

Prunus serrulata

COMMON NAMES

Japanese hill cherry

BIOSTATUS

Exotic

CONSERVATION STATUS

Not applicable

CATEGORY

Vascular

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Trees & Shrubs - Dicotyledons

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, White

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Deciduous tree up to about 12 m tall. Leaves thin, broadly ovate 80-130 by 45-60 mm, petiole 20-32 mm, lamina rounded at the base tapering to a point at the tip, glabrous above and below, with serrate margins. Inflorescence a cluster of 3-4 white to pink flowers on short lateral shoots. Fruit less than 15 mm diameter, globose, dark red-black, stone smooth.

SIMILAR TAXA

In the sub genus *Carasus* (cherries). The acuminate (tapering to a fine point, sides slightly concave) marginal teeth on the leaves and the spreading flowers distinguish this species.

HABITAT

Terrestrial.

GENUS

Prunus

FAMILY

Rosaceae

AUTHORITY

Prunus serrulata Lindl.

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

FLOWERING

August, September, October

YEAR NATURALISED

1982

ORIGIN

China, Japan

REASON FOR INTRODUCTION

Ornamental

LIFE CYCLE AND DISPERSAL

Perennial. Reproduces by seed which is probably dispersed by birds.



Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/09/2012, Licence: CC BY.



Bark. Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt. Photographer: Jeremy R. Rolfe, Date taken: 23/04/2011, Licence: CC BY.

ETYMOLOGY

serrulata: Rough edged

ENVIRONMENTAL WEED (2024)

This plant is named in a list of 386 environmental weeds in New Zealand 2024 prepared by DOC. 759 candidate species were considered for inclusion on this new comprehensive list of environmental weeds in New Zealand. The species considered were drawn from published lists of weed species, lists of plants that must be reported or managed by law if observed, existing national and regional programmes and agreements for pest management, and species already managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC). Candidate species were then assessed to see if they were fully naturalised and whether they have more than minor impacts in natural ecosystems. Read the full report [here](#).

NVS CODE

PRUSER

MORE INFORMATION

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

PDF DATE

25 May 2026