

12. LITCHI Sonnerat, Voy. Indes Orient. 3: 255. 1782.

荔枝属 li zhi shu

Scytalia Gaertner.

Trees, monoecious. Leaves paripinnate, alternate, estipulate. Thyrses terminal, golden tomentose; bracts and bracteoles small. Flowers unisexual, actinomorphic. Calyx cupular, 4- or 5-lobed, valvate, opening early. Petals absent. Disk acetabuliform, entire. Stamens (male flowers) 6–8, exserted; filaments filiform, pilose. Ovary (female flowers) shortly stalked, obcordiform, 2(or 3)-lobed, 2(or 3)-loculed; ovules 1 per locule; style inserted between ovary lobes; stigma 2- or 3-lobed. Fruit deeply parted into 2 or 3 schizocarps, usually only 1 or 2 developed, ovoid or subglobose; pericarp leathery (crustaceous when dry), abaxially with tortoise-shell-like fissure, with scattered conical prominents, sometimes nearly smooth. Seeds nearly same shape as schizocarps; testa brown, nitid, leathery, arillode fleshy, wrapping all or lower half of seed; embryo erect. $2n = 28, 30$.

One species: SE Asia; widely cultivated in subtropical regions.

See the notes on *Litchi* by Leenhouts (Blumea 24: 398–402. 1978).

1. *Litchi chinensis* Sonnerat, Voy. Indes Orient. 3: 255. 1782.

荔枝 li zhi

Dimocarpus lichi Loureiro; *Litchi chinensis* var. *euspontanea* H. H. Hsue; *Nephelium chinense* (Sonnerat) Druce; *N. litchi* Cambessèdes; *Scytalia chinensis* (Sonnerat) Gaertner.

Trees, evergreen, often less than 10 m tall, sometimes to 15 m tall or more. Bark grayish black; branches brownish red, terete, with dense white lenticels. Leaves with petiole 10–25 cm or longer; leaflets 2 or 3(or 4) pairs; petiolules 7–8 mm; blades adaxially deep green and shiny, lanceolate or ovate-lanceolate, sometimes elliptic-lanceolate, 6–15 × 2–4 cm, thinly leathery or leathery, abaxially glaucous, glabrous, lateral veins often slender, conspicuous or slightly prominent abaxially, margin entire, apex cuspidate or shortly caudate-acuminate. Inflorescences terminal, large, many branched. Pedicels 2–4 mm, slender, sometimes short and stout. Calyx golden tomentose. Stamens 6 or 7, sometimes 8; filaments ca. 4 mm. Ovary densely tuberculous

and hispid. Fruit usually dark red to fresh red when mature, globose to subglobose, 2–3.5 cm. Seeds thoroughly covered by fleshy arillode. Fl. spring, fr. summer.

Native in SW Guangdong (Xuwen) and Hainan; widely cultivated in S China, especially in S Fujian and Guangdong [Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, New Guinea, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam; widely cultivated in subtropical regions].

Long cultivated in China, this species is famous for its fruit (litchi, lichee, lychee). Nowadays there are about ten cultivars in China.

