

1.3 **Distribution of camphor laurel**

Camphor laurels have naturalised from near Nowra on the NSW south coast to Cooktown in north Queensland (Firth 1981). They especially favour high rainfall areas (greater than 1400mm) on fertile soils such as those derived from basalt and on floodplains. As it currently does not set seed in cooler areas such as Victoria it is not a current weed there. Camphor laurels recently began setting seed at Dorrigo (at elevations of over 700m); its adaption in that area has serious implications for other cooler climate areas to the south. Camphor laurels are restricted in low lying areas due to waterlogging and frost.

In 1979, there was over 220,000 camphor laurels in the Richmond, Brunswick & Tweed alone (Firth 1979). Approximately 1/3 of camphor laurels on the north coast are now estimated to be under 3 years in age (Scott, pers. comm.) – that equals a lot of camphors!

In South-east Queensland, camphor laurel is widespread in the Tallebudgera and Nerang valleys, parts of the Sunshine coast and around Gympie. Within the NSW North Coast, they are spreading rapidly in most catchments, particularly in the following areas:

Tweed: Common, particularly in 2 broad areas, namely the Terranora, Duroby, Bilambil, Carool, Cobaki and Piggabeen area and a broad band from Uki, Smiths Creek, Stokers Siding, Burringbar through to Byron Shire (Tweed Shire Council 1999). Also in the Duranbah area. See plate 6 and 9 below.

Brunswick: Common, especially Mullumbimby Creek, Bilinudgel, Main Arm to Mullumbimby. See plate 7 and 10 below.

Richmond: Common, especially the Wilson River catchment and north of a line from Wardell to Lismore including Teven, Alstonville, Tintenbar, Nimbin, The Channon and Bangalow. See plate 8 below.

Clarence: Nymboida-Orara catchments, particularly streambanks around the townships of Nymboida and Coutts Crossing; many riparian zones of the lower and middle Clarence River; Clarence floodplain, especially the Coldstream River catchment; Duck Creek.

Coffs Harbour LGA: Throughout the Upper Orara River area but particularly on streambanks; Shephards Road area (both areas currently being controlled); Valery-Crossmaglen-Bonville area.

Bellinger: Throughout the Never Never and Pine Creek catchments; on the Bellinger River streambanks downstream of the Never Never junction; around Bellingen; Hydes Creek area and the Kalang River downstream of Moodys Creek.

Nambucca: Warrell Creek area; Taylors Arm, especially downstream of Utungan; Nambucca floodplain; Missabotti Creek and the Morans Road area.

Macleay: The Macleay floodplain downstream of Sherwood; Clybucca-Smithtown area, Collombatti Creek.

Hastings: Camden Haven riparian zones downstream of Lorne; Rawdon Island, Wauchope & Beechwood area; Wilson River upstream of Telegraph Point and around the Ellenborough – Hastings junction.

Manning: The lower elevated Manning / Lansdowne floodplain and riparian zones downstream of Wingham and Upper Lansdowne.

Mapping of camphor laurel is being undertaken by local weed control authorities and others. Previous mapping focused on the Tweed, Brunswick and Richmond catchments (e.g Firth 1979). Within those catchments, DLWC produced maps from 1:25,000 air photos and some ground truthing. (see plates 6, 7 and 8).

Other mapping of camphor laurel distribution has been undertaken by:

- Tweed Shire Council using satellite imagery, 1:25,000 air photos (API) and some ground truthing. Accurate to the nearest 1 ha of vegetation or remnants/ corridors over 25m wide. Several areas of the Shire were not mapped (TSC 1999). See plate 9.
- Byron Shire Council using 1:25,000 API and ground truthing. Each specific vegetation community with a minimum size of 5ha (in forest situations) or 1ha (in largely cleared areas) was mapped onto GIS; providing relatively accurate mapping for larger forest areas but not for individual trees (BSC 1999). See plate 10.

Plate 6: Distribution of camphor laurel in the Tweed catchment produced from DLWC mapping. Light green areas indicate camphor laurel presence (1-49%). Dark green areas

