**Introduction**

This large, spreading shrub from Argentina, very tender to frost, produces from late summer to fall, large spikes of golden-yellow flowers, opening from bottom to top. Flower spikes look like golden candles when covered with un-opened flower buds. Reaching a height of 10 to 15 feet with an equal spread, candlebrush makes an attractive specimen shrub or small tree if it is properly trained.

**General Information**

- **Scientific name:** *Cassia alata*
- **Pronunciation:** KASS-ee-uh uh-LAY-tuh
- **Common name(s):** Candlebrush
- **Family:** *Leguminosae*
- **USDA hardiness zones:** 10A through 11 (Fig. 2)
- **Origin:** not native to North America
- **Invasive potential:** little invasive potential
- **Uses:** specimen; container or planter; trained as a standard; deck or patio; highway median
- **Availability:** not native to North America

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**Description**

- **Height:** 10 to 15 feet
- **Spread:** 10 to 15 feet
- **Crown uniformity:** irregular
- **Crown shape:** oval
- **Crown density:** open
- **Growth rate:** fast
- **Texture:** coarse

**Foliage**

- **Leaf arrangement:** alternate (Fig. 3)
- **Leaf type:** even-pinnately compound
- **Leaf margin:** entire
- **Leaf shape:** obovate, oblong
- **Leaf venation:** pinnate
- **Leaf type and persistence:** evergreen
- **Leaf blade length:** 2 to 4 inches
- **Leaf color:** green
- **Fall color:** no color change
- **Fall characteristic:** not showy

![Figure 3. Foliage](image)

**Flower**

- **Flower color:** yellow
- **Flower characteristics:** very showy

**Fruit**

- **Fruit shape:** pod or pod-like
- **Fruit length:** 6 to 12 inches
- **Fruit covering:** dry or hard
- **Fruit color:** brown
- **Fruit characteristics:** does not attract wildlife; not showy; fruit/leaves not a litter problem

**Trunk and Branches**

- **Trunk/bark/branches:** branches don't droop; not showy; typically multi-trunked; thorns
- **Pruning requirement:** needed for strong structure
- **Breakage:** susceptible to breakage
- **Current year twig color:** green
- **Current year twig thickness:** thick, medium
- **Wood specific gravity:** unknown

**Culture**

- **Light requirement:** full sun
- **Soil tolerances:** clay; sand; loam; slightly alkaline; acidic; well-drained
- **Drought tolerance:** moderate
- **Aerosol salt tolerance:** unknown

**Other**

- **Roots:** not a problem
- **Winter interest:** no
- **Outstanding tree:** no
- **Ozone sensitivity:** unknown
- **Verticillium wilt susceptibility:** unknown
- **Pest resistance:** resistant to pests/diseases

**Use and Management**

Candlebrush grows rapidly in full sun on a wide range of soils. Pinching new growth increases branching, creating a fuller canopy which produces more flowers. Candlebrush produces the nicest flower display next year when it is pruned back hard in the spring. It makes a beautiful accent in a shrub border or planted as a specimen in a ground cover. Locate it near the patio or by an entryway for a stunning fall accent plant.

Propagation is by cuttings or seed, blooming the first year from seed.

**Pests**

Caterpillars can cause a problem for candlebrush, eating the foliage and flower buds.

**Diseases**

No diseases are of major concern.