

Camphortree **CICA**
***Cinnamomum camphora* (L.) J. Presl**

From: Miller, James H. and Steve T. Manning. [working title] An Expanded Nonnative Invasive Plants of Southern Forests: A Field Guide for Identification and Control. Asheville, NC: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Research Station. DRAFT - August 2008

Family: Lauraceae

Plant. Evergreen tree 60 to 100 feet (18 to 30 m) in height and boles up to 2 feet (0.6 m) in diameter, with a round spreading crown formed by large branches radiating from mid-tree. Also found in dense thickets from root sprouts and seedlings. Glossy, lanceolate leaves and slender, green to reddish-brown twigs having a camphor odor when crushed, cut, or bruised. Abundant clusters of spherical, black drupes in fall to winter.

Stem. Twigs slender, smooth, and green to yellowish green sometimes tinged with red, with scattered light dots (lenticels). Corky ridges encircle junctures of new growth with jutting leaf scars on prior year's growth. Buds 0.5 inch (1.2 cm) long, sharp pointed, with overlapping scales. Branches green eventually reddish, smooth and glossy, increasingly covered with gray corky ridges and plates that fissure with age. Bark light grayish brown and widely fissured, becoming platy with age.

Leaves. Alternate but more clustered at twig tips, evergreen, leathery and glossy with a camphor odor when crushed, lanceolate, ovate to obovate, 2 to 4 inches (5 to 10 cm) long and 0.8 to 2 inches (2 to 5 cm) wide. Burgundy when young turning dark green with light-green veins above, whitish green beneath with tiny, brownish glands in axils of main veins, also evident as light dots on the upper surface. Margins entire, yellowish green, and wavy. Petioles slender to 1 inch (2.5 cm) long.

Flowers. May. Slender, stalked, axillary panicles, 2 to 3 inches (5 to 7 cm) long

with tiny, greenish-white, fragrant flowers having both male and female parts,
Fruit and seeds. July to February. Many fleshy, rounded drupes, 0.3 inch (0.7 cm) wide, dangling, green turning black with a funnel shaped, green base.

Ecology. Rapid growing, forming thickets and dense stands in fencerows, disturbed sites, and adjacent upland forests. Grows in well-drained, acid to basic soils and can withstand partial shade. Cannot tolerate cold temperatures below 20 degrees F (- 6 degrees C). Colonizes by root sprouts and spreads by prolific animal- and water-dispersed seeds.

Resembles another nonnative invasive, tallowtree [*Triadica sebifera* (L.) Smal]), which is deciduous and emits no camphor odor. **Also** resembles Carolina laurel cherry [*Prunus caroliniana* (Mill.) Ait.], considered an invasive native evergreen tree that has dark gray smooth bark and finely serrated leaves, which emit an almond scent when crushed.

History and use. Introduced in 1727 from Japan, China, and Taiwan as an ornamental and herbal plant, although it is toxic to humans in large doses.