

# CASSIA

Yellow Shower, Pisabed, Calceolaria Shower

*Senna spectabilis*

Fabaceae

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## ECHO® PLANT INFORMATION SHEET

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### Origin

Central and northern South America are areas where Cassia is called a native though it has been introduced to Africa primarily as an ornamental, shade tree. This is a short tree, with a growth range of 7-10 m (23-32 ft) and a trunk diameter of 30 cm (12 in). Greater than its ornamental value is its value as firewood and as a source for charcoal. It is said that if a family could plant and sustain growth of ten Cassia trees, this would meet their demand for firewood. The tree has a dense, spreading crown and can serve as fodder for ruminants but only if the leaves are dry or wilted. Fragrant yellow flowers produce good nectar for bees. The wood is termite resistant, heavy and durable enough for use as tool handles.

### Common Names

- Spanish
  - Frijolillo

### Cultivation

*S. spectabilis* is a fast growing tree, given adequate moisture, 600-2000 mm (24-80 in) which will tolerate cool conditions of 15-25° C (59-77° F) and an altitude of up to 2000 m (6500 ft). This Cassia species prefers soil that is neutral to basic pH. Its abundance of foliage used as its own mulch or dug into the soil will provide the tree with the deep, moist loam soil that it needs to produce such foliage. It is propagated from seeds that have been covered with hot water, left to soften for 24 hours, then planted directly in the soil or in pots. The foliage will grow back when the tree is pruned at the beginning and end of the growing season for up to 50 seasons.

### Harvesting and Seed Production

A large number of cylindrical or flattened, hard pods are produced turning from green to black as the seeds inside mature. The pods are difficult to split to release the flat, brown 2.5 cm (1 in) seeds. The seeds will stay viable for up to 2 years when stored in a cool, dry place.

### Pests and Diseases

The wood is termite resistant. Beetles feed on the leaves but they do little or no harm to the yield of foliage.

### Cooking and Nutrition

No parts of this tree should be consumed by humans. The leaves can be poisonous to pigs and horses. Only leaves that have been dried or left to wilt after picking should be fed to ruminants. The leaves have a medium to high nutrient content.