

Senna hebecarpa (Cassia h.) - Wild Senna



Native to open moist woodlands, meadows, disturbed areas and roadsides of the eastern United States, wild senna was used as a medicinal by Native Americans for fevers, pneumonia, sores, and as a remedy for worms. Shrubby plants grow 4-6 feet tall by 30 inches wide. Clusters of light yellow to orange flowers bloom in July and August, followed by long black seedpods favored by bobwhites and wild turkeys. The seedpods of wild senna open in autumn and drop their seeds, while the seedpods of Maryland senna (*S. marilandica*) stay tightly closed. This is one distinguishing feature that separates the two species. As a member of the legume family (*Fabaceae*), root nodules pull nitrogen from the atmosphere and, therefore, do not need to be fertilized.

Hardy to USDA zone 4 (-30 degrees F), wild senna grows best in moist to average soil in sun to part shade. If soil is too rich, plants may flop.

Wild senna attracts native bumblebees, ladybird beetles, flies, butterflies and hummingbirds. It is also the larval host and nectar source for moth caterpillars and the cloudless giant butterfly.