

Cherry Laurel

Prunus caroliniana

The Rose Family (Rosaceae)

Basic Description: Dense shrub or small tree with simple, evergreen leaves arranged alternately along green, red or grayish brown slender twigs. Bark smooth and gray; with age becoming blocky and almost black.

Interesting Facts: Crushed leaves emit almond extract-like odor. Seeds, twigs and leaves of all *Prunus* species contain hydrocyanic acid (a poison that gives almonds their characteristic flavor). Leaves of *Prunus caroliniana* are particularly high in this toxin.

Flower: Fragrant, white to cream, about .19" wide, in showy elongate clusters among the leaves, opening from February to April.

Fruit: Fleshy, with a thin pulp, dark red to black, .5" long by .375" wide, egg-shaped with a small tip, and persistent through winter.

Wildlife Value: Berries attract birds. Flowers attract bees, butterflies and other insects. Evergreen foliage provides cover.

Habitat: Well drained soils along natural levees and slopes.

LEAF TYPE

SIMPLE



POLLINATOR

INSECT



WILDLIFE VALUE

MEDIUM



Fruit



Height range 30-40'

