

PAEONIA DECOMPOSITA

Posted on 2017, October 4th by khurtekant

For images please visit the website.



Paeonia decomposita (footnote: Hong, De-Yuan. "Peonies of the World. Polymorphism and diversity." Kew: Royal Botanic Gardens, 2011, p. 12.)

Shrubs to 1.8 m tall, glabrous throughout. Stems up to 2 cm in diameter. Lower leaves mostly triternate-pinnate, ternate-bipinnate, biternate-bipinnate, with 29–65 leaflets; terminal leaflets elliptic to orbicular, 3-partite to the base or 3-lobed, terminal lobes 3-lobed; lateral leaflets elliptic to orbicular, 3-lobed or coarsely toothed. Flowers solitary, terminal, 10–15 cm wide. Involucrate bracts 2–5, mostly 2 or 3, unequal, linear-lanceolate. Sepals 3–5, green, broadly obovate, all caudate at the apex. Petals 9–12, rose, obovate, 4–7 cm long, 3–5 cm wide. Disk leathery, enveloping half of carpels at anthesis, white or yellowish, with triangular teeth. Carpels always 5, very rarely 4 or 3, glabrous, green or purple; styles 1–2.5 mm long; stigmas red. Follicles black-brown when mature, ellipsoid. 2–4 cm long, 1.3–1.7 cm in diameter. Seeds black, glossy, broadly ellipsoid or globose, 8–10 mm long, 6–8 mm in diameter.

Chromosome number: $2n = 10$ (diploid).

Paeonia decomposita was observed to grow in thickets, young secondary forests or sparse coniferous forests with *Cotoneaster soongaricus* (Regel) Popov, *Rosa willmottiae* Hemsl., *Berberis polyantha* Hemsl., and *Cupressus chengiana* S. Y. Hu, as well as species of *Lespedeza*, *Rhamnus* L. and *Quercus* L., on cliffs and rocks at altitudes from 2,050 to 3,100 m. This species is confined to the Dadu River Valley of northwestern Sichuan in China.

All images below taken by Carsten Burkhardt from his peony travels in China (2006). www.paeo.de