

## *Senna siamea* (*Cassia siamea*)

## Caesalpinioideae

South-East Asia

**English:** Yellow cassia  
**Kunda:** Makeche  
**Nyanja:** Makeche  
**Senga:** Makeche

**Ecology:** A medium to large tree cultivated all over the tropics from sub-humid to semi-arid and even arid zones. Tolerates a variety of soils. In Zambia widely planted as an avenue and ornamental tree and for windbreaks. Common in Eastern Province.

**Uses:** Firewood, charcoal, timber (furniture), **poles**, medicine (bark), **shade, ornamental**, mulch, soil conservation, **windbreak**.

**Description:** An evergreen tree occasionally up to 30 m high, often smaller or shrub-like. **BARK:** smooth, pale grey-brown. **LEAVES:** compound, grooved, **leaflets oblong, round at base and tip, which may be notched**, dark, shiny green above. **FLOWERS:** pale yellow in dense heads. **FRUIT:** pods, in dense clusters, flat, yellow-brown and smooth, slightly curved.

**Propagation:** Seedlings, wildings, direct seeding.

**Seed:** This tree is a prolific seeder. No. of seeds per kg: 30,000–45,000.

**treatment:** Fresh seed requires no pre-treatment. Soak old seed in cold water for 24 hours.

**storage:** Seed can be stored for up to one year but germination rate drops with time.

**Management:** Lopping, coppicing.

**Remarks:** Fast growing. This species is not browsed and so is easy to establish. Foliage is poisonous to pigs but not to cattle or sheep. Resistant to termites; ideal for school compounds, for example. In Eastern Province extension efforts are being made to promote *S. siamea* to replace some eucalyptus which are not growing well because of a lack of inputs. *S. siamea* is a low-input tree crop. The bark is used to treat sexually transmitted diseases and diarrhoea.

