



Senna pendula **SENNA**

SEPTEMBER 2008

There are nine species of Cassia, also known as Arsenic Bush, in the Sydney region; some of these are native to Australia. The native shrub *Breynia oblongifolia* is distinguished by the alternate opposing pairs of leaflets found along each stem.

DESCRIPTION

A spreading perennial shrub up to 3.5 metres, Cassia can have multiple stems. The stems and leaves are hairless, leaves alternate 6 cm long. Three opposite pairs of leaflets, leaflets paler on the undersurface, sometimes yellow. Flowers yellow, 3 cm in diameter, with five petals, produced in autumn. Fruit is a 13 cm long curled bean-like structure, ripens in winter, and contains multiple black seeds.

Effects on the environment

Cassia can grow to the size of a large shrub and can cover other plants with its numerous branches, starving the other plants of space and sunlight. Cassia thrives in the understorey of the bushland. With its quick growth rate and the ability to germinate easily Cassia can reduce the soil's water and nutrients from the surrounding native plants.

HABITAT

Cassia can survive in most environmental conditions. The plant prefers dry eucalypt woodland forests. Cassia is rarely seen growing in dense colonies, rather as individuals scattered throughout the bushland.



Flowers and fruits which contain multiple black seeds.

Source: Sutherland Shire Council

ORIGIN AND DISTRIBUTION

Native to South America, Cassia prefers the forest climate of damp and sunny conditions. In Australia Cassia is found to also grow prolifically in similar environments, especially open woodlands and rainforests. Cassia thrives in the moist conditions along the coast urban settlement. Seed dispersion occurs through pod explosion and the consumption of the bean-like fruit by birds.

DECLARATION

Cassia is designated as an environmental weed in Sutherland Shire. However, it is still important that environmental weeds be destroyed, as they can also affect human health, or can be invasive in the natural environment killing the native flora and reducing the natural bio-diversity. Native animals may also be affected due to the loss of their natural habitat.

CONTROL

If there are young Cassia seedlings it is best to remove the whole plant by hand. If the plant is larger and more difficult to remove then it is easier to poison the plant with a herbicide using the Cut and Paint or Scrape and Paint procedures. Wait for plant to defoliate and remove above ground parts.



Mature Cassia plant with flowers and fruit.
Source: Sutherland Shire Council

For further information contact
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