
Herbs annual, aquatic. Stem prostrate, slender, rooting at nodes. Leaves opposite or verticillate, shortly petiolate; leaf blade small, margin usually entire. Flowers usually only 1 per node, very small. Sepals 2–4, united at base, membranous, apex subacute. Petals 2–4, longer than sepals, apex obtuse. Stamens 1 or 2 × as many as petals. Ovary globose, compressed, 2–4-loculed, apex truncate; ovules numerous; styles 2–4; stigmas capitate. Capsule membranous, 2–4-septicidal. Seeds straight, curved, or horseshoe-shaped, surface reticulate-striate with hexagonal or elliptic pits.

About 25 species: tropical, subtropical, and temperate regions; three species in China.

1a. Sepals and petals 4; stamens 8; capsule 4-septicidal; seeds horseshoe-shaped .................................................. 1. E. hydropiper

1b. Sepals and petals 3; stamens 3; capsule 3-septicidal; seeds nearly straight or slightly curved.

2a. Flowers sessile or shortly pedicellate, pedicel 0.3–0.4 mm, conspicuously shorter than petals ......................... 2. E. triandra

2b. Flowers conspicuously pedicellate, pedicel 1.5–2.5 mm, 1–2 × as long as petals ................................................. 3. E. ambigua


马蹄沟繁缕 ma ti gou fan lu

Plants 2–4 cm tall. Branches ascending. Leaves opposite; stipules small, slightly conspicuous; petioles on upper part of stem shorter, those on lower part longer; leaf blade oblanceolate, oblong-elliptic, or subspatulate, 2–5 × ca. 0.5 mm, base attenuate into petiole, margin entire, apex obtuse. Flowers solitary in leaf axils, subsessile or very shortly pedicellate. Sepals 4, oblong, 0.6–7(–0.9) × ca. 0.3 mm, apex rounded. Petals 4, obovate or broadly elliptic, 0.8–1 × ca. 0.4 mm, slightly longer and wider than sepals, apex rounded. Stamens 8, shorter than petals. Ovary 4-loculed; styles 4. Capsule compressed globose, ca. 2 mm in diam., 4-septicidal. Seeds horseshoe-shaped, 0.5–0.7 mm, finely and densely hexagonal reticulate-striate.

Pools, water on river banks, marshy places. Heilongjiang, Jilin, Liaoning [Russia (Siberia); Europe].


三蕊沟繁缕 san rui gou fan lu

Plants 2–10 cm tall. Stem richly branched. Leaves sub sessile or shortly petiolate; stipules lanceolate, ca. 1 mm, membranous, margin entire, apex acute; petiole (if present) ca. 1 mm; leaf blade spatulate, lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate, or elliptic, 2–5 × ca. 0.7 mm, margin entire, apex subacute. Flowers axillary, solitary, sessile, subsessile, or shortly pedicellate and then pedicel 0.3–0.4 mm at flowering stage. Sepals 2 or 3, ovate, 0.5(–0.7) mm, connate at base, apex obtuse. Petals 3, white or reddish, broadly ovate or elliptic, slightly longer than sepals. Stamens 3, shorter than petals. Ovary compressed globose, 3-loculed; styles 3, erect, free, short. Capsule compressed globose, 1–1.5 mm in diam., 3-septicidal. Seeds oblong, nearly straight or slightly curved, ca. 0.5 mm, finely and densely hexagonal reticulate-striate.

Pools, streams, paddy fields, marshy places. Guangdong, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Taiwan [India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, Philippines; Australia, Europe, North America, Pacific islands (New Zealand)].


长梗沟繁缕 chang geng gou fan lu

Plants 1.5–3 cm tall. Stem richly branched. Leaves sub sessile or shortly petiolate; stipules lanceolate, ca. 1 mm, membranous, margin dentate, apex acute; petiole (if present) ca. 1 mm; leaf blade spatulate, lanceolate to ovate-lanceolate, or elliptic, 2–5 × ca. 0.7 mm, margin entire, apex subacute. Flowers axillary, solitary; pedicel conspicuous, curved downward at fruiting stage, 1.5–2.5 mm. Calyx 3-fid; lobes oblong-ovate or broadly lanceolate, ca. 0.5 × 0.3 mm, apex obtuse. Petals 3, reddish, long elliptic, elliptic, or ovate, 1–1.5 × ca. 0.5 mm, 2–3 × as long as sepals. Stamens 3, shorter than petals. Ovary obovoid, 3-loculed; styles 3. Capsule cylindric-ovoid, 3-septicidal. Seeds nearly straight or slightly curved, ca. 0.5 mm, reticulate-striate.

Lakes, pools, marshy places. Yunnan [Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam; naturalized in Australia, Europe, and North America (California)].