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Cassia fistula

Golden Shower Tree, Cañafistula, Pudding Pie Tree

Fabaceae

Flower Display: A+



Fort Myers, Florida

Early June



Fort Myers, Florida

Late June

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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Fort Myers, Florida

Late June

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

Tropical Flowering Trees List
 Questions/Comments:
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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.



Fort Myers, Florida

Mid July

Leaves: Even-pinnate, alternate, 12-18 inches long, 4-8 pairs of ovate, opposite, leaflets, 3-6 inches long

Flowers: Five bright yellow, widely spaced petals, about 2 inches wide with 10 stamens. Flower cluster held on pendent, terminal racemes

Fruits: Pods, long and hanging, indehiscent, to 24 inches long and 1 inch diameter, many cross walls, each with a single poisonous seed in sticky brown pulp

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