

*Schinus* L. PEPPER TREE

*Schinus molle* L., CALIFORNIA PEPPER TREE, PERUVIAN PEPPER TREE. Tree, evergreen, with flexible, spreading to pendent terminal branches, in range 4–13(–18) m tall; dioecious; shoots puberulent when very young, retaining hairs on axes and leaflet veins and margins, strongly aromatic when cut or crushed (having resin ducts with terpenes); bark coarsely fissured, ± tightly adherent, tannish brown. **Stems:** young stems cylindric with faint ridges and wrinkles, often turning red on exposed surfaces. **Leaves:** helically alternate, odd-1-pinnately compound with (6–)10–40 subopposite or alternate lateral leaflets, petiolate, without stipules; petiole 25–65 mm long; blade in outline narrowly triangular-lanceolate, 100–300 × 60–130 mm, rachis somewhat flattened on upper side with raised midrib, leaflets on edge of rachis to 20 mm apart, lateral leaflets sessile, blades of leaflets linear-lanceolate to lanceolate, 10–80 × 2.5–11.5 mm, the longest = the basal leaflets and the shortest = the terminal leaflet, 2 halves of a leaflet blade unequal, tapered and slightly asymmetric at base, entire or serrate on margins with 1–4 teeth on each edge, acuminate at tip with fine point that blackens, pinnately veined with midrib scarcely raised on mature blade, becoming glabrescent with hairs remaining mostly on margins. **Inflorescences:** panicle of cymes, unisexual, axillary and terminal, 60–250 mm long, open, lax to pendent on lateral branchlets, many-flowered, bracteate, minutely puberulent; peduncle 15–45 mm long continuing as a somewhat zigzagged rachis (staminate) or straight rachis (pistillate); bract subtending lateral branchlet minute, red, thin, early-deciduous; lateral branchlet with short internodes, having pulvinuslike thickening at base (staminate); bract subtending each fork and bractlet subtending each pedicel short, reduced upward, abscising while in bud; pedicel < 1 mm, glabrous. **Staminate flower:** radial, 3–4 mm across; **calyx** (4–)5-lobed, cup-shaped, 0.7–1 mm long, green; tube to midpoint; lobes obtuse, 0.7–1 mm wide, whitish and short-ciliate on margins; **petals** (4–)5, spreading, broadly elliptic to ovate, 1.5–2.1 × 0.9–1.2 mm, pale yellowish green becoming brown along midvein, obtuse at tip, margins eventually folding inward; **stamens** (8)10 in 2 whorls, free, arising between lobes of nectary, outer whorl > inner whorl and exerted; filaments 1.3–1.7 mm long (long stamens) and ca. 0.7 mm long (short stamens), ascending between lobes of nectary; anthers dorsifixed, dithecal, 0.7–0.9 mm long, yellow, longitudinally dehiscent; pollen yellow; **nectary disc** ringlike, short-crenately (8)10-lobed, ca. 1.5 mm diameter, fleshy, with each filament appressed into a notch between nectary lobes, yellowish green aging orangish along edges; **pistil** vestigial, sterile, with dark maroon style. **Pistillate flower:** radial, ca. 4 mm across; **calyx** 5-lobed, cup-shaped, 0.7–1 mm long, green; tube to midpoint; lobes obtuse, 0.7–1 mm wide, whitish and short-ciliate on margins, persistent beneath fruit; **petals** 5, widely spreading, broadly elliptic to ovate, 1.8–2.4 × 1–1.2 mm, pale yellow, rounded at tip; **stamens** 10 in 2 whorls, free, vestigial, sterile; filaments < 0.8 mm long; anthers pale yellow, lacking pollen; **nectary disc** ringlike, short-crenately 10-lobed, ca. 1.5 mm diameter, fleshy, yellowish green; **pistil** 1; ovary superior, spheric, to 1 mm, green, glabrous, with base hidden by nectary, 1-chambered with 1 ovule; styles 3–4, fused at base, club-shaped, < 0.5 mm long, greenish; stigmas somewhat orange aging deep maroon. **Fruit:** drupelike, dry at maturity, with 1 stone, spheroid, 4.5–6(–8) mm, vivid-red or rose-red to pink, glabrous; outer shell (exocarp) leathery becoming dry and brittle; pulp (mesocarp) resinous, aromatic, drying to

form a sticky coating on stone; stone (endocarp) shriveled ovoid or spheroid, 3–4.5 mm long, very hard. January–December.

Naturalized. Evergreen tree escaped from cultivation throughout the range along roadsides and landscaped properties via fruits or also cloning from root sprouts. *Schinus molle*, California pepper tree, is easily recognized as light green and having long-pendent terminal branches, inflorescences, and fruit clusters. This is a dioecious species, and flowers of either sex may be found any day of the year. To date no attempts have been made to control this species, because it does not appear to be invasive.

B. A. Prigge & A. C. Gibson