

2. CENTELLA Linnaeus, Sp. Pl., ed. 2, 2. 1393. 1763.

积雪草属 ji xue cao shu

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Herbs perennial. Stem slender and creeping, diffuse, nodes rooting. Leaves petiolate, forming rosettes along the creeping stem; petioles sheathing at base; blade simple, entire or shallowly dentate, palmately veined. Inflorescence simple; umbels loose to subcapitate, few-flowered; peduncles axillary, usually very short; bracts 2, membranous; pedicels slender to obsolete. Calyx teeth obsolete. Petals valvate, orbicular with a narrow inflexed apex. Stylopodium obsolete; styles short, equaling filaments. Fruit reniform or globose, base cordate to truncate, strongly laterally compressed; commissure narrow, constricted; primary and secondary ribs prominent, 7–9 per mericarp, filiform, reticulate nerves evident in between; oil-bearing layer beneath the epidermis present, occasionally containing small oil tubes (cf. vittae); endocarp woody. Seed narrowly oblong in cross section, face plane. Carpophore present, entire.

Twenty species: predominately in S Africa and tropical and subtropical regions; one species in China.

1. *Centella asiatica* (Linnaeus) Urban in Martius, Fl. Bras. 11(1): 287. 1879.

积雪草 ji xue cao

Hydrocotyle asiatica Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 1: 234. 1753; *H. lurida* Hance.

Petiole 0.5–10(–30) cm; leaf blade orbicular or reniform, 1–4.5 × 1.5–5 cm, palmate veins 5–7, prominent, both surfaces glabrous or abaxially sparsely pubescent on the veins, base broadly cordate, coarsely toothed. Peduncles 2–4, clustered axillary, 0.2–1.5 cm; bracts 2 (rarely 3), ovate, 3–4 × 2.1–3 mm,

persistent in fruit; umbels 3–4-flowered, capitate. Flowers sessile or subsessile. Petals white or rose-tinged. Fruit 2.1–3 × 2.2–3.6 mm. Fl. and fr. Apr–Oct.

Shady, wet, grassy places, river margins; 200–1900 m. Anhui, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, S Jiangsu, Jiangxi, S Shaanxi, Sichuan, Taiwan, Yunnan, Zhejiang [widespread throughout tropical and subtropical countries worldwide, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Thailand, Vietnam].

This species is similar in appearance to, and is sometimes mistaken for, *Dichondra micrantha* Urban (Convolvulaceae). It is sometimes eaten, and is an important herb (“ji xue cao”) of traditional Chinese medicine.

