

MENISPERMACEAE MOON-SEED FAMILY

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Woody vines or more rarely shrubs, trees or perennial herbs, usually dioecious. LEAVES alternate, simple or rarely trifoliolate, entire or occasionally 3-5-lobed, petiolate, palmate, or occasionally peltate, usually estipulate, palmately or sometimes pinnately veined. INFLORESCENCE racemose to paniculate or umbellate, rarely solitary, commonly bracteate. FLOWERS actinomorphic; sepals (1-)6(-12), often in 2-3 series, distinct or rarely united, imbricate or valvate; petals (0-)6, distinct or rarely united, often in 2-3 series, yellow, white, or green; stamens (1-)6-12(-40), opposite the petals, distinct or the filaments united; pistillate flowers often with staminodia, hypogynous, with (1-)3-6(-32) separate carpels; stigma sessile or on a very short style. FRUIT a 1-seeded drupe or sometimes a nut; endocarp bony, usually curved and sculptured, often laterally compressed. SEED with curved, coiled, or rarely straight embryo. --70-80 genera, 400 spp., mostly tropical.

Cocculus DC. Snail-seed, Coralbead

Woody vines or rarely shrubs or small trees; dioecious. LEAVES simple, entire or sometimes 3-5 lobed, thickened, semi-evergreen, lanceolate to ovate or deltoid, often apically mucronate, the base oblique to cordate; pubescent with 1-2-celled hairs; blades mostly longer than petioles. INFLORESCENCE of axillary racemes, panicles, cymes or thyrses, or the pistillate flowers rarely solitary. FLOWERS small; sepals 6, in 2 series, the inner larger than the outer, sparsely to densely pubescent, the margins fimbriate to erose; petals 6, in 2 series, shorter than the inner sepals, thin to fleshy, each embracing a stamen or staminodium; stamens 6 in staminate flowers, usually nodding inward; staminodia 6 in pistillate flowers, linear; anthers completely or incompletely 4-celled; pistils 6; ovules 2 per carpel but one abortive; style short, pointed; stigma subulate, terete, grooved along the upper surface. FRUIT red to dark purple, globular drupes, 1-6 per flower, glabrous, short-stipitate; endocarp coiled, sculptured, laterally compressed. SEED coiled, crescent-shaped. --Ca 12 spp. worldwide, mostly tropical and subtropical. (Diminutive of Latin *coccus* = berry).

Cocculus diversifolius DC. (diverse leaves) Sarsaparilla, Correhuela. --Vine to 2 m tall. STEMS woody, gray to brown, with short, confluent ridges; younger stems green to gray or brown, finely grooved, with fine, appressed hairs. LEAVES linear to oblong, ovate or suborbicular, minutely mucronate, 2-6(-9) cm long, (0.2-)0.5-2.0(-3.0) cm wide, coriaceous; petiole 0.5-2.0 cm long, with fine appressed hairs; base cordate to rounded or sometimes somewhat hastate; margin entire and slightly revolute; upper surface dull green, glabrous, semi-lustrous, finely reticulate-veined; lower surface pale green, glabrous or slightly puberulent on the veins near the base. INFLORESCENCE a short axillary raceme 1-5 cm long; pedicels 1-6 mm long. FLOWERS 1-3 mm in diameter; sepals greenish, elliptic; petals white to yellowish, 1-2 mm long, ovate to oval, concave, the margin erose; stamens barely included, the filaments erect or incurved; style short; ovary incurved in fruit. FRUIT fleshy, solitary or in clusters of 2-6, dark purple to bluish-black, glaucous, 5-6 mm in diameter. SEED 3-4 mm in diameter, 1.5-2.0 mm thick; ventral side with rugose transverse ridges. [*Cebatha diversifolia* (DC.) Kuntze; *Epibaterium diversifolium* (DC.) Tidestr.]. --Along roadsides and in washes and woodlands: Pima, Santa Cruz cos.; 1000-1500 m (3200-5000 ft); May-Aug; NM, TX; s to Oax., Mex.