

5. VERBENA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 18. 1753.

马鞭草属 ma bian cao shu

Herbs or subshrubs, annual or perennial. Branches 4-veined. Leaves opposite, sessile, dentate, lobed, or pinnatifid. Spikes usually terminal, simple or branched; bracts small. Flowers alternate, nearly zygomorphic. Calyx membranous, 5-dentate. Corolla with a distinct tube; lobes 5, unequal, spreading. Stamens 4, fertile, didynamous, inserted at middle of corolla tube, included; anthers ovate. Ovary 4-locular; ovules erect, 1 per locule. Capsules dry, included in calyx, dehiscing into 4 1-seeded pyrenes.

About 250 species: chiefly in tropical America, one species in China.

Additional species grown as ornamentals.

1. *Verbena officinalis* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 20. 1753.

马鞭草 ma bian cao

Herbs, annual or weakly perennial, erect, 30–140 cm tall, pubescent to subglabrous. Leaves narrowed into a petiole 0.3–4 cm; leaf blade ovate, obovate, or oblong, 2–8 × 1–5 cm, papery, hirsute especially on abaxial veins, margin coarsely dentate or cut to sometimes deeply pinnatifid or lobed. Spikes long, slender; bracts as long as calyx. Calyx 1–4 mm, pubescent, glandular. Corolla blue to pink, (2–)4–8 mm, pubescent. Ovary glabrous. Nutlets oblong, ca. 2 mm. Fl. and fr. Jul–Oct. $2n = 14$.

Grassy places on mountain slopes; 100–1800 m. Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guangxi, Guizhou, Hainan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Shaanxi, Shanxi, Sichuan, Taiwan, Xinjiang, Xizang, Yunnan, Zhejiang [worldwide weed in temperate zones and tropics].

