

How-To Identify Gold Medallion Trees

by Kathy Hargrove



Gold Medallion trees (scientific name: *Cassia leptophylla*) are a beautiful tree that are native to Brazil, and were introduced to California in the 1980's. The Pacific Beach/Taylor Library has 20 of these flowering trees growing on the lawn that faces Cass Street (4275 Cass St. San Diego, CA 92109) if you'd like to visit. Once you know how to spot these gorgeous trees you'll notice them growing all around our region, especially when they are in bloom during the summer.

Characteristics of Gold Medallion trees:

- In the summer they grow brilliant, deep yellow flowers that grow in clusters of 30-50 blossoms on 6" spikes. The cluster of yellow flowers grows to about the size of a basketball.
- The trees provide excellent shade because its canopy growth is in an umbrella fashion.
- The weeping branches hang down if the trees are not groomed.
- Later in the year, they'll shed footlong seed pods.

Tips to grow Gold Medallion trees from the seeds:

These tips were adapted from comments left on Pat Welsh's website (she also has a book called *Pat Welsh's Southern California Gardening*): <https://www.patwelsh.com/pruning/gold-medallion-tree/>

- Look for large, undamaged seed pods that have fallen to the ground.
- Open up the pod to get the seeds. You may need large pliers.
- Put the seeds in a jar with freshly boiled water. Seal it up, then put the jar away for a day. NOTE: make sure that the seeds can't be easily reached on accident, as they can be toxic.
- The next day you should see that the outer shell has dissolved.
- Then plant them, and hope that they'll grow!



Three images of the Gold Medallion trees when they are not in bloom.

1) Close of up young seed pods. 2) Trees in mid-May. 3) Dried seed pods, still clinging to the tree.

