

**9. WALTHERIA** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 673. 1753.

蛇婆子属 she po zi shu

Herbs or subshrubs, rarely woody, stellate puberulent. Stipules lanceolate; leaves simple, margin serrate. Inflorescence terminal or axillary, cymose, often congested. Flowers small, bisexual. Calyx 5-lobed. Petals 5, spatulate, persistent. Stamens 5, connate at base, opposite to petals; anthers 2-thecate, thecae parallel. Ovary sessile, 1-celled; ovules 2; style clavate or fimbriate at apex. Capsule 2-valved. Seed 1, with copious endosperm; cotyledons flat.

About 50 species: mostly in tropical America; one species in China.

**1. Waltheria indica** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 673. 1753.

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*Waltheria americana* Linnaeus; *W. americana* var. *indica* (Linnaeus) K. Schumann; *W. indica* var. *americana* (Linnaeus) R. Brown ex Hosaka; *W. makinoi* Hayata.

Erect or ascending subshrubs, up to 1 m tall, multi-branched. Branchlets densely puberulent. Petiole 0.5–1 cm; leaf blade ovate or long elliptic-ovate, 2.5–4.5 × 1.5–3 cm, both surfaces densely puberulent, base rounded or shallowly cordate, margin serrulate, apex obtuse. Inflorescence cymose, capitate,

axillary; peduncle nearly absent to 1.5 cm. Epicalyx lobes narrowly lanceolate, ca. 4 mm. Calyx tube-shaped, 5-lobed, 3–4 mm, lobes triangular, much longer than tube. Petals yellowish, spatulate, apex truncate, slightly longer than sepals. Filament tube enclosing ovary. Ovary sessile, puberulent; style inserted obliquely; stigma fimbriate. Capsule obovoid, ca. 3 mm, hairy, 1-seeded, enclosed by persistent calyx. Seed obovate, very small. Fl. summer–autumn.

Weed. Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Taiwan, Yunnan [pantropical].

*Waltheria indica* is sometimes grown as an ornamental and is used medicinally.

