

Flowering Trees for Southwest Florida

Cultural Notes for Flowering Tree Video

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Golden Shower Tree *Cassia fistula*



Height: 30' to 50' Spread: 30' to 40' Growth Rate: Fast

Light Requirement: Full Sun

Flower Color: Yellow Bloom Time: May to July Intense Blooming Days:*
36

Roots: Not a problem

Zone: 9b–12b

Seed Pods: Up to 24" long with $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter.

Pulp is strongly purgative, sometimes called the purging cassia. Leaves drop before flowering. However, during flowering, most trees quickly regain most or all of their foliage.

[Cassia fistula: Golden Shower](#)¹



Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

Introduction

Golden shower is a fast-growing tree which reaches 30 to 40 feet in height and 30 to 40 feet wide. The well-spaced branches are clothed with pinnately compound leaves, with leaflets up to eight inches long and 2.5 inches wide. These leaves will drop from the tree for a short period of time and are quickly replaced by new leaves. In summer, golden shower is decorated with thick clusters of showy yellow blooms which cover the slightly drooping branches. The blooms are followed by the production of 2-foot-long, dark brown, cylindrical seedpods which persist on the tree throughout the winter before falling to litter the ground. The seeds contained within are poisonous.

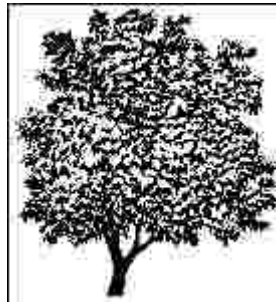


Figure 1. Middle-aged *Cassia fistula*: Golden-Shower
[Click thumbnail to enlarge.]

General Information

Scientific name: *Cassia fistula*

Pronunciation: KASS-ee-uh FIST-yoo-luh

Common name(s): Golden shower

Family: *Leguminosae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Invasive potential: has been evaluated using the UF/IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida s Natural Areas (Fox et al. 2005). This species is not documented in any undisturbed natural areas in Florida. Thus, it is not considered a problem species and may be used in Florida.

Uses: street without sidewalk; shade; specimen; tree lawn 4–6 feet wide; tree lawn > 6 ft wide; parking lot island 100–200 sq ft; parking lot island > 200 sq ft

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree



Figure 2. Range
[Click thumbnail to enlarge.]

Description

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 30 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular

Crown shape: vase, oval, upright/erect

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: even-pinnately compound

Leaf margin: entire, undulate

Leaf shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaf venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaf blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

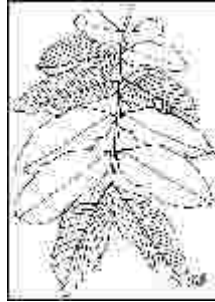


Figure 3. Foliage
[Click thumbnail to enlarge.]

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: pod or pod-like, elongated

Fruit length: 12 inches or more

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: purple

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; showy; fruit/leaves a litter problem

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: branches droop; not showy; typically one trunk; thorns

Pruning requirement: needed for strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thick

Wood specific gravity: unknown



Culture

Light requirement: full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; sand; loam; alkaline; acidic; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Other

Roots: not a problem

Winter interest: no

Outstanding tree: no

Ozone sensitivity: unknown

Verticillium wilt susceptibility: unknown

Pest resistance: free of serious pests and diseases

Use and Management

Golden shower is ideal for use as a specimen planting. It can look a bit coarse and unkempt for short periods when the leaves drop but the vibrant flower display more than makes up for this. Some communities have planted this as a street tree where it has held up quite well.

Golden shower should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. The trees are moderately drought- and salt-tolerant. Although golden shower is damaged by temperatures falling slightly below freezing, it will come back with warmer weather. Trees will need occasionally pruning when they are young to control shape and develop a uniform crown. Young trees can grow asymmetrical with branches often drooping toward the ground. Staking and proper pruning will help develop a well shaped and structured crown.

Propagation is by seeds (which are poisonous).

Pests

No pests are of major concern but occasionally bothered by caterpillars.

Diseases

Mildew, leaf spot, root rot diseases.

Literature Cited

Fox, A.M., D.R. Gordon, J.A. Dusky, L. Tyson, and R.K. Stocker (2005) UF/IFAS Assessment of the Status of Non-Native Plants in Florida's Natural Areas. Cited from the Internet (November 3, 2006), <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/assessment.html>

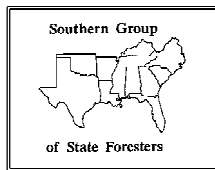
Footnotes

1. This document is ENH286, one of a series of the Environmental Horticulture, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date November 1993. Reviewed February 2014. Visit the EDIS website at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu>.

2. Edward F. Gilman, professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, former associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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Cassia fistula Golden-Shower¹

Edward F. Gilman and Dennis G. Watson²

INTRODUCTION

Golden-Shower is a fast-growing tree which reaches 30 to 40 feet in height and 30 to 40 feet wide (Fig. 1). The well-spaced branches are clothed with pinnately compound leaves, with leaflets up to eight inches long and 2.5 inches wide. These leaves will drop from the tree for a short period of time and are quickly replaced by new leaves. In summer, Golden-Shower is decorated with thick clusters of showy yellow blooms which cover the slightly drooping branches. The blooms are followed by the production of two-foot-long, dark brown, cylindrical seedpods which persist on the tree throughout the winter before falling to litter the ground. The seeds contained within are poisonous.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Scientific name: *Cassia fistula*

Pronunciation: KASS-ee-uh FIST-yoo-luh

Common name(s): Golden-Shower

Family: *Leguminosae*

USDA hardiness zones: 10B through 11 (Fig. 2)

Origin: not native to North America

Uses: large parking lot islands (> 200 square feet in size); wide tree lawns (>6 feet wide); shade tree; specimen; residential street tree

Availability: somewhat available, may have to go out of the region to find the tree

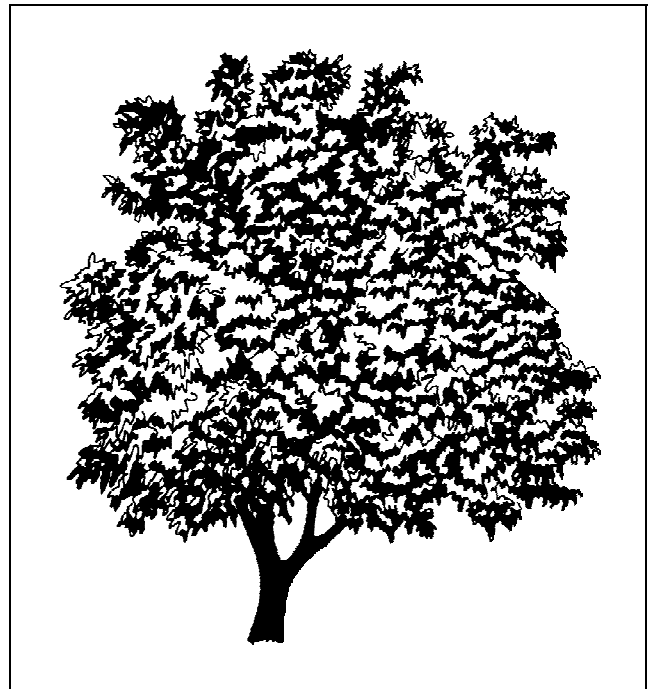


Figure 1. Middle-aged Golden-Shower.

DESCRIPTION

Height: 30 to 40 feet

Spread: 30 to 40 feet

Crown uniformity: irregular outline or silhouette

Crown shape: oval; upright; vase shape

Crown density: moderate

Growth rate: fast

Texture: medium

1. This document is adapted from Fact Sheet ST-127, a series of the Environmental Horticulture Department, Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. Publication date: November 1993.
2. Edward F. Gilman, associate professor, Environmental Horticulture Department; Dennis G. Watson, associate professor, Agricultural Engineering Department, Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida, Gainesville FL 32611.



Figure 2. Shaded area represents potential planting range.

Foliage

Leaf arrangement: alternate (Fig. 3)

Leaf type: even pinnately compound

Leaflet margin: entire; undulate

Leaflet shape: elliptic (oval)

Leaflet venation: pinnate

Leaf type and persistence: deciduous

Leaflet blade length: 4 to 8 inches

Leaf color: green

Fall color: no fall color change

Fall characteristic: not showy

Flower

Flower color: yellow

Flower characteristics: summer flowering; very showy

Fruit

Fruit shape: elongated; pod

Fruit length: 12 inches or more

Fruit covering: dry or hard

Fruit color: purple

Fruit characteristics: does not attract wildlife; fruit, twigs, or foliage cause significant litter; showy

Trunk and Branches

Trunk/bark/branches: droop as the tree grows, and will require pruning for vehicular or pedestrian clearance beneath the canopy; not particularly showy; should be grown with a single leader; no thorns

Pruning requirement: requires pruning to develop strong structure

Breakage: resistant

Current year twig color: brown

Current year twig thickness: thick

Culture

Light requirement: tree grows in full sun

Soil tolerances: clay; loam; sand; acidic; alkaline; well-drained

Drought tolerance: moderate

Aerosol salt tolerance: moderate

Soil salt tolerance: moderate

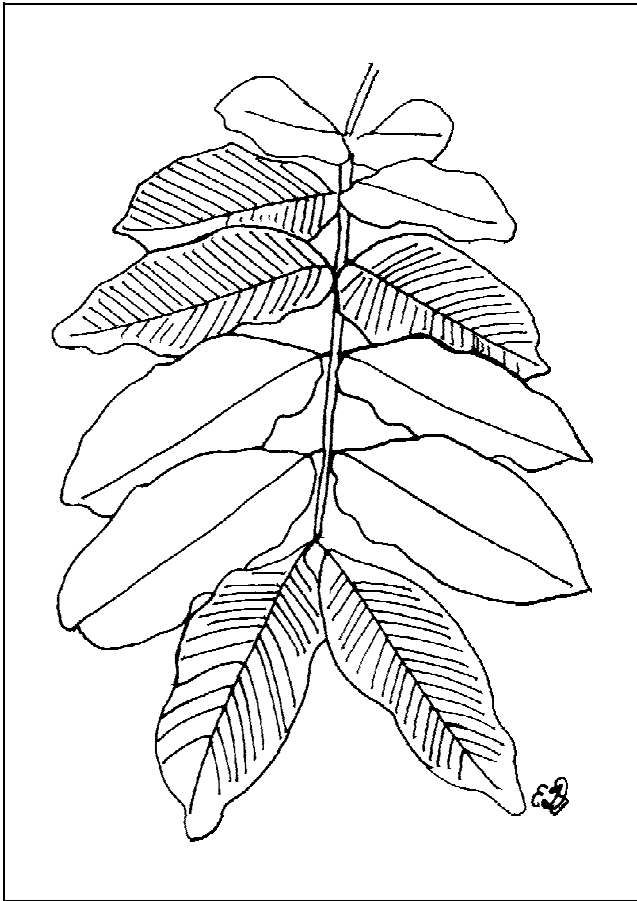


Figure 3. Foliage of Golden-Shower.

Other

Roots: surface roots are usually not a problem

Winter interest: no special winter interest

Outstanding tree: not particularly outstanding

Invasive potential: little, if any, potential at this time

Pest resistance: no pests are normally seen on the tree

USE AND MANAGEMENT

Golden-Shower is ideal for use as a specimen planting. It can look a bit coarse and unkempt for short periods when the leaves drop but the vibrant flower display more than makes up for this. Some communities have planted this as a street tree where it has held up quite well.

Golden-Shower should be grown in full sun on well-drained soil. The trees are moderately drought- and salt-tolerant. Although Golden-Shower is damaged by temperatures falling slightly below freezing, it will come back with warmer weather. Trees will need occasionally pruning when they are young to control shape and develop a uniform crown.

Young trees can grow asymmetrical with branches often drooping toward the ground. Staking and proper pruning will help develop a well shaped and structured crown.

Propagation is by seeds (which are poisonous).

Pests

No pests are of major concern but occasionally bothered by caterpillars.

Diseases

Mildew, leaf spot, root rot diseases.

Cassia fistula-Golden Shower tree



PLANT

Family: Fabaceae

Genus: *Cassia*

Species: *fistula*

Common Names: canafistula, golden shower, Indian laburnum, purging fistula, purging cassia, gurmala, baton casse, ch'ang kuo tzu shu, chacara, nanban-saikati, samyaka, sember hiyari agaci, kacang kayu (woody bean), kallober, keyok, klober, klohur

Part Used: Fruit, Leaves, Bark

CANAFISTULA

HERBAL PROPERTIES AND ACTIONS

Main Actions

- moderate laxative
- antioxidant
- kills viruses
- lowers blood sugar
- kills parasites
- astringent

Other Actions

- relieves pain
- reduces fever
- lowers cholesterol
- stimulates digestion

Standard Dosage

Leaves, bark

Infusion: 1/2 cup twice daily

Tincture: 1-2 ml twice daily

Canafistula is a fast-growing, medium-sized, deciduous tree which grows to about 9 meters in height. Leaves are compound, with 4-8 pairs of opposite leaflets. It produces flowers which are golden yellow and hang in showering bunches of up to 40 cm long earning its common name of "golden shower tree." The flowers appear when the branches are bare, just before the new leaves emerge and are a favorite of bees and butterflies. The blooms are followed by the production of two-foot-long, dark brown, cylindrical, woody seed pods which persist on the tree throughout the winter before falling to litter the ground. Canafistula is native to India, the Amazon and Sri Lanka, and is now widely cultivated worldwide as an ornamental tree for its beautiful showy yellow flowers.



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