

Spenceria

Spenceria ramalana is the lone species in the plant genus *Spenceria*,^[3] known by two varieties.^[2] *S. ramalana* grows from 18–32 cm. tall, and puts out yellow flowers from July through August; bearing fruit (yellowish-brown achenes) from September to October.^[2] The Chinese name, *ma ti huang* [马蹄黄],^[2] can be translated to mean "yellow horseshoe".^[4]

Henry Trimen, both the genus, and binomial authority of *Spenceria*, and *S. ramalana*, respectively, gave an explanation of how he arrived at these names: the genus name was given in honor of Trimen's friend, and fellow botanist, Spencer Moore, who was employed at Kew Herbarium. Trimen thought about choosing a name commemorating the collector of the species, one Captain Gill, R.E., but decided against it, as there already was a genus *Gilia* (*Polemoniaceae*), and he wished to avoid, in his words, "the formation of another of precisely similar sound."^[5] As the species was collected from a mountain named Ra-Ma-La,^[5] it is likely that the specific epithet "*ramalana*" was chosen as a toponym (the suffix "-ana" meaning "belonging to", hence "from Ra-Ma-La").

Spenceria ramalana is native to Bhutan and China (in the provinces of Sichuan, Xizang (Tibet), and Yunnan).^[1]

Spenceria ramalana inhabits limestone soil on montane slopes and meadows (elev. 3000–5000 m.).^[2]

Both varieties of *S. ramalana* have been used locally in traditional folk medicine.^[2]

