

4. ALTHAEA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 686. 1753.

药葵属 yao kui shu

Herbs annual to perennial, erect, ± stellate hirsute. Leaves simple; stipules subulate; leaf blade ovate-triangular or palmately 3–5-lobed or -parted. Flowers axillary, solitary or fascicled, sometimes grouped into terminal racemes. Epicalyx lobes 9, cup-shaped, connate basally, stellate hirsute. Calyx cup-shaped, 5-parted. Corolla lavender or pink, funnel-shaped; petals obovate, less than 2 cm, apex shallowly notched. Staminal column cylindric, pubescent; anthers grouped at apex, brownish purple. Ovary 8–25-loculed; ovules 1 per locule, erect; style branches as many as locules; stigma linear, decurrent. Fruit a schizocarp, oblate or disk-shaped, axis disk-shaped, not longer than carpels; mericarps 8–25, semicircular, abaxially channeled, 1-celled and 1-seeded.

About 12 species: C and SW Asia, Europe; one species in China.

1. *Althaea officinalis* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 686. 1753.

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Althaea kragujevacensis Pančić ex N. Diklić & V. Stevanovic; *A. micrantha* Borbás; *A. sublobata* Stokes; *A. taurinensis* Candolle; *A. vulgaris* Bubani; *Malva althaea* E. H. L. Krause; *M. maritima* Salisbury; *M. officinalis* (Linnaeus) Schimper & Spenner.

Herbs perennial, erect, ca. 1 m tall; stem densely stellate hirsute. Petiole 1–4 cm, stellate tomentose; leaf blade ovate-orbicular or cordate, 3-lobed or not lobed, 3–8 × 1.5–6 cm, papery, both surfaces densely stellate tomentose, base nearly cordate or rounded, margin bluntly dentate, apex acute. Epicalyx lobes 9, lanceolate, ca. 4 mm, densely stellate strigose. Calyx cup-shaped, persistent, 5-parted, longer than epicalyx, densely stellate hirsute, lobes lanceolate. Corolla pink, ca. 2.5

cm in diam.; petals ca. 1.5 cm, obovate-oblong. Staminal column ca. 8 mm. Ovary 15–25-loculed. Fruit a disk-shaped schizocarp, ca. 8 mm in diam., enclosed by calyx, puberulent. Seeds reniform. Fl. Jul.

Riverbanks. Native in Xinjiang (Tacheng); cultivated in Beijing, Jiangsu (Nanjing), Shaanxi (Xi'an), and Yunnan (Kunming) [Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; SW Asia, Europe].

The roots are used medicinally. They are also the source of mucilage used for confections.

