

Yellow or Siamese Cassia
Cassia siamea
Family: Caesalpinaceae

Overview: This fast growing evergreen originating in Southeast Asia tolerates both arid lands and tropical climates. Because of its fast growth and quick regeneration from coppices, it is applicable to many agroforestry systems. It is very popular in arid regions, particularly, West Africa.



Agroforestry Uses: Leaves are high in nitrogen and great as an organic fertilizer. **WINDBREAKS:** Good, tall filler in windbreaks because leaf density is full yet not too thick, space at 3-4 meters. **LIVE FENCING:** Growth speed makes it great live fence posts. **WOOD:** Dense wood great for fuelwood and pole timber, very coppiceable, **BEE FODDER:** We have been thoroughly impressed with the amount of yellow flowers available to assist in honey production. Leaves are toxic to pigs but a good source of forage for ruminant animals. **DISPERSED TREE:** Good for shade around houses, along roads.

Characteristics: Rainfall as low as 500mm may inhibit growth from exceeding 5 meters, yet rainfall up to 1500mm can allow growth to 20m. Lateral roots have been reported to compete with crops in alley cropping, so should be kept out of gardens and crop fields (though makes a great windbreak/boundary planting). Seeds all year round.

Site Requirements: **WATER:** Tolerates low rainfall and drought, but 500mm is about its minimum requirement. Prefers 1000mm in well-drained areas. **SUN:** Enjoys full sun. **SOIL:** Decent soil is sufficient, but can not tolerate poor or skeletal soils.

Propagation: Seeds are relatively thin, and individual seeds are difficult to handle. Scarification by hand, scratching/clipping seed coat, reveals the best germination rates (be sure not to scratch the radicle). Hot soak pretreatment with boiled water for 24 hours is easier and more common, though germination rates are often lower. Chose and seed those that have begun to swell and germinate. Leave unswollen seeds in water for a second day. Be sure not to seed too deep, ~1/4 inch deep. Seed 4-5/sack if hot soaked and 3-4/sack if scarified by hand. Keep soil moist and in a sunny place. Propagation by cuttings up to 2m is possible.

Pests and Diseases: Insects are quick to attack harvested or splintered wood.

