

4. OSYRIS Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 1022. 1753.

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Shrubs or small trees evergreen. Branches usually 3-ridged or -angled. Leaves alternate, \pm sessile, elliptic-lanceolate or elliptic-ovate, usually \pm leathery, pinnately veined, lateral veins inconspicuous. Inflorescences axillary; male ones cymose; bisexual and female ones often 1-flowered; bracts and bracteoles on male inflorescences caducous. Flowers unisexual (when plants dioecious) or bisexual. Bisexual flowers: perianth tube mostly connate to ovary, lobes 3(or 4), triangular or ovate, with a tuft of hair adaxially. Stamens 3(or 4), short, on the base of lobes; anthers ovoid, cells distinct, parallel, dehiscence longitudinal. Disk nearly flat, sinuate at margin. Ovary inferior, 1-loculed; ovules 2–4. Style needle-shaped; stigmas 3(or 4)-parted. Male flowers: stamens slightly longer than bisexual flowers; ovary rudimentary. Female flowers: bracteoles more prominent; perianth tube shorter. Fruit a drupe, relatively small (to 1 cm), usually with rudimentary perianth at apex or with only rudimentary disk, exocarp fleshy, endocarp crustaceous. Seeds globose.

Six or seven species: Africa, Asia, Europe; one species in China.

Osyris japonica Thunberg is *Helwingia japonica* (Thunberg) Dietrich (Helwingiaceae/Cornaceae s.l.).

1. *Osyris quadripartita* Salzmann ex Decaisne, Ann. Sci. Nat., Bot., sér. 2, 6: 65. 1836.

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Osyris arborea Wallich ex A. Candolle; *O. arborea* var. *rotundifolia* P. C. Tam; *O. arborea* var. *stipitata* Lecomte [“*tipitata*”]; *O. lanceolata* Hochstetter & Steudel ex A. Candolle, nom. illeg. superfl.; *O. wightiana* Wallich ex Wight.

Plants 2–5 m tall. Branches slender, 3-angled when young. Leaf blade grayish green, 1.2–6 \times 0.6–2 cm, leathery, sometimes rugose on both surfaces, with dense glands, base gradually narrowed or obtuse, apex acute to cuspidate or rounded. Male inflorescences 2–4(–13)-flowered; peduncle to 11 mm. Female inflorescences 1–3-flowered; bracts minute, caducous. Male flowers: pedicel 4–8 mm; perianth ca. 4 mm in diam., lobes 3, yellow or green, sometimes flushed brown, ca. 1.5 mm.

Stamens 3, filaments very short, disk fleshy; sterile ovary very small, at center of disk. Female flowers usually solitary, sometimes to 4 in subumbel; pedicel to 25 mm, enlarged at apex; bracteoles 2, linear-spatulate, ca. as long as ovary, soon caducous, disk and stamens as in male but stamens sterile. Bisexual flowers similar to female but with fertile stamens; stigmas 3. Drupe orange to red when ripe, drying pale blackish, subglobose or pear-shaped, 4.5–10 mm in diam. Fl. Apr–Jun, fr. Oct.

Thickets; 600–2700 m. Guangxi, Sichuan, Xizang, Yunnan [Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; Africa, S Europe].

This is a very widespread and variable species with several widely used synonyms. Plants with stipitate fruits have been described as *Osyris arborea* var. *stipitata*, but there are collections with shorter stipes that link that form to the typical, sessile-fruited form.

