

Senna spectabilis (Cassia spectabilis)

Caesalpinioideae

Tropical America

Common names: Eng: cassia; **Swah:** mhoba.

Ecology: The tree is native to central and northern South America. It has been introduced in Africa as an ornamental tree. It is tolerant of cool conditions (15-25°C) and therefore in Tanzania is suitable for elevations up to 2,000 m. It will grow well with a mean annual rainfall of 800-1,000 mm in deep, moist sandy or loamy soils.

Uses: Firewood, charcoal, tool handles, bee forage, shade, ornamental, mulch.

Description: A small rounded deciduous tree generally less than 10 m tall. The bole is short and tends to fork near the ground. Bare for several months. **BARK:** smooth, grey with horizontal markings. **LEAVES:** compound to 40 cm, with many **pointed leaflets**, often softly hairy below. **FLOWERS:** **golden yellow** in **erect pyramid clusters to 60 cm high**, all over the tree. **FRUIT:** **long cylindrical** or flattened pods, turning from **green to black**, the seeds in separate compartments.

Propagation: Direct sowing, seedlings.

Seed **info.:** No. of seeds per kg: about 39,000. Seeds profusely.
treatment: immerse in hot water, allow to cool and soak for 24 hours.
storage: under cool dry conditions the seed can be stored for up to two years.

Management: Fast growing in good sites; coppicing.

Remarks: The wood is resistant to termites. Easy to raise and less susceptible to pests and diseases than *Senna siamea*.

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