

**222. OPHIUROS** C. F. Gaertner, Suppl. Carp. 3. 1805.

蛇尾草属 she wei cao shu

Sun Bixing (孙必兴 Sun Bi-sin); Sylvia M. Phillips

Annual or perennial. Culms robust. Leaf blades linear, flat; ligule membranous. Inflorescence of many single racemes aggregated into a spathate compound panicle; racemes cylindrical, fragile, transversely or slightly obliquely articulated, spikelets borne alternately on opposite sides of rachis; rachis internodes stout, semi-cylindrical, base with central peg, apex hollow. Sessile spikelet sunk into hollow in rachis; lower glume oblong, leathery, broadly convex, smooth, areolate or latticelike; marginally 2-keeled, with or without narrow wings toward apex; lower floret male with a palea; upper floret hyaline with entire awnless lemma. Pedicelled spikelet absent; pedicel linear, adnate to adjacent internode, sometimes barely distinguishable from it.

Four species: NE tropical Africa, tropical Asia, Australia; one species in China.

**1. *Ophiuros exaltatus*** (Linnaeus) Kuntze, Revis. Gen. Pl. 2: 780. 1891.

蛇尾草 she wei cao

*Aegilops exaltata* Linnaeus, Mant. Pl. 2: 575. 1771;  
*Mnesithea exaltata* (Linnaeus) Skeels; *Ophiuros corymbosus*  
(Linnaeus f.) Gaertner; *Rottboellia corymbosa* Linnaeus f.

Perennial. Culms often bulbously swollen at base, erect, 1–2 m tall, 4–6 mm in diam., simple or branched. Leaf sheaths with tubercle-based hairs or glabrous, margins densely ciliate with rather rigid tubercle-based hairs; leaf blades broadly linear, 30–60 × 0.5–2.5 cm, midrib broad and white, margins pectinate, base rounded or subcordate, apex long-acuminate; ligule 1–2 mm, glabrous. Racemes often fastigiately clustered, slender, 0.5–1.5 cm, base enclosed by a spatheole; rachis very fragile, internodes ca. 3 mm, obliquely articulated. Sessile spikelet 2–3 mm; lower glume ovate-oblong, smooth or areolate on back, sometimes also tuberculate, wingless, apex subacute; upper glume equal to lower glume, boat-shaped. Pedicelled spikelet completely absent; pedicel obscure, free at extreme apex. Fl. and fr. Jun–Oct.

Grassy hillsides; below 900 m. Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Yunnan [India, Laos, Malaysia, New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; Australia].

Flora of China 22: 647–648. 2006.