Cassia fistula
Golden Shower Tree, Cañafistula, Pudding Pie Tree

Timely, and spectacular! That’s the description of Cassia fistula when in full bloom. From Florida to Central America, and into the Caribbean, this species holds a tight flowering schedule. In all regions, it is at its best in May and June. Leaves begin to fall in April in preparation for the display. The drier the conditions, the greater the leaf loss, and the more spectacular is the display. When faced with extremely dry condition, the branch extremities may not flower and remain bare for weeks. However, during flowering, most trees quickly regain most or all of their foliage. A secondary, but less spectacular bloom occurs in September. When this happens, the tree retains all its leaves.

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In full bloom, *Cassia fistula* is laden with 8 to 18 inch hanging racemes of pure yellow. The ensuing pods are one inch thick, and can reach lengths of 24 inches. They are persistent and will turn from green to black and remain on the tree until the next season. *C. fistula* is semi-deciduous after flowering, but most trees regain all their leaves by late July. It is an upright, rather narrow tree with an open top, and slightly drooping branches. However, on several occasions, I’ve seen broad spreading trees, with their width greater than their height. Propagation is from seed. Plant it in full sun and in a place where it will be noticed. Some communities have planted this as a street tree where it has done quite well. For streetscapes, plant trees about 35 feet apart. *C. fistula* begins flowering about 3 years after germination. As with most fast growers, it can be brittle but when properly pruned stands up quite well to hurricane strength wind. When grown in high pH soil, it should be fertilized about three times a year to prevent iron and magnesium deficiencies. It is occasionally bothered by caterpillars.

**Cassia fistula**

**Incorrect:** None Found  
**Origin:** Possible Tropical Asia  
**Zone:** 9b-12b, 25°F minimum  
**Growth Rate:** Fast  
**Flowering Month(s):** May—July, September  
**Flowering Days:** 36  
**Leaf Persistence:** Deciduous and Semi-deciduous  
**Messiness:** Moderate in April and May  
**Salt Tolerance:** High  
**Drought Tolerance:** High  
**Nutritional Requirements:** Medium  
**Typical Dimension:** 36’x 30’  
**Uses:** Garden, Park, Shade, Specimen, Streetscape  

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