

3. **MIRABILIS** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 177. 1753.

紫茉莉属 *zi mo li shu*

Herbs annual or perennial. Roots thick, obconic. Leaves opposite, petiolate or upper ones sessile. Inflorescence with each flower surrounded by a 5-fid, calyxlike involucre of bracts, arranged in terminal, ± flat-topped cymes, rarely solitary; involucre lobes erect, acuminate, plicate, not enlarged after flowering. Flowers bisexual, opening in afternoon, fragrant or not. Perianth constricted beyond ovary; limb showy, variously colored, expanded, salverform, plicate, distally 5-lobed, deciduous. Stamens 5 or 6, as long as perianth tube or exserted; filaments adnate to tube at base. Ovary ovoid or ellipsoid. Style linear, as long as stamens or longer, exserted; stigma capitate. Fruit globose or obovoid, coriaceous, crustaceous, or chartaceous, ribbed or tuberculate, without sticky glands. Seed: embryo curved, cotyledons folded, enclosing the mealy endosperm.

About 50 species: mainly in tropical America; one species (introduced) in China.

1. **Mirabilis jalapa** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 177. 1753.

紫茉莉 *zi mo li*

Nyctago jalapa (Linnaeus) Candolle.

Herbs annual, to 1 m tall. Roots tuberous, black or black-brown. Stems erect, much branched, cylindric, glabrous or slightly pubescent, inflated on nodes. Petiole 1–4 cm; leaf blade ovate or ovate-triangular, 3–15 × 2–9 cm, base truncate or cordate, margin entire, apex acuminate. Flowers usually several clustered at apex of branches, fragrant; pedicel 1–2 mm. Invo-

lucre campanulate, ca. 1 cm, 5-lobed, lobes triangular-ovate, acuminate, glabrous, persistent. Perianth purple, red, yellow, white, or variegated; tube 2–6 cm; limb 2.5–3 cm in diam., opening in late afternoon, closing next morning. Stamens 5; filaments slender, exserted; anther globose. Fruit black, globose, 5–8 mm in diam., coriaceous, ribbed and plicate. Endosperm white mealy. Fl. Jun–Oct, fr. Aug–Nov.

Originally introduced as an ornamental, now a ruderal weed in some areas of China [native to tropical America; now pantropical].

This species is used medicinally and as an ornamental.

