

7. **PUNICA** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 472. 1753.

石榴属 shi liu shu

Qin Haining (覃海宁); Shirley Graham

Shrubs or small trees; branches often terminating as spines. Leaves opposite or subopposite, sometimes crowded on short lateral shoots, simple, entire, stipulate. Flowers solitary, terminal or 1–5 in axillary or terminal clusters, actinomorphic, bisexual. Floral tube thick, leathery, adnate to ovary and produced above it; sepals thick, valvate, persistent. Petals showy, red [or white], strongly crumpled. Stamens numerous, covering inner surface of floral tube from rim to ovary. Ovary inferior, multiloculed; style exserted; stigma capitate. Fruit berrylike, with leathery rind, retaining a crown of sepals. Seeds many, with translucent, juicy sarcotesta; cotyledons spirally rolled.

Two species: one endemic to the Indian Ocean island of Socotra; one of uncertain native origin, probably from C and SW Asia, now widespread in cultivation.

1. ***Punica granatum*** Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 472. 1753.

石榴 shi liu

Shrubs or small trees, 2–3 m tall, glabrous. Branches and branchlets 4-angled, becoming terete with age, often terminating as indurate spines. Petiole 2–10 mm; leaf blade adaxially shiny, lanceolate, elliptic-oblong, or oblong, 2–9 × 1–2 cm, base attenuate, apex obtuse or mucronate. Floral tube red-orange or pale yellow, campanulate-urceolate, 2–3 × 1–1.5 cm; sepals 5–9, erect, deltate. Petals 5–9, bright red-orange [or white], obovate, 1.5–3 × 1–2 cm, apex rounded or obtuse. Stamens numerous, included to exserted. Ovary 8–13-loculed, in 2

or 3 superposed layers, lower locules with axile placentation, upper ones with apparent parietal placentation. Fruit globose, leathery berries, variable in color, red to yellow-green or red-brown, 5–12 cm in diam., crowned by persistent sepals, irregularly dehiscent. Seeds obpyramidal within juicy sarcotestal layer, ruby-red, pink, or yellowish white. Fl. Mar–Jul. $2n = 16, 18$.

Widely cultivated in China, and naturalized in W China [widespread in cultivation].

Punica granatum is grown for its showy flowers and edible fruit (pomegranate). It was probably introduced to China from C Asia or Europe during the Han dynasty (207 BCE to 220 CE).

