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Prunus ilicifolia

[Synonyms : *Cerasus ilicifolia*, *Laurocerasus ilicifolia*, *Prunus capuli*, *Prunus ilicifolia* subsp. *ilicifolia*, *Prunus ilicifolia* subsp. *lyonii*, *Prunus salicifolia*, *Prunus serotina* subsp. *capuli*, *Prunus serotina* var. *salicifolia*]

HOLLYLEAF CHERRY is an evergreen shrub or tree. Native to California (United States) it has tiny fragrant white flowers.

It is also known as Californian cherry laurel, *Fuji-kirsebaer* (Danish), Holly-leaved cherry, Islay, and *Mame zakura* (Japanese).

Ilicifolia is derived from the genus name *Ilex* and Latin *-folia* (leaved) components meaning ‘with leaves like those in that (holly) genus’.

Local North American Indian tribes relied on the tiny bluish-black fruit for food. Among them were the Costanoan Indians who not only ate the fruit but the roasted kernels as well. For the Cahuiilla tribe the fruit were a delicacy, while the Mahuna mainly viewed them as a thirst quencher. Both the Luiseño and the Diegueño made flour from the seeds (apart from eating the cherry-like fruit). The latter used the flour to make roasted cakes or a porridge and the former depended upon the flour as a staple part of the tribe’s diet.

Costanoan Indians made some of their hunting bows from the wood.

The plant was also a source of medicine for some Indian tribes. For example coughs were cured in the Mahuna tribe with a root or bark infusion, while Diegueño Indians preferred a leaf infusion.