

5. ACANTHUS Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 639. 1753.

老鼠勒属 lao shu le shu

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Acanthodus Rafinesque.

Shrubs or perennial herbs, erect or decumbent, without cystoliths. Leaves opposite [whorled or in a basal cluster], petiolate; leaf blade margin entire, pinnatifid, or spinously toothed. Inflorescences in terminal [or axillary], uninterrupted spikes; bracts imbricate, ovate, growing in size as plant matures, margin spiny; bracteoles 2 or sometimes absent. Calyx 4-lobed, posterior and anterior lobes larger, lateral pair of lobes smaller. Corolla tube very short, horny; limb of a single (lower) lip (upper lip sometimes rudimentary); lip elongate, obtusely 3-lobed. Stamens 4, paired, inserted at top of corolla tube, exerted; filaments stout, thickened, bony; anthers 1-theous; theca linear-oblong, usually densely bearded, lacking basal appendages; staminodes absent. Ovary with 2 ovules per locule; style slender; stigma 2-cleft. Capsule not stipitate, ellipsoid, shiny, 4-seeded; retinacula present. Seeds ± compressed.

About 20–25 species: tropical and subtropical regions of Old World; three species in China.

Acanthus mollis Linnaeus is cultivated in Chinese gardens so is not treated here.

- 1a. Bracteoles absent 1. *A. ebracteatus*
1b. Bracteoles 2.
2a. Bracts broadly ovate, margin entire 2. *A. ilicifolius*
2b. Bracts ovate to obovate, margin apically spiny 3. *A. leucostachyus*

1. *Acanthus ebracteatus* Vahl, Symb. Bot. 2: 75. 1791.

小花老鼠勒 xiao hua lao shu le

Acanthus ilicifolius Linnaeus var. *ebracteatus* (Vahl) Benoist; *Dilivaria ebracteata* (Vahl) Persoon.

Shrubs 1–3 m tall. Stems terete, stout, glabrous, often with stipulelike spines at nodes. Petiole 1–4 cm, glabrous; leaf blade oblong to obovate-oblong, 5–12 × 3–5 cm, rigid, subleathery, glabrous, secondary veins 3 or 4 on each side of midvein and spreading to spinose teeth, base cuneate, margin 3- or 4-toothed or irregularly pinnatifid, apex truncate to slightly mucronate and obtuse. Inflorescences terminal spikes to 4 cm; bracts broadly ovate, 6–7 × 4–5 mm; bracteoles absent. Calyx posterior and anterior lobes broadly ovate and 8–12 × 5–9 mm, lateral lobes elliptic and ca. 10 × 4 mm. Corolla white [blue or purplish], ca. 2.5 cm; tube basally cylindric and ca. 2.5 mm wide for 5–8 mm; lip oblong, ca. 2.2 cm; lobes oblong, outside glabrous, inside appressed pubescent. Stamens subequal; filaments ca. 9 mm; anther theca oblong, ca. 8 mm, with a line of trichomes on both sides of suture. Capsule ca. 1.8 cm. Seeds yellow, ca. 10 × 7 mm, rugose. Fl. Apr–May, fr. Aug–Sep. $2n = 44$.

Mangrove swamps; near sea level. Guangdong, Hainan [Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Vietnam; Australia, Pacific islands].

2. *Acanthus ilicifolius* Linnaeus, Sp. Pl. 2: 639. 1753.

老鼠勒 lao shu le

Acanthus ebracteatus Vahl var. *xiamenensis* (R. T. Zhang) C. Y. Wu & C. C. Hu; *A. ilicifolius* var. *xiamenensis* (R. T. Zhang) Y. F. Deng, N. H. Xia & Heng B. Chen; *A. xiamenensis* R. T. Zhang; *Dilivaria ilicifolia* (Linnaeus) Jussieu.

Shrubs to 2 m tall, erect. Stems stout, scarcely branched,

glabrous, often with stipulelike spines at nodes. Petiole 3–6 mm, thick, glabrous; leaf blade oblong to oblong-lanceolate, 6–14 × 2–5 cm, glabrous, secondary veins 5–7 on each side of midvein, base cuneate, margin pinnatifid and with few large spines, serrate, or subentire, apex truncate. Spikes terminal, to 16.5 cm; bracts broadly ovate, 7–8 mm, caducous; bracteoles ovate, ca. 5 mm, leathery. Calyx posterior and anterior lobes 1–1.3 cm, margin scarious and sometimes crispate, apex emarginate; lateral lobes ovate, ca. 1 cm, margin entire. Corolla white [bluish to pinkish], 3–4 cm; tube ca. 6 mm; lip obovate, 2.2–3 cm, thinly leathery, outside with soft trichomes, apex 3-cleft. Stamens equal; filaments ca. 1.5 cm; anther theca with a line of trichomes on both sides of suture. Style ca. 2.2 cm. Capsule 2.5–3 cm. Seeds light yellow, reniform. Fl. Feb–Mar, fr. Aug–Sep. $2n = 44, 48$.

Mangrove swamps, marshes; near sea level. Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan [Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam; Australia, Pacific islands].

This species is used medicinally.

3. *Acanthus leucostachyus* Wallich ex Nees, Pl. Asiat. Rar. 3: 98. 1832.

刺苞老鼠勒 ci bao lao shu le

Herbs to 1 m tall, erect, unbranched. Stem brown, ca. 4 mm in diam., hairy. Petiole 0.8–2.5 cm; leaf blade elliptic, ovate-lanceolate, oblanceolate, or lanceolate, 9–23 × 2–4.5 cm, abaxially glabrescent or brown pubescent along veins, adaxially glabrous, secondary veins 5–8 on each side of midvein and netted near margin, tertiary veins inconspicuous, base rounded to subcordate, margin slightly spinose-dentate but sometimes inconspicuously dentate or occasionally entire, apex acute.

Fl. China 19: 379–380. 2011.

Inflorescences terminal spikes, to 16 cm, 4-ranked; rachis grayish pubescent; bracts ovate to obovate, $1-1.5 \times 0.5-0.8$ cm, abaxially pubescent, palmately veined, base rounded, margins apically spiny, apex acute to acuminate; bracteoles lanceolate to oblanceolate, $1.3-2 \times 0.2-0.4$ cm, abaxially pubescent, base rounded, margin entire and ciliate, apex rounded with a short tip. Calyx ca. 2 cm, pubescent; lobes unequal, margin ciliate, anterior lobe ca. 1.7×0.4 cm, lateral lobes lanceolate and ca. 1.5×2.5 mm, posterior lobe oblong-lanceolate and ca. 2×0.5 cm. Corolla white, ca. 2.1 cm, villous; lobes orbicular, ca. 5×5 mm, apex emarginate. Staminal filaments ca. 8 mm, glabrous, upper pair curved (S-shaped); anther theca ca. 4.5 mm, pilose. Ovary ca. 3 mm; style ca. 1.1 cm. Capsule ca. 10×3 mm, glabrous. Seeds reniform, ca. 2×2.5 mm, glabrous. Fl. Feb–May, fr. Aug–Sep.

Dense forests, wet places; 600–1200 m. Yunnan [India, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam].

Fl. China 19: 379–380. 2011.