

Senna siamea (Cassia siamea)

Caesalpinioideae

S. E. Asia

Eng: *Ironzwood, Kassod tree*

- Ecology:** Cultivated all over the tropics from sub-humid to semi-arid and even arid zones. Prefers a high watertable. Tolerates a variety of soils, but does better in light to medium ones. In Eritrea, *S. siamea* is planted as an ornamental in Ghinda, Keren, Barentu and Mai-habar towns, 800-1,500 m.
- Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, poles, timber (furniture), medicine, bee forage, mulch, **ornamental**, shade, **soil conservation**, **windbreak**.
- Description:** An evergreen ornamental tree to 15 m, often shrub-like. **BARK:** Smooth, pale grey-brown. **LEAVES:** Compound, with 4–16 pairs of **leaflets**, **oblong**, round at base and **tip** which may be **notched**, dark, **shiny green above**, **stalk to 30 cm**, grooved. **FLOWERS:** **Pale yellow in dense heads** to 20 cm long, each flower 3 cm across. **FRUIT:** Pods in dense cluster, **flat yellow-brown and smooth**, slightly curved, 20 seeds within.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, direct sowing.
- Seed:** A prolific seeder. No. of seeds per kg: $\pm 39,000$.
- treatment:** Soak stored seed. Fresh seed requires no pre-treatment.
- storage:** Seed can be stored for up to a year but germination rate falls with time.
- Management:** Lopping, coppicing, pollarding.
- Remarks:** The name of this tree has recently been changed to *Senna siamea*. The tree is fast growing and since it is not browsed it is easy to establish. Foliage is poisonous to pigs but not to cattle or sheep. Competes with crops and is susceptible to powdery mildew attacks on the leaves. It is termite-resistant and coppices well. The dense wood makes good firewood, although the fire is smoky.

