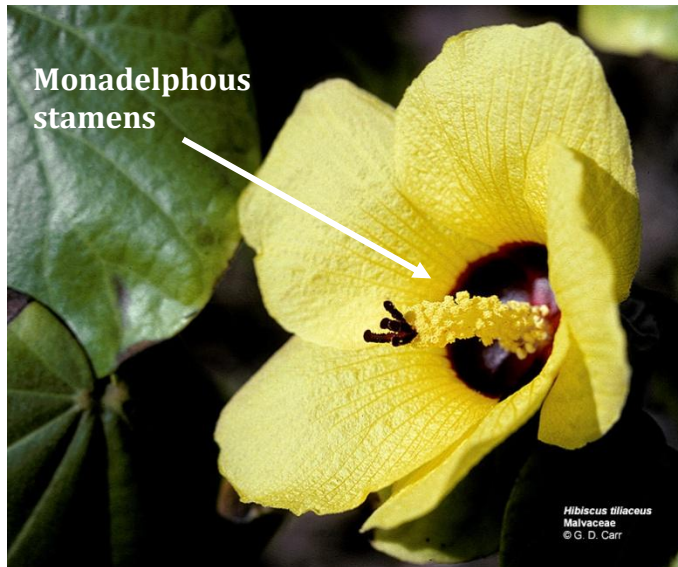


Malvaceae

The Mallow Family

250 genera

4,200 species



Distribution:

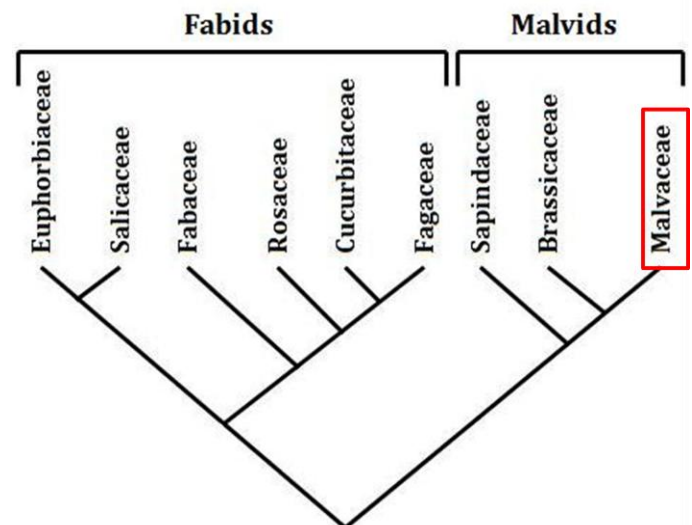
A cosmopolitan family, though primarily tropical and subtropical. About 75% of the species occur in the New World. Most occur in the savanna, scrub and forest edge.

Economic Uses:

- Cotton (*Gossypium*) is the major economic commodity produced by this family.
- Also, the seeds of *Theobroma cacao* are used to produce chocolate.

- In the horticulture industry, many members of Malvaceae are significant. For example, species of the genus *Hibiscus* are common flowering shrubs.

Rosids: Reduced Phylogeny of Required Families



Characteristic features:

- Trees, shrubs, lianas and herbs.
- Vegetative parts with mucilage.
- Leaves often palmately veined and lobed or palmately compound; stellate hairs.
- Basic inflorescence unit: a modified, 3-bracted cyme.
- Flowers often associated with conspicuous bracts forming an epicalyx.
- Flowers: 5 petals & sepals; calyx valvate; 5 to many stamens, monadelphous or polyadelphous; 2 to many connate carpels in a superior ovary.
- Nectaries of densely packed, multicellular glandular hairs, usually on sepals.
- Fruit usually a loculicidal capsule but can also be a berry, samara, schizocarp or drupe.

References for further inquiry:

- Brummitt, R.K. *Vascular Plant Families and Genera*. Richmond, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew (1992).
- Heywood, V.H., Brummitt, R.K., Culham, A., & Seberg, O. Malvaceae. Pp. 201-203. In: *Flowering Plant Families of the World*. New York, Firefly Books (2007).