FRANKENIACEAE
瓣鳞花科 ban lin hua ke

Yang Qiner (杨亲二)¹; Molly Whalen²

Herbs, subshrubs, or shrubs. Leaves simple, small, opposite, petiolate [or sessile], with salt glands; paired leaves united at base by sheathing margins; leaf blade flattened [to subterete], margin entire, slightly to gradually [to strongly] revolute. Flowers hermaphroditic [rarely unisexual], small, actinomorphic, sessile, subtended by [2 or]4 leaflike floral bracts, solitary or clustered in terminal or axillary, simple or compound dichasia (frequently with some monochasial branching). Calyx persistent, tubular, ribbed, [4 or]5[–7]-dentate. Petals [4 or]5[–7], free, imbricate, with spreading limb, clawed at base, with a scalelike appendage or ligule present [rarely absent] on adaxial face of claw. Stamens [3–]6[to many]; filaments free or slightly united at base; anthers 2-thecate, extrose, longitudinally dehiscent. Pistil 1, consisting of (1–)3(or 4) carpels; ovary superior, 1-loculed; ovules numerous on parietal placentas [to fewer, rarely 1]; style solitary, slender; style branches [1–3][or 4], as many as carpels. Capsule included in persistent calyx, loculicidally dehiscent. Seeds [1 to] numerous, small; testa thinly crustaceous; embryo immersed in endosperm.

One genus and ca. 70 species: N and S Africa, C and SW Asia, Atlantic islands, Australia, Europe, North and South America; one species in China.


Hypericopsis Boissier.

Morphological characters and geographic distribution are the same as those of the family.


瓣鳞花 ban lin hua

Herbs annual. Stem prostrate, 6–16 cm, richly branched from base, sparsely white puberulous, hairs incurved. Petiole 1–2 mm; leaf blade narrowly obovate, obovate, or elliptic, sometimes orbicular on lower leaves, 2–7 × 1–2.5 mm, abaxially slightly powdery-puberulous, adaxially glabrous, base attenuate into a short petiole, apex obtuse or retuse. Flowers subtended by 4 leaflike floral bracts, borne in terminal or axillary dichasia, rarely solitary, with much of plant often composed of elongated compound dichasia in which branches often develop unequally. Calyx tube 2–3.5 × 1–1.5 mm, 5-ribbed; teeth 5, subulate, 0.5–1 mm. Petals 5, pink to violet, oblong-oblancoate, oblong-obovate, or spatulate, 3–4(--5) × 0.7–1.4 mm, attenuate below middle, apex erose denticulate; ligule oblanceolate-elliptic. Stamens 6. Ovary with numerous ovules on 3 parietal placentas. Capsule oblong-ovoid, ca. 2 × 1 mm. Seeds numerous, golden brown, oblong-ellipsoid, 0.5–0.7 × ca. 0.3 mm, acute in lower part. Fl. and fr. May–Aug. 2n = 20.

High-salinity grasslands of floodlands, by lakes, always on moist and slightly alkaline soils in desert regions; 1200–1500 m. Gansu (Minqin), W Nei Mongol (Ejin Qi), Xinjiang (Xinyuan) [Mongolia, Russia, Turkmenistan; N and S Africa, C and SW Asia, S Europe; introduced in Australia and the Americas].