

**27. SAPONARIA** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 408. 1753.

肥皂草属 fei zao cao shu

Lu Dequan (鲁德全); Magnus Lidén, Bengt Oxelman

Herbs annual or perennial. Stem solitary, erect. Leaves lanceolate, elliptic or spatulate, 3- or 5-veined. Inflorescence a cyme, panicle, or capitulum. Calyx cylindrical, 15- to 25-veined, not membranous between veins, 5-toothed. Petals 5, red or white, margin entire, emarginate, or 2-lobed; claw long, narrow; coronal scales usually present. Stamens 10. Ovary 1-loculed; styles 2. Androgynophore short. Capsule cylindrical or ovoid, crustaceous, dehiscent with 4 teeth. Seeds reniform, tuberculate or striate; embryo annular.

About 30 species: temperate Asia and Europe, mainly in the Mediterranean region; one species in China.

**1. *Saponaria officinalis*** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 408. 1753.

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*Lychnis officinalis* (Linnaeus) Scopoli; *Silene saponaria* Fries ex Willkomm & Lange.

Herbs perennial, 30–70 cm tall. Axial root stout, fleshy, rhizome thin, many branched. Stem simple or branched above, usually glabrous. Leaves ovate or ovate-lanceolate, 5–10 × 2–4 cm, 3- or 5-veined, base attenuate, slightly connate, semiclasping, apex acute. Inflorescence a thyrse, cymules 3–7-flowered; bracts lanceolate, margin and midvein sparsely hirtellous, apex long acuminate. Pedicel 3–8 mm, sparsely and shortly pubescent. Flowers large. Calyx green, sometimes dark purple, tubular, 1.8–2 cm × 2.5–3.5 mm, obscurely 20-veined; calyx teeth broadly ovate, apex acute. Petal limb white or pink, cuneate-obovate, 1–1.5 cm, apex emarginate; coronal scales linear. Gynophore ca. 1 mm. Stamens and styles exserted. Capsule cylindrical-ovoid, ca. 1.5 cm. Seeds black-brown, globose-reniform, slightly compressed, 1.8–2 mm, tuberculate. Fl. Jun–Sep.  $2n = 30$ .

Cultivated as an ornamental in parks, usually escaping. NE China [native to W Asia and Europe].

This species is used medicinally and as a soap.

