

3. SPERGULA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 440. 1753.

大爪草属 da zhua cao shu

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Herbs annual, rarely perennial, much branched at base. Stems ascending, often decumbent. Leaves opposite, usually apparently verticillate with leaf-fascicles (short, leafy, lateral branches) on both sides of nodes, sessile; leaf blade linear, fleshy; stipules free, scarious. Inflorescence a cyme, terminal. Flowers 5-merous. Pedicel reflexed, long. Sepals free, green, margin scarious. Petals white, margin entire. Stamens 10, rarely 5. Ovary 1-loculed, with numerous ovules; styles 5. Fruit a capsule, ovoid to subglobose, 5-valved, valves opposite sepals, many seeded. Seeds lenticular, often winged.

Five species: originally native to N temperate regions but now widespread as introductions; one species in China.

1. *Spergula arvensis* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 440. 1753.

大爪草 da zhua cao

Spergula linicola Boreau ex Nyman; *S. maxima* Weihe;
S. sativa Boenninghausen; *S. vulgaris* Boenninghausen.

Plants annual. Stems (7-)13-50(-60) cm, pilose, apically glandular hairy. Stipules triangular-ovate, small, soon deciduous. Leaf blade linear, (1.1-)1.5-4 cm × 0.5-0.7 mm, abaxially channeled, glabrous or glandular pubescent, apex acute. Cymes lax, at first dichasial, upper branches monochasial. Pedicel 1.5-2.5 cm, slender. Sepals ovate, 3(-5) mm, glandular pubescent, apex subacute to obtuse. Petals obovate, slightly shorter than to slightly longer than sepals, apex obtuse. Stamens 10, shorter than ovary. Ovary ovoid; style extremely short; stigmas 5. Capsule ovoid, ca. 4 mm in diam., slightly longer than sepals. Seed gray-black, subglobose, slightly compressed, 1-2 mm, both surfaces often with minute, pale, club-shaped papillae, margin with narrow wing. Fl. Jun-Jul, fr. Jul-Aug.

Grasslands, riverbanks. SW Guizhou, N Heilongjiang, Shandong, Yunnan [Bhutan, N India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Philippines, Russia, Sikkim; N Africa, SW Asia, Europe, North America].

This plant is a weed of wheat fields, and is used as fodder.

