
Subshrubs or herbs. Leaves subsessile to short petiolate, ± hairy, conspicuously impressed glandular, upper leaves bractlike. Verticillasters axillary, 1- to many flowered, in terminal spikes or panicles. Calyx tubular, 13(-15)-veined, straight or slightly curved, ± hairy, glandular, throat pilose, limb with 5 subequal straight teeth or somewhat 2-lipped. Corolla white, reddish, to purple, 2-lipped, hairy; tube straight, gradually dilated at throat; upper lip straight, margin entire, apex emarginate or 2-lobed; lower lip spreading, 3-lobed; lobes subequal or middle lobe larger, margin entire, undulate, or emarginate. Stamens 4, anterior 2 longer, ascending, free, apex arcuate, approximate, included or occasionally exserted; anther cells 2, parallel, divergent or convergent, connectives transversely thicker. Style apex 2-lobed; lobes subulate, equal or anterior lobe elongated, involute, flat, posterior lobe short. Nutlets ovoid or triguentor oblong, dry, smooth.

About 100 species: Africa, Asia, Europe; five species in China.

The generic limits between Micromeria, Clinopodium, Calamintha, and several related genera not found in China are controversial.

1a. Leaves more than 1 cm.
   1b. Stems densely puberulent; leaves widely spaced, conspicuously crenulate; verticillasters pedunculate, 3-7 in narrow panicles; calyx 13-veined; corolla dark red, ca. 1 cm, pilose on middle of lower lip and apical part of tube inside.......................................................................................................................... 4. M. wardii
   1b. Stems densely puberulent, white spreading pilose; calyx to 9 mm; teeth subequal, subulate, apiculate, ca. 2.5 mm; corolla ca. 1.8 cm ........................................................................................................ 3. M. barosma


姜味草 tai wan jiang wei cao


Subshrubs tufted, aromatic. Stems numerous, ascending, to 30 cm, shorter, slender, densely ± patent white pilose and pubescent, red-purple. Petiole 0.1-0.5 mm; leaf blade ovate, 4-5×2-5.3 mm, conspicuously golden yellow glandular, sparsely puberulent on midrib, base rounded to shallowly cordate, margin flat or recurved, entire, apex acute. Verticillasters 1- or 2-flowered, peduncle; peduncle 1-2 mm; bracts and bracteoles subequal, linear-subulate, ca. 1.5 mm, ciliate. Pedicel 2-3 mm, secund, red. Calyx short tubular, 2-lipped, to 4 mm, veins puberulent, throat pilose, 13-veined, ciliate; posterior teeth narrowly triangular, ca. 1.5 mm, apex long acuminate; anterior teeth subulate, ca. 2 mm, apex spinescent. Corolla rose, ca. 6 mm, sparsely puberulent, tube ca. 4 mm; upper lip elliptic, ca. 2 mm; lower lip ca. 2.5 mm, lobes subequal or middle larger. Anterior stamens nearly included. Ovary yellow-brown, glabrous. Nutlets brown, oblong, ca. 1 mm, glabrous. Fl. Jun-Jul, fr. Jul-Aug.

Hilly grasslands over limestone; 2000-2500 m. Guizhou, Yunnan [Afghanistan, Bhutan, India, Nepal].

Extremely variable and at the center of a species complex distributed in Africa and SW Asia.

Essential oil used for flavoring liqueurs. Decoction used for abdominal distension, dysentery, colds, and coughs.

puberulent, golden glandular between veins, throat pilose annulate; teeth subulate, apiculate, subequal, ca. 2.5 mm. Corolla rose to red-purple, ca. 1.8 cm, densely puberulent; tube slender, ca. 1.2 cm; upper lip oblong, ca. 6×3 mm; lower lip spreading, ca. 7 mm; middle lobe elongated, oblong; lateral lobes ovate. Ovary glabrous. Nutlets triquetrous, oblong, ca. 1.3 mm, black-brown with 2 white scars at base, glabrous. Fl. Jul-Aug, fr. Sep-Oct.

- Dry gravelly grasslands, rocky crevices of limestone mountains; 2300–3800 m. Yunnan.

Species 3–5 are closely related.


西藏姜味草 xi zang jiang wei cao

Subshrubs aromatic. Rhizomes transverse. Stems erect, to 50 cm, few branched, terete, purplish, finely striate, sparsely white floccose-puberulent, branches erect. Petiole ca. 1 mm; leaf blade ovate, 1–1.5 cm×4–7 mm, densely impressed glandular, adaxially sparsely strigose, scabrid, base cuneate, margin entire, involute, apex obtuse. Verticillasters 2–6-flowered, widely spaced, in upper axils; bracteoles subulate. Pedicel subulate, 1–3 mm. Calyx 4–5×1–1.5 mm, purplish, veins puberulent, white pilose at throat, conspicuously 15-veined; teeth subequal, triangular, ca. 1 mm, apex subulate, spreading. Corolla purplish, ca. 1.4 cm, pubescent; tube slender, to 2 mm wide at throat; upper lip ovate, 2-lobed; lower lip slightly longer. Ovary glabrous. Nutlets subtriquetrous, ovoid-oblong, ca. 1.3 mm, glabrous.

- Grassy hillsides, thickets, pine forests; 2100–3700 m. Xizang.


清香姜味草 qing xiang jiang wei cao


Subshrubs aromatic, diffuse, tufted. Stems numerous, prostrate-ascending, unbranched, slender, 15–30 cm, basally woody, terete, densely glandular puberulent, purple-red. Petiole 2–4 mm, narrowly winged at apex; leaf blade ovate to subcircular, bractlike toward stem apex, 1–2 ×0.5–1.3 cm, glabrous or midrib puberulent, impressed glandular, base cuneate to rounded, ± decurrent, margin remotely crenulate, apex rounded. Verticillasters (2–)6–10-flowered, 3–7 in narrow terminal panicles; peduncle 5–10 mm; bracts oblong, ca. 5×1.5 mm; bracteoles minute, linear. Pedicel 2.5–4 mm. Calyx ca. 5 mm, glandular puberulent, sparsely golden yellow glandular, veins and teeth pilose, throat white pilose, conspicuously 13-veined; teeth narrowly triangular, apex spinescent, subequal, ca. 1.5 mm. Corolla dark red, ca. 1 cm, sparsely puberulent, conspicuously pilose inside; tube ca. 6 mm, slightly exerted; upper lip slightly spreading, suboblong, ca. 1.5 mm, 2-lobed to ca. 1/2 its length; lower lip ca. 5 mm, margin undulate, middle lobe subobcordate, lateral lobes broadly ovate. Ovary glabrous. Nutlets brown, ca. 1 mm, glabrous. Fl. Jun-Aug, fr. Sep-Nov.

- Grassy hillsides, dry valleys in limestone mountains; 3300 m. Yunnan.