

13. *SPINACIA* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 1027. 1753.

菠菜属 bo cai shu

Herbs annual, erect, glabrous. Leaves alternate, petiolate; leaf blade flattened, triangular-ovate or hastate, margin entire or lobed-serrate. Flowers unisexual (plants dioecious), forming glomerules, male ones usually arranged in terminal, interrupted panicles, female ones axillary. Male flowers: perianth 4- or 5-parted; segments oblong, apex obtuse; stamens 4 or 5, inserted at base of perianth; filaments capillary; anthers exerted. Female flowers borne within 2 united, leathery, and hardening bractlets; perianth absent; ovary subglabrous; ovule subsessile; stigmas 4 or 5, filiform. Utricle compressed globose; pericarp membranous, adnate to seed. Seed vertical; embryo annular; perisperm copious, farinaceous.

Three species: Mediterranean region; one species (introduced) in China.

1. *Spinacia oleracea* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 1027. 1753.

菠菜 bo cai

Plants to 1 m tall. Root reddish, rarely white, conic. Stem simple or few branched, hollow. Leaf blade light green, hastate to ovate, slightly succulent, margin entire or with a few lobelike teeth. Male flowers: perianth segments usually 4; filaments filiform, flattened; anthers without an appendage. Fruiting bracts slightly compressed, with a thornlike appendage on each side, apex with 2 teeth; stigmas exerted. Utricle ovoid or subglobose, compressed, ca. 2.5 mm in diam.; pericarp brown.

Commonly cultivated as a vegetable in China [unknown in the wild; widely cultivated in temperate and subtropical regions of the world].

