

Annual or perennial herbs or undershrubs, prostrate or climbing, mostly with simple or branched tendrils. Leaves exstipulate, petiolate, alternate, lamina entire or palmately, pedately or pinnately divided, rarely compound. Inflorescence paniculate, racemose, umbellate or subumbellate or flowers solitary. Flowers unisexual (plants then monoecious or dioecious), very rarely bisexual, actinomorphic, yellow or white. Sepals mostly 5, united into a rotate, campanulate, saucer-shaped or tubular calyx, adnate to and often produced beyond the ovary in female flowers, with 5, imbricate or open lobes. Petals mostly 5, free or united into a rotate or campanulate corolla, with 5, imbricate or induplicate-valvate, entire or rarely fimbriate lobes. Stamens basically 5, of which 4 mostly connate in pairs, thus giving false impression of only 3 stamens or sometimes 2 or 1 due to cohesions, anthers connate or free, all monothealous when all stamens free, 1 monothealous and other 2 dithealous when stamens 3, thecae straight, curved, flexuous or conduplicate, connective often produced; staminodes often present in female flowers. Carpels (2-) 3 (-5), syncarpous; ovary inferior to semi-inferior, mostly unilocular, rarely more loculed, ovules numerous, anatropous with parietal, fleshy placentas, mostly meeting in the middle; style simple, rarely (2-) 3, free, stigmas (2-) 3, bilobed, thick. Fruit an elongated or globose berry or pepo, rarely capsule, indehiscent or variously dehiscent, smooth or covered with tubercles or prickles. Seeds mostly flattened, occasionally winged, exalbuminous, embryo straight.