

# ***Cassia javanica*, Pink and White Shower<sup>1</sup>**

Michael G. Andreu, Melissa H. Friedman, and Robert J. Northrop<sup>2</sup>

## **Family**

Fabaceae or Leguminosae, bean family

## **Genus**

*Cassia* comes from the ancient Hebrew word “quetsi’oth,” first used by Dioscorides, a physician in Ancient Greece (40–90 AD). Linnaeus, also known as the father of taxonomy, was the first to use *Cassia* to signify members of this genus.

## **Species**

The species name *javanica* is the Latin term for Java, where this plant was originally described.

## **Common Name**

**Pink and white shower, apple blossom cassia**

This tree is referred to as “pink and white shower” because it produces pink and white blooms. It is also called “apple blossom cassia” because its dainty pink and white flowers may be easily confused with those of apple trees.

## **Description**

This deciduous tree is native to Southeast Asia and Indonesia. It grows well in tropical regions of the United States such as Florida, Hawaii, and Puerto Rico, as long as it is in well-drained soil with little threat of freezing temperatures.

This tree should be grown in direct sunlight for full flowering potential. With proper pruning, pink and white shower can reach heights of 35–45 feet. The leaves are alternately arranged and are pinnately compound. Each leaflet is oval-shaped, 4–5 inches long, and arranged in 5–12 pairs on a leaf. New woody stems are brown, and the mature bark is light gray with thick vertical sections of dark brown. Small flowers appear at the end of branches in the summer months, and these blooms display different shades of pink and white on the same tree and on the same flower. Fruits are foot-long dry pods.

## **Allergen**

Members of the genus *Cassia* are moderately allergenic. Oil from the pods may cause skin irritation to some individuals.

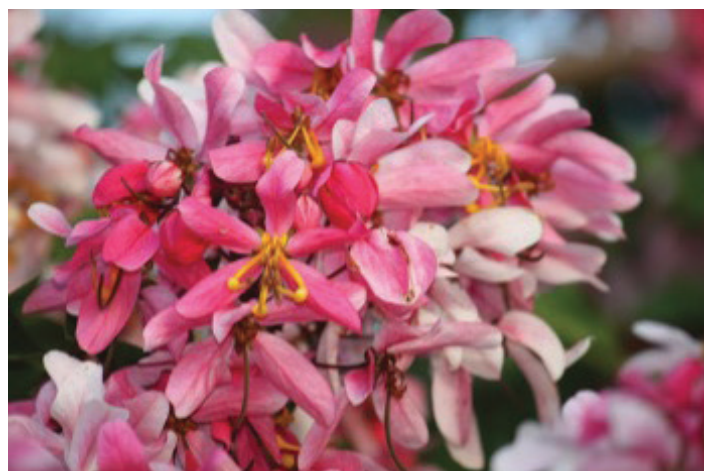


Figure 1. Clustering flowers of *Cassia javanica* (Pink and White Shower). Credits: Jan Smith, CC BY 2.0, <http://flic.kr/p/7qjwsN>

1. This document is FOR296, one of a series of the School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension. Original publication date July 2012. Revised January 2022. Visit the EDIS website at <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu> for the latest version of this publication.
2. Michael G. Andreu, associate professor; Melissa H. Friedman, research scientist; School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences; and Robert J. Northrop, Extension forester, UF/IFAS Extension Hillsborough County; UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

The Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) is an Equal Opportunity Institution authorized to provide research, educational information and other services only to individuals and institutions that function with non-discrimination with respect to race, creed, color, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, political opinions or affiliations. For more information on obtaining other UF/IFAS Extension publications, contact your county's UF/IFAS Extension office. U.S. Department of Agriculture, UF/IFAS Extension Service, University of Florida, IFAS, Florida A & M University Cooperative Extension Program, and Boards of County Commissioners Cooperating. Andra Johnson, dean for UF/IFAS Extension.

## Storm Tolerance

Because of its droopy limbs and tendency not to form a strong, single-leader trunk, the pink and white shower tree is not strongly resistant to wind. However, adequate pruning can help to increase its storm tolerance.

## Applications

### Horticultural

*Cassia javanica* is planted primarily as a decorative shade tree. While not as popular as the yellow flowering *Cassia fistula* or golden shower, many people consider pink and white shower to be aesthetically pleasing because of its pink and white blooms that emerge during the summer months. Although pink and white shower is deciduous, it quickly replaces its leaves. Because its leafless season is so short, many find that pink and white shower is still a desirable shade tree throughout the year. Its rapid growth rate makes it an ideal tree for homeowners looking to increase their tree cover.

Additionally, pink and white shower's natural resistance to pests increases its desirability as a landscape tree that is commonly used as an ornamental street tree.

## Additional References

Gilman, E. F. (1997). *Trees for Urban and Suburban Landscapes*. Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.

Stebbins, M. K. (1999). *Flowering Trees of Florida*. Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press.

Brown, S. H., and Lans, H. S. (n.d.). *Flowering Trees for South Florida*. Gainesville, FL: UF/ IFAS Florida Cooperative Extension Service. Retrieved from <http://blogs.ifas.ufl.edu/leeco/files/2018/02/FloweringTreesTropical.pdf>.