

Senna siamea

(*Cassia siamea*)

Fabaceae



S. E. Asia

Am: *Yeferenji digita*

Eng: *Ironwood, Kassod tree*

Ecology

Cultivated all over the tropics from subhumid to semi-arid and even arid zones. Prefers a high water table and grows in Dry and Moist Kolla agroclimatic zones. Tolerates a variety of soils, but does better in light to medium ones.

Uses

Firewood, charcoal, timber, furniture, poles, medicine, bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch, 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 at site.

Seed

Prolific seeder. About 39,000 seed per kg.

Treatment: Stored seed: Pour hot water on seed, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours. Fresh seed requires no pretreatment. Seed should be sown in areas with full sunlight as the slightest shade reduces germination.

Storage: Seed can be stored in airtight containers but germination rate falls with time.

Management

Fast growing. Lopping, coppicing.

Remarks

An earlier name of this tree was *Cassia siamea*. The tree is fast growing and since it is not browsed, 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. Coppices well. The dense wood makes good firewood, although the fire is smoky.



Photo: Patrick Maundu



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