



# Cassia and Senna

Family: Fabaceae (Pea)

## **Cassia – ~30 known**

- Evergreen, partially evergreen, and deciduous trees
- Native to many lands, generally warm
- Summer blooms are bright, showy, and a shade of yellow, but can be pink or white
- Summer fruit produce seed pods which fall to the ground
- Best grown in well-drained soil in full sun

## **Senna – ~260 known**

- Evergreen, semi-evergreen plants, shrubs, and trees
- Native to South America and other temperate regions
- Summer blooms are generally yellow and many have showy flowers
- Summer fruits appear as seed pods
- Best grown in well-drained soil and full sun
- Medicinal uses, among others, include

# Gold Medallion Tree – *Cassia leptophylla*



- Brought to Southern California about 80 years ago from Brazil
- Introduced by the Los Angeles County Arboretum's plant introduction programs in 1960s and 70s
- Favored by landscapers for the following reasons:
  - Fast growing rate—can reach 25 feet tall and 30 feet wide
  - Ability to withstand hot temperatures and 32F+
  - Relatively drought tolerant
  - Incredible showy yellow summer blossoms that cover tree



- Essentially an evergreen with dense, dark leaves
- Each leaf has nine to fourteen 2-3 inch long elliptical, pointed leaflets
- Summer blooms produce clusters of flowers that look like a “medallion”
- Flowering is followed by foot-long dark brown seedpods that drop to the ground
- Best pruning is in fall following the flower and seedpod drop
- Yes, messy

# Crown of Gold – *Senna spectabilis*



- Known as *Cassia excels*, *C. carnival*, and *C. spectabilis* prior to 1980s
- In 1982 *Cassia* genus split into 30 *Cassia* species, about 260 *Senna* species, and about 270 *Chamaecrista* species
- You can still find references to Crown of Gold as part of the *Cassia* group if you look it up online





- Native to Argentina, leaves are longer than Gold Medallion, carry twice the leaflets, which have tiny spines at an indented tip
- Blooms appear late summer into fall and produce foot-long clusters of yellow flowers
- The foot-long green pods drop to the ground after flowering
- Temperature, water, soil, and pruning are similar to the Gold Medallion tree
- Yes, messy



# Uses in the landscape

- Because of drought tolerance and showy blooms, these two trees are favored with civic landscapers for parking lots, parks, and other commercial purposes



- Can also be used as a patio tree and for other residential purposes
- Both attract butterflies, birds, and hummingbirds
- Crown of Gold has been labeled an invasive plant in certain areas of Africa, the island of O'ahu in Hawaii, and French Polynesia as, if left un-checked, can choke out native plants as it plentifully reseeds

# Your choice?

- Gold Medallion



- Crown of Gold

