

30. DESMANTHUS Willdenow, Sp. Pl. 4: 888, 1044. 1806, nom. cons.

合欢草属 he huan cao shu

Acuan Medikus.

Subshrubs [or trees, shrubs, or perennial herbs]. Leaves bipinnate; stipules persistent, setaceous; pinnae [1–]2–6[–15] pairs; leaflets small; petiolar gland often between lower pair. Heads solitary, axillary, ovoid-globose. Flowers all bisexual, or lower male or neuter and sometimes without petals but with short staminodes. Calyx campanulate, shortly dentate. Petals free or nearly so. Stamens [5 or]10, free, exserted; anthers eglandular at apex. Ovary subsessile; ovules numerous; style subulate or thickened distally; stigma terminal. Legume straight or falcate, linear, plano-compressed to terete, 2-valved, continuous within or subseptate between seeds. Seeds oriented lengthwise or oblique, ovoid to ellipsoidal, compressed.

About 24 species: mainly in tropical and subtropical regions of the Americas; one species (introduced) in China.

1. *Desmanthus pernambucanus* (Linnaeus) Thellung, Mém. Soc. Sci. Nat. Math. Cherbourg, sér. 4, 38: 256. 1912.

合欢草 he huan cao

Mimosa pernambucana Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 519. 1753.

Subshrubs, to 2 m tall. Stem glabrous or slightly puberulent, angulate. Stipules subulate; petiolar gland on lowest pair of pinnae; pinnae 2–6 pairs, 1.2–2.5 cm; leaflets 6–21 pairs per pinna, oblong, 4–6 × ca. 2 mm, ciliate along margin, slightly asymmetric, base truncate, apex acute. Heads axillary, ca. 5 mm in diam., 4–10-flowered; bracteoles ovate, caducous. Flowers

white, upper ones bisexual, lower ones male. Calyx campanulate, ca. 2.5 mm, 5-dentate. Petals 5, narrowly lanceolate, 3–4 mm. Stamens 10, ca. 5 mm, free. Ovary oblong, ca. 2 mm. Legume reddish brown, straight or slightly curved, linear, 4–11 × 0.2–0.4 cm. Seeds dark brown, rectangular, ca. 3 mm.

Naturalized in Guangdong, Taiwan, Yunnan [native to tropical America; widely cultivated in the tropics].

In FRPS (39: 20. 1988), the name *Desmanthus virgatus* (Linnaeus) Willdenow was misapplied to this species.

This species is planted as a cover crop.

