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Trees, shrubs or herbs, rarely woody or herbaceous climbers, sometimes succulent, often with milky juice, very variable in habit. Leaves alternate or opposite, rarely whorled, simple, rarely variously compound, or reduced to scale-like, usually stipulate, sometimes with 1–2 glands at apex or base of petioles. Inflorescences very varied. Flowers unisexual (plants monoecious or dioecious), usually small, regular, either without a perianth in one or both sexes, or more frequently with a simple calyx-like perianth, or sometimes also with 4 or 5 petals alternating with the calyx-lobes; staminate flowers usually with intrastaminal disk and with 1 to many stamens; pistillate flowers with hypogynous Disk; ovary consisting of 3 or sometimes 2 or more than 3 united 1-locular or rarely 2-locular carpels, each with 1 or 2 pendulous ovules; styles as many as carpels, free or \pm united, entire or divided. Fruit usually capsular, separating into as many elastically 2-valved cocci as carpels, leaving a persistent axis, or rarely succulent and indehiscent, the endocarp consisting of as many as indehiscent nuts or cocci as carpels. Seed laterally attached at or above the middle, with or without an aril.

A very large family containing about 317 genera and 5000 species, widespread in the world, primarily in the tropics and subtropics, poorly represented in the temperate regions; about 70 genera and 470 species present in China; 30 genera and 95 species in Hong Kong.

- 1a. Leaves trifoliate [複葉]; fruit baccate, indehiscent 1. *Bischofia* 秋楓屬
- 1b. Leaves simple [單葉]. (2)
- 2a. Leaves palmately divided [掌狀分裂]. (3 屬) (3)
- 3a. Leaves not peltate [不是盾狀葉] (cultivated species of Hong Kong) 2. *Jatropha* 麻瘋樹屬

- 3b. Leaves peltate [盾狀葉]. (4)
- 4a. Juice not milky; lobes of leaf serrate *3. Ricinus* 蓖麻屬
- 4b. Juice milky; lobes of leaf entire *4. Manihot* 木薯屬
- 2b. Leaves undivided or shallowly lobed [葉不裂或淺裂]. (27 屬) (5)
- 5a. Plants without milky juice. [沒乳汁] (17 屬) (6)
- 6a. Petioles and leaf-base without glands. [葉基沒腺體] (10 屬) (7)
- 7a. Flowers with petals [有花瓣] and disk *5. Bridelia* 土蜜樹屬
- 7b. Flowers apetalous [沒花瓣]. (8)
- 8a. Flowers without disk or only male ones with disk. (9)
- 9a. Fruit a drupe *6. Putranjiva* 假黃楊屬
- 9b. Fruit capsular. (10)
- 10a. Leaf blade serrate or nearly entire, sepals valvate; filaments free. *7. Acalypha* 鐵苋菜屬
- 10b. Leaf blade entire; sepals imbricate; filaments connate. (11)

- 11a. Sepals free; fruits with many longitudinal grooves. 8. *Glochidion* 算盤子屬
- 11b. Male calyx discoid, cup-shaped or turbinate; fruit without longitudinal grooves. (12)
- 12a. Male flowers with 6–12-lobed disk; female calyx 6-parted; capsule dehiscent 9. *Sauropus* 守宮木屬
- 12b. Male flowers without disk; female calyx turbinate, funnelform or hemispherical; capsule bacciform, indehiscent. 10. *Breynia* 黑面神屬
- 8b. **Flowers with disk.** (13)
- 13a. Leaves distichous; fruit capsular or baccate. (14)
- 14a. Male flowers with pistillode 11. *Flueggea* 白飯樹屬
- 14b. Male flowers without pistillode 12. *Phyllanthus* 葉下珠屬
- 13b. Leaves not distichous; fruit a drupe. (15)
- 15a. Sepals free; styles very short or nearly absent; stigma usually dilate, peltate or reniform; drupes larger, 1 – 2.5 cm in diam. 13. *Drypetes* 核果木屬
- 15b. Sepals connate into cup-shaped or discoid calyx; styles terminal or lateral, not dilate at apex; drupes less than 8 mm in diam. 14. *Antidesma* 五月茶屬
- 6b. **Petioles or leaf-base with glands. [葉基有腺體] (7 屬)** (16)

- 16a. Leaves with glandular glands. (17)
- 17a. Inflorescences terminal, rarely axillary; anthers 2-celled 15. Mallotus 野桐屬
- 17b. Inflorescences axillary; anthers 3 – 4-celled 16. Macaranga 血桐屬
- 16b. Leaves without glandular glands. (18)
- 18a. Leaves barbate at axils of veins abaxially; pedicels in fruit 3– 7.5 cm; anthers 4-celled 17. Cleidion 棒柄花屬
- 18b. Leaves not barbate at axils of veins; pedcels in fruit less than 5 mm; anthers 2-celled. (19)
- 19a. Leaves with 2 small subulate stipules at base, reddish abaxially, margin with glandular tipped teeth 18. Alchornea 山麻桿屬
- 19b. Leaves without stipules at base, green or glaucous abaxially, margin without glandular teeth. (20)
- 20a. Plant usually stellate-hairy; leaves alternate or opposite; capsules usually softly echinate or glandular punctate 15. Mallotus 野桐屬
- 20b. Plant glabrous or pubescent; leaves alternate; capsules unarmed. (21)
- 21a. Leaves leathery, elliptic to oblanceolate; petioles to 1.5 cm; sepals imbricate; stamens 2 – 4; ovules 2 per locule 19. Aporosa 銀柴屬
- 21b. Leaves papery, ovate; petioles to 5–15 cm; sepals valvate; stamens 15–25; ovules 1 per locule 20. Claoxylon 白桐樹屬
- 5b. **Plants with milky juice. [有乳汁] (10 屬)** (22)

- 22a. Leaves without glands at base or at apex of petioles. (23)
- 23a. Branches with leaf scars; flowers in racemes, with sepals, male flowers with petals and disk 21. *Codiaeum* 變葉木屬
- 23b. Branches without leaf scar; flowers in cyathium, without sepal, petal and disk 22. *Euphorbia* 大戟屬
- 22b. Leaves with glands at base or at apex of petioles. (24)
- 24a. Branches, leaves, inflorescences and fruits covered with stellate hairs or scales. (25)
- 25a. Branches with leaf scars; leaves entire; stipules triangular, hairy; calyx cup-shaped; petals absent 23. *Endospermum* 黃桐屬
- 25b. Branches without leaf scars; leaves usually obscurely serrate or lobed; stipules glabrous, caducous; calyx 2 – 5-lobed; petals present. (26)
- 26a. Leaves alternate, opposite or nearly whorled, with glands at apex or sinus of serration; calyx 5-lobed; fruit capsular 24. *Croton* 巴豆屬
- 26b. Leaves alternate, without glands at apex or sinus of serration; calyx 2– 3-fid; fruit drupaceous 25. *Aleurites* 石栗屬
- 24b. Branches, leaves, inflorescences and fruits glabrous or pubescent. (27)
- 27a. Perennial herbs; leaves linear or linear-lanceolate; fruits spinose 26. *Sebastiania* 地楊桃屬
- 27b. Shrubs or trees; leaves otherwise; fruits spineless. (28)
- 28a. Leaves usually lobed, with glands at sinus of lobes; basal veins 3–7; fruit drupaceous 27. *Vernicia* 油桐屬

- 28b. Leaves entire or unlobed, margin eglandular; veins pinnate; fruit capsular. (29)
- 29a. Flowers with petals and disk 28. *Trigonostemon* 三寶木屬
- 29b. Flowers without petals and disk. (30)
- 30a. Plant dioecious; inflorescences axillary; petioles usually eglandular; sepals free in male flowers 29. *Excoecaria* 海漆屬
- 30b. Plant monoecious; inflorescences terminal; petioles biglandular at the tip; calyx of male flowers 2–5 shallowly lobed 30. *Sapium* 烏柏屬

Source from <https://www.herbarium.gov.hk/en/hk-plant-database/plant-detail/index.html?pType=family&oid=600>