

35. SYMPEGMA Bunge, Bull. Acad. Imp. Sci. Saint-Pétersbourg 25: 351, 371. 1879.

合头草属 he tou cao shu

Subshrubs. Stem much branched, glabrous; bark fissured, corky. Leaves alternate, loosely arranged, linear, terete, fleshy. Flowers usually 1–3-clustered, borne on apex of dwarf, single-internode branches, bisexual; bractlets in 1(or 2) pairs below flower cluster, resembling leaves. Perianth laterally compressed; segments 5, 2 outer and 3 inner, oblong, adaxially concave, hardened in fruit, with an abaxial, transverse wing borne below apex. Stamens 5; filaments narrowly linear, flattened, bases expanded and connate; anthers oblong-cordate, apex without an appendage. Ovary cylindric, somewhat compressed; style short; stigmas 2, recurved, subulate. Utricle enclosed in perianth, globose, slightly compressed laterally; pericarp membranous, free from seed. Seed vertical; testa membranous; embryo planospiral; perisperm absent.

One species: China, Kazakhstan, Mongolia.

1. *Sympegma regelii* Bunge, Bull. Acad. Imp. Sci. Saint-Pétersbourg 25: 371. 1879.

合头草 he tou cao

Plants to 30–150 cm tall. Roots black-brown, stout. Older branches much branched, yellow-white to gray-brown, usually fissured; annual branches gray-green, slightly papillate, with numerous axillary, dwarf, single-internode branches; dwarf branches 3–8 mm, basally articulated, caducous. Leaves obliquely spreading, straight or somewhat arcuate, 4–10 × ca. 1 mm, base contracted, apex acute. Bractlets basally connate.

Perianth segments erect, herbaceous, prominently veined, margin membranous, apex subobtuse; wing light yellow, broadly ovate to suborbicular, unequal, membranous, longitudinally veined. Seed 1–1.2 mm in diam.; embryo yellow-green. Fl. and fr. Jul–Oct.

Slightly saline-alkaline deserts, arid slopes, ravine sides, alluvial fans. NW Gansu, Ningxia, N Qinghai, Xinjiang [Kazakhstan, Mongolia].

This species provides forage in desert and semidesert areas; sheep and camels eat the annual branches.

