

179. SPINIFEX Linnaeus, Mant. Pl. 2: 163, 300. 1771.

蠶刺屬 lie ci shu

Chen Shouliang (陈守良); Sylvia M. Phillips

Perennials, rhizomatous; dioecious or sometimes androdioecious. Leaf blades hard, linear to subulate-involute; ligule a line of hairs. Inflorescence terminal, compound, composed of many single racemes subtended by prophylls and spatulate sheaths and condensed into a compact fascicle. Staminate inflorescence with exserted racemes bearing several spikelets and ending in a short point. Female or bisexual inflorescence stellately globose, falling entire, composed of numerous racemes reduced to a single basal spikelet hidden among subtending spathes, its rachis prolonged into a long needle-like spine. Spikelets dorsally compressed, staminate spikelets herbaceous, female spikelets papery. Staminate spikelet with shorter glumes and both florets staminate. Female spikelet with glumes equal to spikelet and lower floret sometimes paleate and staminate. Upper lemma in both slightly indurate with flat hyaline margins. $x = 9$.

Four species: seashores from India to Japan, SE Asia, and Australia; one species in China.

1. *Spinifex littoreus* (N. L. Burman) Merrill, Philipp. J. Sci. 7: 229. 1912.

老鼠芳 lao shu li

Stipa littorea N. L. Burman, Fl. Indica 29. 1767; *Spinifex squarrosus* Linnaeus; *Stipa spinifex* Linnaeus.

Culms stoloniferous, hard, stout, many-noded, rooting and copiously branching at nodes, flowering shoots ascending to 30–100 cm, internodes farinose. Leaf sheaths broad, rounded on back, imbricate; leaf blades distichous, very tough, involute-subulate, curved, 5–20 × 0.2–0.3 cm, margins scabrous, apex spiny; ligule densely ciliate. Staminate inflorescence of 2–5 clustered turbinate heads 5–10 × 6–8 cm; racemes 3–6 cm, bearing 5–10 loosely imbricate spikelets. Staminate spikelets lanceolate, 8–12 mm; glumes oblong-lanceolate, 7–9-veined, lower glume 1/2 spikelet length, upper glume 2/3 spikelet length; lower lemma 5-veined, 8–10 mm, palea with winged ciliate keels; upper lemma with unkeeled palea. Female inflorescence globose, 20–35 cm in diam.; racemes unispiculate with needle-like 10–18 cm rachis. Female spikelets lanceolate-oblong, 10–20 mm, acuminate; glumes oblong-lanceolate, low-

er glume many-veined, upper glume 7–9-veined; lower lemma ovate-lanceolate, 5-veined, palea absent; upper lemma lanceolate, yellowish. Fl. and fr. summer-autumn.

Sandy beaches, seashore dunes. Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Taiwan [Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam].

This species is an efficient sand binder, forming large colonies and stabilizing dunes. The female inflorescences act as tumbleweeds. The seeds within are dispersed as the spiky head is transported along the coast by wind and sea.

Flora of China 22: 553–554. 2006.