A large glabrous or sparingly pubescent woody herb or subshrub up to 5 m, rarely more. Root tubers to 50 cm long, farinaceous. Bark smooth, often reddish. Young shoots greenish-grey. Petioles 5-13 (-17) cm long. Leaves deeply palmati-partite, 3-5 (-8)-partite, rarely simple, shallowly cordate, sometimes slightly peltate, the lobes oblanceolate, 6-17 x 1-6 cm, acuminate, attenuate to the base, entire, lateral nerves up to 18 pairs, dark green above, glaucous beneath. Stipules triangular-lanceolate, 5 mm long, soon falling. Inflorescences up to 11 cm long; bracts resembling the stipules. Male flowers: pedicels decurved, 5 mm long; bud cylindric-conic; calyx-lobes triangular, 6 x 4 mm, subacute, greenish, tinged orange and crimson and sometimes veined with purple; long filaments 7 mm long, short ones 2.5 mm long, slender, white, anthers 1.5 mm long, pale yellow; disc concave, 10-lobed, the lobes acute. Female flowers: pedicels decurved, 7 mm long, extending to 2.5 cm and thickening in fruit; sepals triangular-ovate, 10 x 5 mm, otherwise as in the ; disc shallowly 5-lobed; ovary 2 x 2 mm, 6-winged or -angled, pink; styles botryoidal, 2 mm long. Fruits ellipsoid-subglobose, 1.5-1.7 x 1.5 cm, rugulose, 6-winged. Seeds ellipsoid, 11 x 5.5 x 3.5 mm, pale grey, sometimes mottled; caruncle 3 mm wide.