa Toth

Cronfa Treftadaeth Heritage Fund
Mewn Partneriaeth â **Llywodraeth Cymru**
In Partnership with **Welsh Government**

Interesting facts

Impacts:

Cherry laurel grows rapidly and forms dense thickets, shading out other plants and preventing the regeneration of trees in woodlands. The leaf litter is acidic and makes the soil less suitable for native species.

Habitat:

Found in woodland and scrub, roadside, private and public gardens.

A vigorous large evergreen shrub or small tree often used as hedging or game cover.

Introduced to Britain by 1611 and found in the wild by 1886.

How it spreads:

Spreads by seed that is carried by wind or birds eating the berries and dispersing seed through their poo. Also spreads vegetatively by branches layering on the ground and rooting.

Photos: NWWT Lisa Toth

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Key identification features

Leathery, glossy, oblong, evergreen leaves up to 15cm long with visible veins and serrated edges.

Berries develop in late summer ripening from green to cherry-like black.

Erect racemes of white flowers to 12cm long in spring.

Photos: NWWT Lisa Toth

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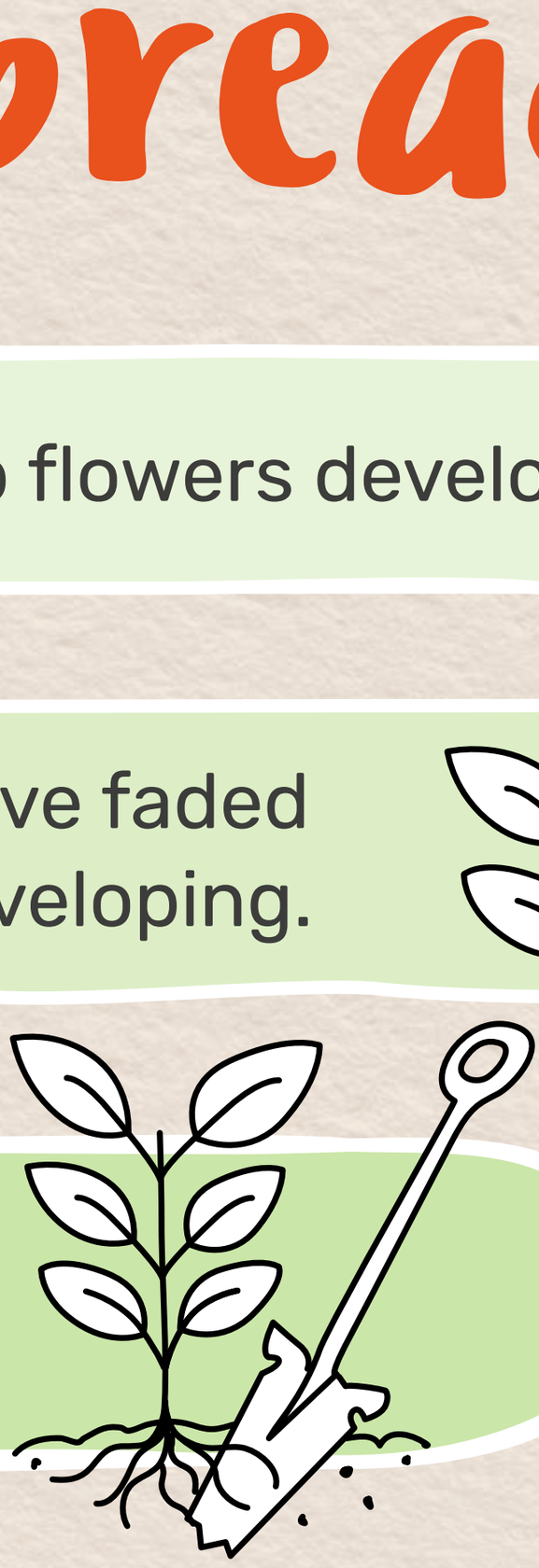
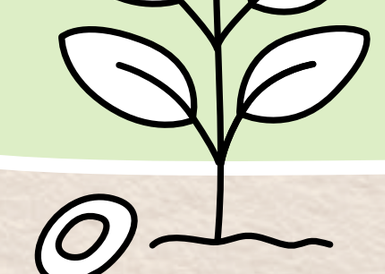
Take action
Help stop the spread!

Cut back in spring to stop flowers developing.

Deadhead after flowers have faded to prevent berries from developing.



Remove mature plants by digging, taking care to remove the roots.



Remove seedlings by hand-pulling or digging.

It’s best not to compost berries or leaves at home, instead use council garden waste facilities.

Explore our tips for alternative plant ideas.

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Handy tips

Legislation

Not currently listed in legislation as an invasive species.

Laurel

Similar species:

Not to be confused with bay tree or bay laurel (*Laurus nobilis*) or rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*).

Holly

Alternative plant ideas

Native

Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

Wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*)

Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*)

Beech

Non-native

Mexican orange ‘White Dazzler’ (*Choisya* × *dewitteana* ‘White Dazzler’)

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Photos: NWWT Lisa Toth.
Illustrations: David Setter @doodleplanet and starfishonline.co.uk
Information collated from: GB NNSS, BSBI and RHS.