

# FGCU Food Forest

## Plant Database

### Privet Cassia (*Senna ligustrina*)

#### Quick Facts

**Origin:** Southwest Florida

**Description:** Privet Cassia is a shrub-like plant native to Southwest Florida and can be recognized by their bright yellow flowers and oval leaves.

**Uses:** Privet Cassia attracts sulfur butterflies and bees. Also great for foliage.

**Harvest:** It flowers summer to early fall, throughout winter (spontaneous).

**Flower:** Flowers are yellow and flowers are in axillary clusters (5-10 and more).

**Tolerance:** Not tolerant to temperatures below freezing, but rapidly grows and sprouts

**General Description:** Privet Cassia is a shrub-like plant native to Southwest Florida. The scientific name for the plant was originally termed *Cassia ligustrina* until present. The privet cassia is recognized for its rapid growth and abundance of blooms periodically throughout the year. Growth of the cassia varies from four to eight feet tall, while maintaining a maximum width of three to six feet. Privet cassia can be recognized by their bright yellow flowers and oval leaves. Privet cassia is an excellent addition to any butterfly garden promoting butterfly and bee population, ultimately increasing pollination within a specific range of land.



- **Native Origin:** It originated in Southwest Florida and is found all over South Florida.
- **General History:** Privet cassias are prevalent throughout the southwestern part of Florida. The plant grows as a shrub bearing bright yellow flowers. Many residents use the flowers for ornamental and decorative purposes. The plant, however, serves a more functional use for butterfly gardens. Typically butterfly gardens possess native plants that produce an abundance of nectar and regrow much more quickly and efficiently than other plants. Gardeners have noticed the nectar produced from the plant attracts an array of sulfur butterflies and bees. Privet cassia requires minimal maintenance once it reestablishes itself after the winter.
- **Distribution:** These plants live well in full and partial exposure to the sun. Privet cassias are fairly hearty plants and tolerate periods of drought and tolerate salt. The plants may be found in coastal and inland areas.
- **Season:** Privet cassia requires minimal maintenance once it reestablishes itself after the winter. To produce effective growth after the winter, cut parts of the stem affected by frost. After the winter, the plant revives itself during the spring through its roots. The seeds dropped the previous year help aid in the process of regrowth and blooming of the flowers.
- **Uses:** Privet Cassia attracts sulfur butterflies and bees. Some butterflies such as cloudless, orange-barred, and sleepy-orange use privet cassia as a host plant. Plants like privet cassia are important to help promote pollination and serve as food for butterflies. The pollen from privet cassia can cause symptoms of asthma and eczema. The plant is highly toxic to horses if consumed. Diarrhea, abdominal pain, dis-coordination, and death can result from consumption.

Privet Cassia	
Scientific Classification	
Kingdom:	Plantae
(unranked):	Angiosperms
(unranked):	Eudicots
(unranked):	Rosids
Order:	Fabales
Family:	Fabaceae/Leguminosae
Genus:	<i>Senna</i> Mill.
Species:	<b><i>Senna ligustrina</i></b>

**Sources**

- <http://privetcassia.weebly.com/>
- <http://www.regionalconservation.org/beta/nfyn/plantdetail.asp?tx=Sennligu>
- <http://www.fnps.org/plants/plant/senna-ligustrina>