

1. LAURUS Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 369. 1753.

月桂属 yue gui shu

Li Xiwen (李锡文 Li Hsi-wen), Li Jie (李捷); Henk van der Werff

Trees evergreen, small. Leaves alternate; leaf blade leathery, pinninerved. Flowers unisexual, in pedunculate umbels enveloped by 4 decussate involucre bracts before anthesis, axillary, always in pairs, usually 1 or 3 in cluster on short raceme. Perianth tube short; perianth lobes 4, subequal. Male flowers: stamens 8–14, usually 12, in 3 whorls; filaments of 1st whorl eglandular, but those of 2nd or 3rd whorls each with 2 reniform glands at middle part; anthers 2-celled, cells introrse; ovary infertile. Female flowers: staminodes 4, alternate to perianth lobes; filaments each with 2 sessile glands and a lanceolate ligule between glands at apex; ovary 1-celled; style short; stigma slightly dilated, obtusely trigonous, 1-ovuled. Fruit ovoid; perianth tube not or slightly dilated, ruptured or not.

Two species: Macaronesian islands, Mediterranean region; one species (introduced) in China.

1. *Laurus nobilis* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 369. 1753.

月桂 yue gui

Evergreen shrublike or small trees, up to 12 m tall, dioecious. Bark blackish brown. Branchlets terete, striate, puberulent on young part or wholly subglabrous. Leaves alternate; petiole purple-red when fresh, 0.7–1 cm, sparsely puberulent or subglabrous, sulcate adaxially; leaf blade greenish abaxially, dark green adaxially, oblong or oblong-lanceolate, 5.5–12 × 1.8–3.2 cm, leathery, glabrous on both surfaces, lateral veins 10–12 pairs, curved and interconnected at ends near leaf margin, midrib elevated on both surfaces, reticulate veinlets ± conspicuous on both surfaces, foveolate, base cuneate, margin slightly undulate, apex acute or acuminate. Umbels 1–3 in cluster on short raceme, globose; involucre bracts suborbicular, glabrous outside, sericeous inside; peduncle up to 7 mm,

sparsely puberulent or subglabrous. Male flowers 5 in each umbel, green, small; pedicels ca. 2 mm, pilose; perianth tube short, densely pilose outside; perianth lobes 4, broadly obovate or suborbicular, appressed villous on both surfaces; fertile stamens usually 12, in 3 whorls; filaments of 1st whorl eglandular but those of 2nd and 3rd whorls each with 2 reniform glands at middle part; anthers ellipsoid, 2-celled, cells introrse; ovary infertile. Female flowers: staminodes 4; ovary 1-celled; style short; stigma slightly dilated, obtusely trigonous. Fruit dark purple when mature, ovoid. Fl. Mar–May, fr. Jun–Sep.

Cultivated. Fujian, Jiangsu, Sichuan, Taiwan, Yunnan, Zhejiang [native to Mediterranean region].

The leaves and fruits contain essential oil, 0.3%–0.5% (or even up to 3%) and ca. 1%, respectively. The leaves also are used as a spice. The seeds contain oil and fat, which are used in soap manufacture.

LAURACEAE