

46. **LEPTUNIS** Steven, Bull. Soc. Imp. Naturalistes Moscou 29(2): 366. 1857.

乐土草属 le tu cao shu

Chen Tao (陈涛); Friedrich Ehrendorfer

Herbs, annual, slender. Raphides present. Stems subterete. Leaves and leaflike stipules in whorls of 8–16, sessile, linear to filiform, without domatia. Inflorescences terminal, thyrsoïd, below with dichasial and above with monochasial cymes, few flowered when young but usually continuing to grow and becoming many flowered and diffuse; peduncles and pedicels filiform with leaflike bracts and reduced bracteoles. Flowers pedicellate to sessile, bisexual, monomorphic. Calyx limb obsolete. Corolla salmon-orange to pale greenish, tubular to funnellform, glabrous inside; lobes 4, valvate in bud. Stamens 4, inserted in upper part of corolla tube, included or partially exerted; filaments short; anthers dorsifixed, black. Ovary inferior, 2-celled, ovules 1 in each cell, basal; stigmas 2, globose, partially exerted. Fruit schizocarpous; mericarps obovoid, with 1 seed, indehiscent, upper part somewhat incurved, dry, with appressed short and curved hairs.

One species: from the SE Caucasus through Afghanistan and C Asia to NW China.

Ehrendorfer et al. (Fl. Iranica 176: 1–287. 2005) included the monotypic genus *Leptunis* in *Asperula* sect. *Trichodes* Boissier, based on the following arguments. Segregation of *Leptunis* as a monotypic genus from *Asperula* was based only on its ripe mericarps being rather obovoid and incurved than ellipsoid and straight. Furthermore, *Leptunis* appears closely linked to *Asperula* by *A. seticornis* Boissier. This local species from S Iran has long been recognized as having fruit that are intermediate in shape between *Leptunis* and “typical” *Asperula*. Nevertheless, considering the still incomplete DNA-analytical study of SW-Asiatic taxa of *Asperula* and the recent discovery of *Leptunis* in China (Abdusalih et al., Acta Bot. Boreal.-Occid. Sin. 23(4): 674. 2003), the genus is provisionally retained here. It is inserted in the key to Rubieae genera and species found in the present volume under *Galium*.

1. **Leptunis trichodes** (J. Gay ex Candolle) Schischkin, Fl. URSS 23: 285. 1958 [“*trichoides*”].

乐土草 le tu cao

Asperula trichodes J. Gay ex Candolle, Prodr. 4: 582. 1830; *Leptunis tenuis* Steven.

Herbs, annual, erect, 10–40 cm tall; stems and branches subterete, glabrous. Leaf blade drying stiffly papery, linear, 10–35 × 0.3–1 mm, glabrous to sparsely scaberulous, base acute, margins usually revolute, apex acute; 1 main vein as midrib, secondary veins not visible. Inflorescence 1–15 × 1–20 cm, glabrous; bracts leaflike, 1–3.5 × 0.1–0.2 mm; pedicels lacking or up to 20 mm, thickened toward flowers. Corolla puberulent outside, 1.5–2 mm; lobes elliptic to ovate, 0.5–1 mm, obtuse. Ovary inferior, obovoid, ca. 1 × 1 mm. Mericarps 1–2 mm, with appressed short and curved hairs. Fl. Jun–Jul, fr. Jul–Aug.

Open ground and grasslands on mountains, riversides, sunny rocky slopes; 900–1500 m. Xinjiang (Ürümqi) [Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan; SW Asia (Azerbaijan, Iran)].

Leptunis trichodes was first documented from China by Abdusalih et al. (Acta Bot. Boreal.-Occid. Sin. 23(4): 674. 2003).

Fl. China 19: 212–213. 2011.