

4. MARANTA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 2. 1753.

竹芋属 zhu yu shu

Herbs caulescent, erect or prostrate, sometimes much branched, occasionally with tuberous, swollen rhizomes. Leaves both basal and cauline or all cauline; petiole sheathing at base. Inflorescences 2 to several per leafy shoot, each a dichotomous panicle or raceme; bracts few, each subtending 2–6 pedicellate flower pairs, herbaceous, late deciduous or persistent. Sepals green, herbaceous. Corolla white; tube 4–14 mm, base often inflated; lobes subequal. Staminode tube usually short; staminodes white, occasionally tinged or marked with purple; outer staminodes 2, petaloid, obovate, exceeding corolla lobes; cucullate staminode with median or subterminal appendage; callose staminode obovate, apex petaloid. Ovary 1-loculed by abortion. Style thick. Fruit a capsule, obovoid to ellipsoid, dehiscent. Seed 1.

About 32 species: tropical America; one species (introduced) in China.

Additional species, e.g., *Maranta bicolor* Ker Gawler, are cultivated in S China as ornamentals. One of us (Kennedy) notes that the plant illustrated in FRPS (pl. 56, f. 4) as *M. bicolor* is in fact *M. leuconeura* E. Morren var. *kerchoveana* (E. Morren) Petersen.

1. *Maranta arundinacea* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1. 2. 1753.

竹芋 zhu yu

Maranta sylvatica Roscoe ex Smith; *Phrynium variegatum* N. E. Brown.

Herbs 30–130 cm tall. Rhizomes sympodial, cylindric, fleshy, starchy. Stems erect, often apically branched, slender. Basal leaves 4–8; cauline leaves 1–8; petiole 3.5–20 cm in basal leaves, often absent in cauline leaves, pulvinus 0.2–1.8 cm, glabrous except adaxially tomentose; leaf blade ovate-oblong, 3.5–35 × 3–11 cm, adaxially sparsely pilose, abaxially glabrous or sparsely pilose, base rounded to truncate, apex acuminate. Inflorescences several per leafy shoot; bracts 1 or 2(or 3), each

subtending 2 or 3 flower pairs, distichous, green, 2.4–6 cm. Flowers mostly self-pollinating; common pedicel 2.3–5.5 cm. Sepals green, narrowly ovate, 1.2–1.7 cm. Corolla white; tube curved, 1.2–1.4 cm, base inflated; lobes 8–10 mm. Stamines white; outer staminodes 2, obovate, ca. 1 cm. Ovary densely pubescent, rarely glabrous or subglabrous. Capsule green or tinged reddish brown, ellipsoid, 7–8 × 4–5 mm, dehiscent. Seeds brown, rugose; aril basal, white, 2-lobed. Fl. Jun–Aug. $2n = 18, 48$.

Cultivated. Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan, Taiwan, S Yunnan [native to tropical America; cultivated pantropically].

Grown as a source of starch.

