

Botanic name : *Cassia alata* L. -- Sp. Pl. 1: 378. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK) [syn. *Senna alata*]

Common name : Ringworm bush, Candle bush,

Family : Fabaceae (Leguminosae)

Habitat : Terrestrial

Distribution : Pantropical; aggressively invasive in many countries including India. The plant shows allelopathic potential on native crops and even on existing weeds to invade new areas. Its northwards invasion towards temperate Himalayas is facilitated by global warming of Himalayan regions, and its footprint at higher reaches is a marker of tropical climate in Himalaya

Description : Annual erect diffuse undershrub; stems branched; leaves alternate, pinnately compound, exstipulate, petiolate; petiole often with single gland; pinnae 8-10, opposite, linear-lanceolate, stipels 0; flowers mustard yellow, arranged in corymbose (racemose) manner in a beautiful columnar way; sepals 5, free; petals 5 free; androecium with 10 herterodynamous (2 long + 4 medium + 4 staminodes) stamens; placentation marginal; fruit legumes or pod, long, with 18-20 black seeds

Phytochemicals: Anthraquinone and derivatives like aloë-emodin, chrysophanol, isochrysophanol and rhein, as well as the alkaloid tyramine and the common steroid beta-sitosterol, tannins (bark), glycosides, steroids, tannins, and volatile oil

Medicinal/Economic uses : Laxative, antidiabetic, antibacterial, antifungal, antitumaor, expectorant, diuretic, purgative (leaf), analgesic, vulnerary, insecticide, and antispasmodic anthelmenthic. Toasted leaves are sometimes used as a coffee substitute. A decoction of the whole plant is beneficial in declining urine. Leaf juice is specific for ring worm and scabies while leaf infusion is helpful in gonorrhœa and syphilis. The plant is useful in treating biliousness and hypertension, constipation and to purify the blood, skin diseases, diarrhoea, worms, parasitic skin diseases, scabies and eczema, tympanites, uterus problems, filaria worm expulsion, stomach disorder. The flowers are used as a laxative and vermifuge. An infusion is used for remedying spleen conditions. A decoction combined with *Zingiber officinale*, is used as a treatment for grippe and as an abortifacient. Seeds are cooked and used as a remedy for intestinal worms as laxative and anthelmenthic.