
Subshrubs or annual or perennial herbs, lanate or villous. Leaves petiolate. Verticillasters 2- to many flowered, in terminal spikes; floral leaves reduced to bracts. Flowers small. Calyx tubular-campanulate, equally or subequally 5-toothed or slightly 2-lipped, 5–10-veined; teeth straight, apex spiny. Corolla yellow, 2-lipped; tube included; upper lip straight, nearly flat, entire to 2-lobed; lower lip spreading, 3-lobed; middle lobe large, apex emarginate. Stamens 4, included, didynamous, anterior 2 longer, with deformed anthers, posterior 2 shorter, with 2-celled anthers; anther cells divaricate. Style included, apex unequally 2-cleft. Nutlets triquetrous, ovoid, smooth, apex obtuse to rounded.

Approximately 100 species: temperate Asia and Europe, two species in China.

1a. Corolla yellow, turning purplish when dry; internodes of inflorescence longer than calyx ............................................ 1. S. montana
1b. Corolla purplish; internodes of inflorescence shorter than calyx ................................................................................................ 2. S. balansae


Herbs annual. Stems ca. 20 cm tall, erect or ascending, spreading hirtellous. Petiole short to almost absent; leaf blade lanceolate to elliptic, 1–2 cm × ca. 5 mm, sparsely pilose, base cuneate, margin entire or remotely serrulate, apex acute. Verticillasters 6- to many flowered; bracts longer than flowers. Calyx 8–10 mm, tube cylindric, villous, 10-veined; teeth equal or subequal, oblong-lanceolate, 3–4 mm, apex spiny, ciliate; fruiting calyx slightly dilated, urceolate-campanulate, distinctly veined. Corolla yellow; tube included; upper lip oblate, ca. 1.5 mm, 2-lobed; lower lip ca. 1 mm. Nutlets gray-brown, triquetrous, ovoid, ca. 1.5 mm, smooth. Fl. and fr. Jun-Aug.

• Valleys, thickets. Xinjiang [Russia, Turkmenistan; SW Asia, Europe].

A toxic weed.


Herbs annual. Stems 2–15 cm tall, erect or ascending, turning red basally, sparsely pilose. Leaves long petiolate, elliptic to oblong, to 15–8 mm, pilose, margin with few oblique serrations, apex obtuse. Verticillasters 2–6-flowered, in compact spikes; bracts similar to stem leaves, as long as or longer than flowers. Pedicel 2–3 mm. Calyx 5–9 mm, spreading pilose, sometimes reddish, distinctly 10-veined; teeth ovate-lanceolate, equal or subequal, straight, apex cuspidate; fruiting calyx slightly dilated, urceolate-campanulate, constricted. Corolla purplish, included or slightly exserted, upper lip 2-lobed. Nutlets gray, triquetrous, ovoid, 1–1.5 mm, smooth. Fl. and fr. Jun-Aug.

• Valleys, thickets. Xinjiang [Russia; SW Asia].

Kamelin (in litt.) believes that Chinese records of this species are based on misidentifications of Sideritis montana which can have a purplish corolla when dried.