

40. NANOPHYTON Lessing, *Linnaea* 9: 197. 1834.

小蓬属 xiao peng shu

Subshrubs cushion-shaped, glabrous or cottony in leaf axils. Leaves alternate, sessile, triangular-ovate, adaxially concave, leathery, base semiamplexicaul, margin membranous, apex subulate or pungent. Flowers solitary in leaf axils and usually 1–4-clustered at each annual branch apex, bisexual, with 2 bractlets. Perianth segments 5, free, in 2 whorls, 2 in outer whorl, 3 in inner whorl, twisted into a cone, lanceolate, adaxially concave, membranous, distinctly enlarged and becoming papery in fruit, without abaxial appendages, apex acute or acuminate. Disk cupular, with 5 semiorbicular, fleshy lobes. Stamens 5, inserted between lobes of disk; filaments complanate; anthers sagittate, apex with a mucronate appendage. Ovary ovoid, compressed; style terete, slightly longer than stigmas; stigmas 2, recurved or erect, linear. Utricle enclosed in perianth, ovoid or broadly so, abaxially convex, adaxially concave; pericarp membranous, adnate to seed. Seed vertical; testa membranous; embryo spiral or planospiral; perisperm absent.

Probably one highly variable species: C Asia, extending to China, Mongolia, and Russia; one species in China.

1. *Nanophyton erinaceum* (Pallas) Bunge, *Mém. Acad. Imp. Sci. Saint Pétersbourg*, Sér. 7, 4(11): 51. 1862.

小蓬 xiao peng

Polycnemon erinaceum Pallas, *Ill. Pl.* 58. 1803; *Halimocnemis juniperina* C. A. Meyer.

Plants to 30 cm tall. Stem twisted, sinuate, gray-brown to black-brown, rough; older branches crowded, with numerous lateral, dwarf, dry branches; annual branches green, usually 5–10 mm. Leaves 1.5–5 mm, abaxially papillate; leaf axil cottony.

Bracts and bractlets similar, proximal margin membranous. Perianth segments sublustrous, white-yellow, veinless, 8–12 mm in fruit. Anther appendage slightly whitish. Style light yellow, ca. 1.25 mm; stigmas slightly shorter than style. Utricle yellow-brown, ca. 2.25 mm. Embryo yellow-green. Fl. and fr. Aug–Sep.

Gobi desert, rocky slopes, arid clayey soils. Xinjiang [Mongolia, Russia (SW Siberia); C Asia].

This species provides good forage for livestock.

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