

8. MELOCHIA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 674 [“774”]. 1753, nom. cons.

马松子属 ma song zi shu

Herbs, subshrubs, shrubs, or rarely small trees, pubescent with stellate, simple, bifurcate or glandular hairs. Leaves simple, irregularly crenate-serrate, foliar nectaries lacking. Inflorescence an axillary or terminal cyme, sometimes congested; bracts conspicuous, persistent. Flowers bisexual, distylous or homostylous. Calyx campanulate, 5-lobed, persistent, sometimes accrescent. Petals 5, flat, not cucullate, without appendages, base clawed, free or shortly adnate to base of staminal tube, purple, yellow, orange, or white (sometimes with a yellow throat), persistent. Stamens 5, opposite to petals; filaments united into a staminal tube; anthers 2-thecate, extrorse, thecae parallel; staminodes absent. Ovary syncarpous, 5-celled, sessile or shortly stipitate; ovules (1 or)2 per locule; styles 5, free or basally connate; stigma slightly thickened. Capsule 5-valved, depressed globose or pyramidal and 5-winged, loculicidally or septicidally dehiscent (or both), often surrounded by persistent calyx and persistent withered corolla. Seeds 1 per cell, obovoid; cotyledons flat.

Between 50 and 60 species: primarily tropical and subtropical with centers of diversity in Malaysia and Pacific islands, and Central and South America; some species now pantropical weeds; one species in China.

1. *Melochia corchorifolia* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 675. 1753.

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Riedlea corchorifolia (Linnaeus) Candolle; *Visenia corchorifolia* (Linnaeus) Sprengel.

Herbs or subshrubs, less than 1 m tall, erect or decumbent. Branches yellow-brown, sparsely stellate puberulent. Stipules linear, 2–4 mm; petiole 5–25 mm; leaf blade ovate, oblong-ovate, or lanceolate, rarely obscurely 3-lobed, 2.5–7 × 1–1.3 cm, thinly papery, abaxially sparsely stellate puberulent, adaxially nearly glabrous, basal veins 5, base rounded or cordate, margin

dentate, apex acute or obtuse. Inflorescence a dense cyme or glomerule, terminal or axillary. Epicalyx lobes 4, linear, hairy. Calyx campanulate, 5-lobed, ca. 2.5 mm, abaxially villous and hispid, adaxially glabrous, lobes triangular. Petals 5, white, drying reddish, oblong, ca. 6 mm, narrowed at base. Stamens 5, connate at base, opposite petals. Ovary sessile, densely velutinous; styles 5, filiform. Capsule globose, 5-angular, 5–6 mm in diam., villous. Seeds 1 or 2 per cell, brown-black, ovoid, slightly triangular, 2–3 mm. Fl. summer–autumn.

Widespread weed. S of Chang Jiang [Japan; pantropical].

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