

Botanic name : *Cassia alata* L. -- Sp. Pl. 1: 378. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK)
(syn: *Senna alata* Roxb. -- Fl. Ind. ii. 349. (IK))

Common name : Emperor's candlesticks, candle bush

Family : Fabaceae-Caesalpinioideae (Leguminosae)

Habitat : Terrestrial

Distribution : Widespread; Tropical Americas, Africa, Australia, southeastern Asia, India, often in invasive form in tropics, including Africa, Southeast Asia, the Pacific Islands, and even tropical America. *Senna alata* can become an invasive weed in pastures; not eaten by livestock and is reported to be poisonous, especially for goats. Aggressively invasive in parts of Indian Himalayas and gradually reaching higher altitude indicating warmer Himalayas

Description : Evergreen tropical shrub or tree, typically grows to 12-30' tall; leaves pinnately compound, dark-green, each with 7-14 pairs of leaflets; leaflets oblong, bright yellow 5-petaled cup-shaped flowers bloom bottom to top arranged in erect axillary racemes, the longest petal-standard and the other petals are similar to each other. The sepals are waxy and smooth to the touch; fruits pods, winged bean-shaped, seeds quadrangular, flattened, shiny

Phytochemicals: Alkaloids, anthraquinones, chrysophanic acid, kaempferol, kaempferol 3- O-beta-glucopyranoside, kaempferol 3- O-gentiobioside and aloe emodin

Medicinal/Economic uses : Antifungal, antiviral, astringent, antibacterial, abortifacient, analgesic, alternative. Effective against ringworm, ascaris, asthma, and other various skin problems, stomach pain during pregnancy, dysentery, haemorrhoids, blood in the urine (schistosomiasis, gonorrhoea), convulsions, heart failure, oedema, jaundice, headache, hernia, one-sided weakness or paralysis (Africa). Also, used as an expectorant in bronchitis and dyspnoea, as a mouthwash and a wash in cases of eczema. Decoctions of the wood are used to treat liver problems, rhinitis, urticaria, and loss of appetite caused by gastro-intestinal problems (India). The seeds are a source of gum. The young pods are eaten as a vegetable only in small quantities. Toasted leaves are sometimes used as a coffee substitute. The roots and bark is used as fish poison, tattooing and for tanning leather. Widely appreciated as a garden ornamental and bee forage.