



Phytochemical Analysis and Medicinal Properties of Some Selected Traditional Medicinal Plants

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ABSTRACT

Interest in and awareness of health attributes by natural resources such as herbs, spices, and fruits have resulted in increased consumption of natural products for a safe and effective resolution for illness and also promoting good health. Plants are rich in diverse chemical substances, including polyphenols, flavonoids, and xanthenes, many of which have demonstrated medicinal effects or pharmacological benefits. Chinese clinical studies have identified many useful plants that can increase the effectiveness of modern drug treatment and reduce its side effects. The scientific basis for using traditional medicinal plants such as *Garcinia mangostana*, *Lycium barbarum*, *Momordica grosvenori*, and *Psidium guajava* has been established. Therefore, this review research aims to highlight these four traditional medicinal plants' chemical components and medicinal effects.

Keywords: Medicinal properties; Phytochemical; *Garcinia mangostana*; *Lycium barbarum*; *Momordica grosvenori*; *Psidium guajava*

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INTRODUCTION

In many parts of the world, ethnomedicines focus on traditional medical intervention and the interpretation of health and diseases by indigenous populations (Díaz-de-Cerio et al., 2017). In addition, it addresses the process of seeking healthcare and the practices associated with healing. Medicinal plants have been used to treat human diseases for thousands of years, and this practice is even more common nowadays. Medical plants usually have a more permanent and stronger long-term effect without bringing any side effects to our bodies compared to synthetic medications. *Garcinia mangostana*, *Lycium barbarum*, *Momordica grosvenori*, and *Psidium guajava* are four important traditional medicinal plants in Southeast Asia (Fig. 1). Due to their widespread usage as herbal medicines, this group of plants is currently being studied to discover new bioactive compounds (Ansori et al., 2020; Zhao et al., 2020; Kaur et al., 2020; Tun et al., 2020).

G. mangostana Linn (purple mangosteen) contains xanthenes as one of its main compounds (Dharmayani et

al., 2022). There are several xanthenes that have been studied extensively: a-, b-, and c-angostins, garcinone E, 8-deoxygartanin, and gartanin (Pedraza-Chaverri et al., 2008) which possess a wide range of health-promoting properties, including antioxidant (Krisanti et al., 2021), anti-inflammatory (Gondokesumo et al., 2020), antimicrobial (Pohan & Rahmawati, 2022) as well as anticancer properties (Nauman & Johnson, 2022).

L. barbarum L. (goji) is rich in zeaxanthin, which exists as dipalmitate (Tang et al., 2011) and polysaccharide protein. Moreover, various bioactive components (hydrophilic, lipophilic) were also isolated from goji (Zhang et al., 2021a; Liu et al., 2022). According to Chinese medicinal monographs, *L. barbarum* fruits were recorded as nourishing the liver and kidney (Byambasuren et al., 2019), and enhancing eyesight (Liu et al., 2022). More functions were reported as anti-oxidation (Liu et al., 2020; Shori & Baba, 2023), anticancer (Qi et al., 2022), anti-inflammatory (Liu et al., 2021), anti-diabetes properties (Luo et al., 2004) and antihypertensive activity (Shori et al., 2021a).

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Fig. 1: Pictures of *Garcinia mangostana*, *Mormodica grosvenori*, *Lycium barbarum*, and *Psidium guajava*.

The sweetness of *M. grosvenori* fruit (monk fruit) or (luo han guo) is attributed to mogrosides as a main bioactive component (Shen et al., 2014). Studies on *M. grosvenori* have demonstrated a wide pharmacological spectrum, including antioxidant, anticancer, and antidiabetic properties (Chen et al., 2019; Li et al., 2022).

A variety of phytochemicals have been isolated from *Psidium guajava* L. leaves, such as essential oils, phenols, flavonoids, and quercetin with their derivatives (Weli et al., 2019). These compounds exhibit biological properties, including antioxidant, antitumoral, antiallergic, Antidiabetic, Antimicrobial, and Anti-diarrhoeal (Koriem et al., 2019; Riaz et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2021). Recently, there has been a surge in the development of pharmaceutical drugs based on the therapeutic benefits of medicinal plants. In addition, Chinese clinical studies have identified many useful plants that can increase the effectiveness of modern drug treatment and reduce its side effects (Shori, 2015; Kee et al., 2017; Shori et al., 2021b). Since medicinal plants have been proven to have excellent properties in maintaining health, the purpose of this research is to highlight the chemical components and medicinal effects of the four traditional medicinal plants i.e. *Garcinia mangostana*, *Lycium barbarum*, *Momordica grosvenori*, and *Psidium guajava*.

Traditional Medicinal Plants

Garcinia mangostana Linn.

The *G. mangostana* L. fruit simply called "purple mangosteen", is a seasonal tropical fruit with white and juicy edible pulps which are protectively covered by a thick layer of dark purple pericarp (Pedraza-Chaverri et al., 2008). Mangosteen trees are primarily distributed in Southeast Asia, such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia, because of geographical and climate factors. It belongs to the family Guttiferae (or Clusiaceae) characterized by having secretory cavities and/or canals throughout most of the plant body (Pedraza-Chaverri et al., 2008). Change in color of the mangosteen pericarp from light greenish yellow into dark purple or reddish is seen over the ripening

period. Munawaroh et al., (2016) found that the purple color of mangosteen pericarp is caused by the presence of anthocyanins. More surprisingly, it was found that the pericarp of mangosteen is the most nutritious part of mangosteen fruits but not the white pulps. It is rich in bioactive secondary metabolites, such as xanthenes and oligomeric proanthocyanins, in considerable quantities (Fu et al., 2007), with α -, β - and γ - mangostin having high priority in terms of relative abundance (Suttirak & Manurakchinakorn, 2014). In contrast to mangosteen pericarp, the pulps of mangosteen relatively lack essential macro- and micronutrients. Dietary Reference Intake (DRI) values and some vitamins and minerals are too low to be detectable. Still, they are a good source of carbohydrates and dietary fiber (Gross & Crown, 2007).

Chemical Components

Xanthenes are a class of polyphenolic compounds with a similar chemical structure to bioflavonoids (Fig. 2) and have great biological activity (Pedraza-Chaverri et al., 2008). Xanthenes endow mangosteen with significant antioxidant activity, with its oxygen radical absorbance capacity (ORAC) values falling between 17,000 and 24,000 $\mu\text{mol TE/g}$ (Suttirak & Manurakchinakorn, 2014). In addition to xanthenes, tannins such as condensed tannins (proanthocyanidins) and hydrolysable tannins in the pericarp of mangosteens have the ability to bind and precipitate protein (Moosophon et al., 2010). The condensed tannins are resistant to enzymatic degradation. Acid hydrolysis of condensed tannins leads to the production of a small amount of anthocyanidins and amorphous phlobaphens (tannins red) (Moosophon et al., 2010). In contrast, hydrolysable tannins can be easily hydrolyzed by weak acids to yield sugars and phenol carboxylic acid such as gallic acid. Other phytochemicals that exist in mangosteen pericarp are garcimangosone D, benzophenones, aristophenones, depsidones, polysaccharides, and terpenoids (Gross & Crown, 2007).

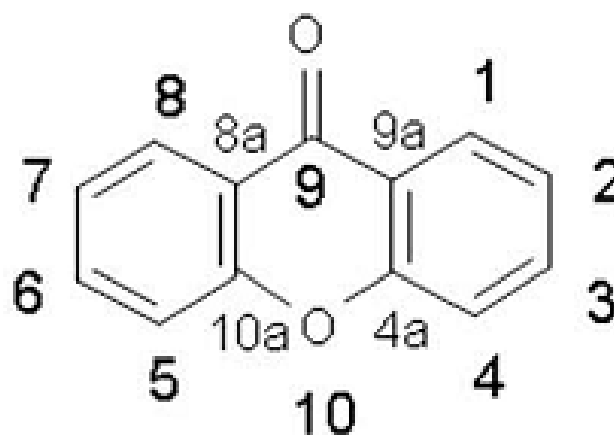


Fig. 2: Chemical structure of xanthone nucleus (Masters & Bräse, 2012).

Medicinal Properties of *G. mangostana*

Antioxidant Properties

Together with other components such as sterols, catechins, xanthenes, and their derivatives react with the free radicals generated during oxidation stress (Chavan &

Muth, 2021). Free radicals are active and attack cellular components, resulting in cellular damage. α -Mangostin reduced light-density lipoprotein (LDL) oxidation and α -tocopherol consumption in humans (Ibrahim et al., 2017; Chavan & Muth, 2021). The antioxidant analysis revealed that the pericarp extract of *G. mangostana* offers significant health benefits, particularly through its potent antioxidant properties. (Geetha et al., 2020; Krisanti et al., 2021). This effect is attributed to the presence of flavonoids and polyphenols, which help reduce the generation of reactive oxygen species (ROS) within cells (Wimanshinee et al., 2021; Fadhila et al., 2022).

Antitumoral Properties

Xanthones, a class of polyphenolic compounds found in *Garcinia mangostana* (mangosteen), exhibit significant antitumor properties through multiple mechanisms. Studies by Herdiana et al. (2021) and Vania et al. (2021) showed that mangosteen extracts containing α -mangostin inhibit breast cancer cell growth and induce apoptosis by interfering with cellular signaling pathways that regulate cell proliferation. These compounds modulate PI3K/AKT and MAPK pathways, commonly implicated in cancer progression. It inhibits the PI3K/Akt pathway signaling, reducing cancer cell proliferation (Nauman & Johnson, 2022). Inhibition of this pathway results in decreased activity of downstream proteins that regulate cell cycle progression, effectively halting the growth of cancer cells. Furthermore, xanthones have also demonstrated an ability to inhibit cancer metastasis. The anti-metastatic activity of α -mangostin was associated with downregulation of mRNA expression of MMP-2 and MMP-9 through

inhibiting NF κ B and Akt pathways (Wang, 2012).

Studies on liver cancer and colorectal adenocarcinoma have shown that α -mangostin induces apoptosis by activating the caspase cascade, leading to cell death (Ong et al., 2020; Veeraraghavan et al., 2020). Apoptosis, or programmed cell death, is often dysregulated in cancer cells, allowing them to survive and proliferate indefinitely. Xanthones can restore this process by upregulating pro-apoptotic proteins (e.g., Bax, caspase-3) and downregulating anti-apoptotic proteins (e.g., Bcl-2; Gunter et al., 2023). In addition, xanthones exhibit anti-inflammatory properties by inhibiting pro-inflammatory cytokines (e.g., TNF- α , IL-6), thus potentially reducing the inflammatory environment that promotes cancer growth and progression (Gunter et al., 2020).

In summary, α -mangostin and other xanthones from *Garcinia mangostana* exhibit potent antitumor activities by targeting cancer cell proliferation, inducing apoptosis, inhibiting metastasis, and providing anti-inflammatory and antioxidant benefits, making them promising agents for cancer therapy (Nauman & Johnson, 2022).

Lycium barbarum

α -Mangostin has inhibitory effects on histamine release and prostaglandins synthesis, both of which are important factors in regulating allergic inflammation (Pedraza-Chaverri et al., 2008). Inflammation has negative impacts on the human body. For instance, it may stimulate the transformation of abnormal cells into cancer cells, destabilize cholesterol deposits, damage nerve cells, etc. Several anti-inflammatory activities of *G. mangostana* Linn are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Anti-inflammatory effects of *Garcinia mangostana* Linn. (GML).

Effects	References
In several experimental models of inflammation in rats and guinea pigs showed anti-inflammatory effects by α -Mangostin.	Gopalakrishnan (1980)
The crude methanol extract from GM legume blocked the histaminergic and serotonergic response in isolated rabbit aorta strips. The histaminergic response was blocked by α -mangostin and c-mangostin blocked the serotonergic response.	Chairungrilerd et al. (1996a)
α -Mangostin ameliorates the histamine-induced contraction of the aorta and trachea from male guinea pigs.	Chairungrilerd et al. (1996b)
c-Mangostin inhibits 5-fluoro-a-methyltryptamine (5-FMT)-induced head twitch response in mice by blocking 5HT2A receptors.	Chairungrilerd et al. (1997)
c-Mangostin is a 5HT2A receptor antagonist in vascular smooth muscles and platelets.	Chairungrilerd et al. (1998)
c-Mangostin inhibited A2318 induced PGE2 release in C6 cells and arachidonic acid conversion to PGE2 in isolated microsomes as well as the activities of both constitutive COX-1 and inducible COX-2.	Nakatani et al. (2002a)
Extracts of <i>mangosteen</i> pod inhibited histamine release in RBL-2H3 cells and decreased A23187 induced PGE2 synthesis in C6 rat glioma cells.	Nakatani et al. (2002b)
inhibited COX-1 and -2 activity and PGE2 synthesis in C6 rat glioma cells was inhibited by c-Mangostin (a), LPS-induced expression of COX-2 protein and its mRNA was inhibited by c-Mangostin (b), c- Mangostin (c), reduced the LPS-inducible activation of NF- κ B, and c- Mangostin (d), inhibited rat carrageenan-induced paw edema.	Nakatani et al. (2004)
PGE2 was induced by A23187 and LPS induced transcription of NF κ B- mediated in C6 rat glioma cells that A23187 and LPS was reduced by garcinone B.	Yamakuni et al. (2006)
α -Mangostin inhibits human 12-LOX.	Deschamps et al. (2007)
LPS-stimulated cytotoxicity was inhibited by α - and c-mangostins. α - Mangostin showed potent inhibition on paw oedema in mice.	Chen et al. (2008)
Anti-inflammatory activity has been shown by α -mangostin, 1- isomangostin, and mangostin triacetate in several experimental models in rats.	Mansour, (2013)
An animal model of peripheral LPS-induced neuroinflammation showed a reduced level of interleukin-6 (IL-6), cyclooxygenase-2 (COX-2), and 18 kDa translocator protein (TSPO).	Catorce et al. (2016)
Anti-inflammatory activity by α -mangostin inhibited the production of PGE2, nitric oxide, iNOS protein expression, TNF- α , and IL-6 cytokines, and COX-2 enzymes in RAW 264.7 cells	Mohan et al. (2018)
GME dramatically suppresses the expression of pro-inflammatory cytokines namely, TNF- α , IL-6, and IL-1 β via the TLR-2 pathway, and also promote the wound healing process.	Tatiya-Aphiradee et al. (2019)
Mangosteen and propolis extracts worked well together as an anti-inflammatory and <i>in vitro</i> bone-forming agent.	Lim et al. (2020)
Mangosteen peel extract has four primary chemicals with anti-inflammatory which play a role in the healing process of burns through signaling the interleukin 6 pathway, epidermal growth factor, and transforming growth factors beta 1, which controls the growth of epithelial cells.	Gondokesumo et al. (2020)

Antimicrobial Properties

Several studies have highlighted the efficacy of mangosteen extract, particularly α -mangostin, against pathogenic bacteria like *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus* (Pohan & Rahmawati, 2022; So-In & Sunthamala, 2022). α -Mangostin exhibits antibacterial activity by disrupting bacterial membranes. It inserts into the lipid bilayer of bacterial cell membranes, increasing membrane permeability and leading to the leakage of cellular contents, ultimately causing bacterial death (Phuong et al., 2017). Phuong et al., (2017) demonstrated that α -mangostin with a purity that exceeded 98%, had minimal inhibitory concentrations between 4.6 and 9.2 $\mu\text{mol/L}$ for *Staphylococcus aureus* (*S. aureus*), methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA), and methicillin-sensitive *S. aureus* (MSSA). According to Phitaktim et al., (2016), the benzene ring and the isoprenyl group of α -mangostin may play a significant role in inhibiting the growth of MRSA strains by direct interactions with the membrane. Furthermore, it has been observed that α -mangostin can inhibit enzymes involved in glycolysis, such as aldolase, glyceraldehyde-3-phosphate dehydrogenase, and lactate dehydrogenase, in *Streptococcus mutans*, further compromising bacterial survival (Nguyen & Marquis, 2011). Guzmán-Beltrán et al. (2016), showed that α -mangostin directly inhibits *M. tuberculosis* growth in a liquid medium with Minimal Inhibitory Concentrations (MIC) of 62 $\mu\text{g/mL}$. Besides, polysaccharides from the rind enhance polymorphonuclear phagocytes' activity against *Salmonella enteritidis* (Karim & Tangpong, 2018).

Mangosteen extracts have been shown to possess potent antifungal activity, particularly against pathogenic fungi (Abd Murad et al., 2022; Ye et al., 2020). Mohamed et al. (2014), reported that xanthenes exhibited their antifungal effect through the inhibition of sterol biosynthesis and lowering levels of ergosterol, compromising the integrity of fungal cell membranes.

Mangosteen and its bioactive compounds have shown potential antiviral effects (Sugiyanto et al., 2019). Xanthenes have also been shown to prevent viral entry into host cells by interacting with viral envelope proteins or host cell surface receptors, blocking the virus from attaching and penetrating cells (Ansori et al., 2024). Ansori et al. (2022) demonstrated the potential therapeutic benefits of α -mangostin and γ -mangostin, extracted from mangosteen in inhibiting SARS-CoV-2 proteases.

Lycium barbarum

L. barbarum refers to Chinese wolfberry, which is widely recognized as goji or goji berry (Bagheri et al., 2021). It is classified under the same family as tomatoes, i.e., Solanaceae. These small, red berries primarily grow in the north-central part of China, Tibet, and Mongolia (Gao et al., 2017). Goji is a key component of traditional Chinese medicine and is also used in Chinese cooking to boost nutritional content and improve flavor. Other parts of the *L. barbarum* plant, for example, the root bark, is used for the purpose of treating cough and bleeding disorder whereas the leaves can be used as a tea substitute (Potterat, 2010).

Chemical Components

Goji, celebrated as a superfood, is highly nutrient-dense and contains a range of beneficial compounds. It is rich in beta-carotene, beta-sitosterol, linoleic acid, and sesquiterpenoids such as cyperone and solavetivone, along with tetraterpenoids like zeaxanthin and physalin. Additionally, goji provides immunologically active polysaccharides and betaine (Toyoda-Ono et al., 2004). According to Shi et al. (2017), treatment with *L. barbarum* polysaccharide (40mg/kg) in diabetic mice significantly improved sperm parameters. Additionally, antioxidant enzyme activity increased to varying degrees, expression of caspase-3 decreased, and the Bcl-2/Bax ratio rose compared to untreated diabetic mice. The fruit is abundant in vitamins and minerals, with vitamin C levels potentially up to 500 times greater than those found in oranges (Jeszka-Skowron et al., 2017). It also includes vitamins B1, B2, B6, and E (Szot et al., 2020), and contains 21 trace minerals, including calcium, iron, zinc, phosphorus, selenium, and germanium (Proestos, 2018). Goji provides 18 amino acids, eight of which are essential, with L-leucine present in notably high concentrations (Chen et al., 2017). The polysaccharides in *L. barbarum* can be either water-soluble, such as glucurono- β -glucan and β -glucan, or water-insoluble, including xylo- β -glucan, xylomann- β -glucan, hetero- β -glucan, and manno- β -glucan (Shori et al., 2021c). High-performance liquid chromatography (HPLC) analysis reveals that LBP consists primarily of glucose and fructose in a 1:2 molar ratio (Lu & Zhao, 2010), while other polysaccharide compounds in *L. barbarum* contain over 100 monosaccharide units.

Zeaxanthin, the major carotenoid in goji (Fig. 3), exists as dipalmitate (Tang et al., 2011). It is mainly found in the macular pigment of the eye with a concentration 85 times higher than its concentration in blood (Manikandan et al., 2016). Another predominant carotenoid pigment in goji is β -carotene, an important precursor for the biosynthesis of vitamin A and also serves as an antioxidant. Goji contains about 7mg of β -carotene per 100 grams of its dried fruits (Gross & Crown, 2007).

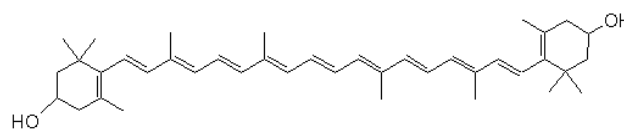


Fig. 3: The chemical structure of zeaxanthin (Roberts & Dennison, 2015).

Medicinal Properties of *L. barbarum*

Antioxidant Properties

L. barbarum (*L. Goji*) is abundant in antioxidants and phytochemicals, including beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, beta-cryptoxanthin, lutein, lycopene, and fatty acids such as linoleic, palmitic, and oleic acids (Skenderidis et al., 2019; Shori et al., 2021d). These substances help mitigate cellular damage caused by free radicals, thus contributing to longer cell lifespan (Baba et al., 2014). *L. barbarum* exhibits the highest levels of free radical scavenging activity, specifically against 2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl and 2,2'-azino-bis (3-ethylbenzthiazoline-sulfonic acid; Henning et al., 2014; Mocan et al., 2014; Byambasuren et al., 2019).

Polysaccharides extracted from dried *L. barbarum* (LBPs) demonstrate strong antioxidant properties in the mitochondrial membranes of rat liver *in vitro*. Li et al. (2007) reported that LBPs significantly protect against radiation-induced loss of protein thiols and inactivation of SOD, CAT, and GSH-Px. Additionally, Feng et al. (2001) indicated that *L. barbarum* is effective in protecting the retina from oxidative injury in diabetic individuals. Castrica et al. (2020) observed that 3% w/w of Goji supplementation in rabbits was associated with reduced lipid oxidation. The antioxidant properties of *L. barbarum* are well-documented and offer notable health benefits, particularly due to its hydrophilic components like ascorbic acid, total phenolics, and total flavonoids, as well as lipophilic components such as total carotenoids (Zhang et al., 2021a; Liu et al., 2020).

Antidiabetic Properties

L. barbarum has demonstrated anti-diabetic properties, including its ability to decrease oxidative stress in individuals with retinopathy (Byambasuren et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2022). Additionally, the polysaccharides found in *L. barbarum* help lower glucose absorption in the intestines and support insulin release (Huizhen, 2020; Shori et al., 2021d). In diabetic rabbits' studies, a water extract of *L. barbarum* fruit (250mg/kg.d) effectively lowered blood glucose levels and exhibited significant hypoglycemic effects (Luo et al., 2004). Moreover, the protein component of *L. barbarum* (10mg/kg.d) has shown insulin-mimetic impact, helping to reduce blood sugar levels and enhance fat metabolism by increasing glucose transporter 4 (GLUT4) on the cell surface, improving GLUT4 trafficking, and boosting intracellular insulin signaling (Zhao et al., 2005).

Anti-inflammatory

Consumption of *L. barbarum* has been shown to provide anti-inflammatory effects by targeting TLR4 and NF- κ B pathways (Fig. 4), modulating the expression of inflammatory markers such as TNF- α and IL-6, and mitigating damage to the liver and intestines (Ávila et al., 2020; Liu et al., 2021). These anti-inflammatory benefits may be attributed to acacetin-7-O-rutinoside, luteolin-7-O-glucoside, chlorogenic acid, and wolfberry polysaccharides (Zhang et al., 2019). Additionally, 5% of *L. barbarum* has demonstrated protective effects for the skin against immune suppression and oxidative stress when consumed for two weeks before UV exposure (Reeve et al., 2010).

Anticancer

L. barbarum polysaccharides (LBPs) exhibit anti-tumor properties by boosting the levels of CD4(+) and CD8(+) T cells within tumor-infiltrating lymphocytes. This action helps counteract immunosuppression and strengthens the body's anti-tumor immune response (Kulczyński and Gramza-Michałowska 2016). Additionally, research by Qi et al. (2022) demonstrated that LBPs can inhibit apoptosis in MCF-7 human breast cancer cells by activating ERK and p53 pathways. *In vitro*, *L. barbarum* polysaccharide at doses ranging from 20 to 1000 mg/L inhibited the growth of human leukemia HL-60 cells and decreased the membrane fluidity (Zhang et al., 2005).

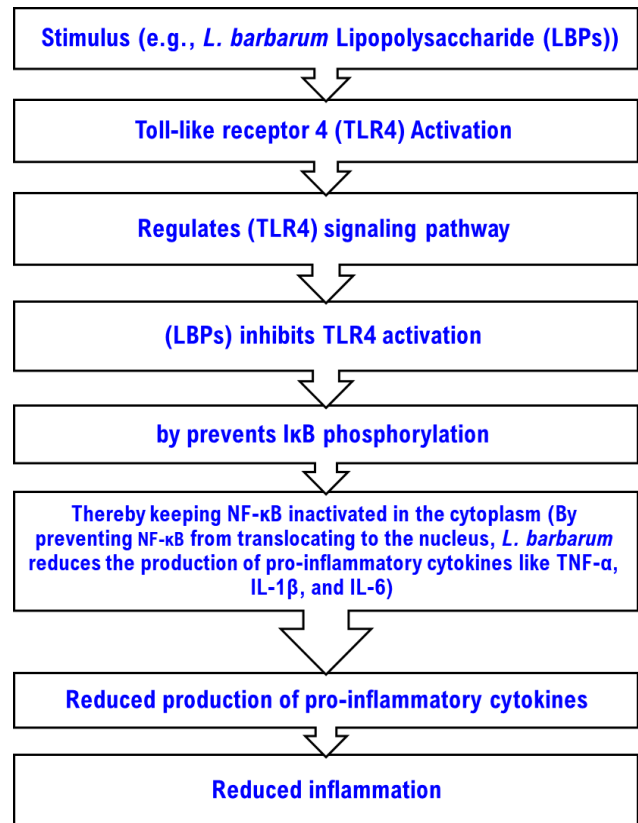


Fig. 4: The pathway illustrates the anti-inflammatory effect of *L. barbarum* by targeting the TLR4/NF- κ B signaling axis (Gan et al., 2018; Linghu et al., 2020).

Eye Health Benefits

Oral intake of 250–280 g of *L. barbarum* has been shown to mitigate the loss of retinal ganglion cells (RGCs), though it does not significantly affect elevated intraocular pressure (IOP) (Chan et al., 2007). This indicates that *L. barbarum* may offer therapeutic potential in preventing retinal neurodegeneration associated with ocular hypertension, making it a promising candidate for developing neuroprotective treatments for glaucoma-related RGC loss (Li et al., 2007). Additionally, the lutein and zeaxanthin found in *L. barbarum* have been observed to restore visual functions in models of light-induced phototoxicity and macular degeneration. These compounds likely protect RGCs by counteracting neuronal apoptosis induced by glutamate and nitric oxide (NO) in the retina (Rhee, 2010). Several studies have found that the polysaccharides, polyphenols, carotenoids, and amino acids of *L. barbarum* protect the eyes from disease by scavenging oxygen free radicals. (Liu et al., 2022; Lin & Wu, 2022). Additional research has shown that 10mg/kg of *L. barbarum* offers protective effects against light-induced damage in various retinal layers, including the stem cell pyramid layer, the outer nuclear layer, and the retinal pigment epithelium in rats (Luo et al., 2006).

Immune System

Four main bioactive *L. barbarum* polysaccharides (LBP) i.e. LBP1, LBP2, LBP3, and LBP4 in goji are known to help strengthen the immune system through increased T cells, cytotoxic T cells, and natural killer cells activity (Deng et al.,

2018). These polysaccharides have chemical structures similar to the compounds present in maitake mushrooms and *Echinacea*. Polysaccharides LBP1, LBP2, LBP3, and LBP4 are glycoconjugates, serving as the sources of essential cell nutrients (glucose, galactose, mannose, xylose, rhamnose, and arabinose; Yong et al., 2022) which are required for boosting the immune system as well as proper intercellular communication. Furthermore, *L. barbarum* may increase immunoglobulin A levels, suggesting its ability to regenerate old cells (de Souza Zanchet et al., 2017).

Momordica grosvenori

Monk fruit which is scientifically referred to as *Siraitia grosvenorii* formerly known as *Momordica grosvenorii* is an herbaceous perennial vine primarily cultivated in southwestern China (Shori et al., 2018). *M. grosvenori* is classified under cucurbitaceae family. It produces fruits called Luo Han Guo which are well-known for their intense sweetness and medicinal properties. The primary bioactive compounds in monk fruit, known as mogrosides, are responsible for its sweetness. Additionally, the fruit is reputed to offer various health benefits (Gangoso et al., 2019).

Chemical Components

The active compounds present in Luo Han Guo extract are mogrosides, a group of triterpene glycosides that make up about 1% of the fleshy part of the fruit. These compounds give a sweet taste to Luo Han Guo (Tang et al., 2011). Generally, five different mogrosides have been isolated from these fruits and numbered from I to V (Chen et al., 2022). Mogroside V (formerly known as esgoside; Fig. 5) is the most abundant mogroside among the five, hence, it determines the level of sweetness and quality of a Luo Han Guo (Chen et al., 2022). A previous study found that the sweetness of the mixed mogrosides can be about 300 times higher than that of sugar by weight but contains lower calories, i.e., 2.3kcal/g, whereas sugar gives approximately 4.5kcal/g (Muñoz-Labrador et al., 2022). Due to this reason, Luo Han Guo extract is widely used as a sweetener in beverages and cooked foods (Muñoz-Labrador et al., 2022). Other similar compounds such as siamenoside and neomogroside have also been found in Luo Han Guo extract.

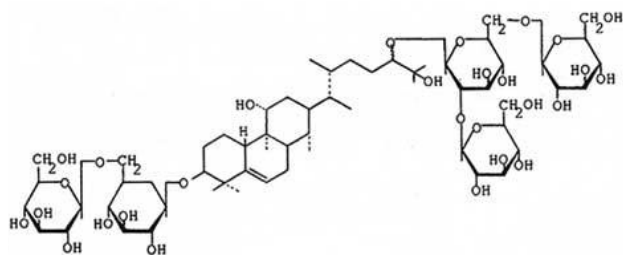


Fig. 5: Chemical structure of Mogroside V (Wang et al., 2014).

Medicinal Properties of *M. grosvenori*

Low Glycemic Index

Luo Han Guo is a good and safe alternative sweetener, especially for diabetics. Despite its intense sweetness, Luo

Han Guo sweetener does not cause a spike in insulin levels or result in extreme fluctuations in blood glucose levels (Gangoso et al., 2019). It is because the triterpene glycosides in Luo Han Guo are not metabolized into glucose to generate energy. Furthermore, studies showed that triterpene glycosides have an inhibitory effect on maltase, suppressing the rise in blood sugar levels in rats (Lee et al., 2016; Pandey & Chauhan 2019) and *in vitro* using human HepG2 cells (Li et al., 2017). This suggests that Luo Han Guo has an anti-hyperglycemic effect. In addition, Zhang et al., (2021b) reported that *M. grosvenori* fruits have antidiabetic properties by modifying the gut microbiota. Luo Han Guo extract exhibits anti-diabetic effects by enhancing insulin sensitivity during fasting, improving kidney function, and boosting antioxidant activity in both the liver and plasma (Li et al., 2022).

Antioxidant Properties

The glycoside components of Luo Han Guo extract, including cucurbitane glycosides, mogroside IV, mogroside V, 11-oxo-mogroside V, and siamenoside I, demonstrate antioxidant properties. These compounds effectively prevent oxidation of copper-mediated and cell-mediated low-density lipoprotein in a dose-dependent fashion (Wang et al., 2014; Cheng et al., 2017). Previous studies concluded that extract of *M. grosvenori* could be used as an antioxidant (Shori et al., 2021d; Konno et al., 2022). Wuttisin & Boonsook, (2019) indicated that the antioxidant activity of *M. grosvenori* extracts might be due to the flavonoid compounds.

Anticancer Properties

M. grosvenori has been investigated for its potential anticancer effects, with evidence suggesting it can inhibit cancer cell growth and shield normal cells from oxidative damage (Konno et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022). Research has indicated that Luo Han Guo may be effective in treating colorectal and laryngeal cancers (Liu et al., 2016), possesses anti-tumor activity and offers lung protection (Chen et al., 2019), and can suppress the proliferation of K562 leukemic cells (Liu et al., 2015), primarily due to its cucurbitane glycosides and related compounds (Liu et al., 2016). Additionally, the extract has been found to inhibit the activation of Epstein-Barr virus early antigen (EBV-EA) at levels comparable to or exceeding those of beta-carotene (Konoshima & Takasaki, 2002). In further studies, 11-oxo-mogroside V and mogroside V exhibited potent inhibitory effects (Takasaki et al., 2003). In a 2-stage skin carcinogenesis model in mice, administration of mogroside V or 11-oxo-mogroside V led to a delay in tumor development and a reduction in the number of papillomas over 10 and 15 weeks, respectively, compared to controls (Takasaki et al., 2003).

***Psidium guajava* L.**

P. guajava L., commonly called guava in English, is classified under the family Myrtaceae (Shori et al., 2022). It is believed that guava is considered native to the American tropics (the area between Mexico and Peru) and spread throughout tropical and subtropical countries. *P. guajava* is a small tree reaching up to 10

meters in height, characterized by its broad, spreading branches and square, fuzzy twigs (Gutiérrez et al., 2008). Ripe guava fruits can be eaten fresh or processed into juice, jelly, jam, or preserved foods.

Each part of the plant has its respective medicinal properties (Joseph & Priya, 2011). In the indigenous system of medicine, the flowers of guava are used to remove internal body heat and treat eye sores and bronchitis. The fruits, which are rich in vitamin C, are effective in curing bleeding gums (Joseph & Priya, 2011). Fresh leaves are used topically to treat wounds, ulcers, and rheumatic pain (Gutiérrez et al., 2008). Additionally, an infusion made from the new shoots of *P. guajava* is utilized as a tonic, febrifuge, and spasmolytic agent (Joseph & Priya, 2011). In traditional medicine, *P. guajava* is also widely applied for treating diarrhea, gastroenteritis, dysentery, inflammation, and respiratory problems (Gonçalves et al., 2005; Ojewole, 2006; Gutiérrez et al., 2008).

Chemical Components

Spectral analysis has identified over 20 phytochemical compounds in guava leaves, including essential oils, flavonoids, anthocyanins, carotenoids, phenols, saponins, tannins, triterpenes, lectins, fatty acids, and vitamin C (Shori et al., 2020). The essential oils contain α -pinene, β -pinene, menthol, limonene, isopropyl alcohol, curcumene, etc (Gutiérrez et al., 2008; Weli et al., 2019). Five essential oils i.e. β -sitosterol, nerolidiol, crategolic, ursolic and guayavolic acids are present in *P. guajava* (Weli et al., 2019). The presence of flavonoids quercetin (Fig. 6) and avicularin gives guava leaves antimicrobial properties.

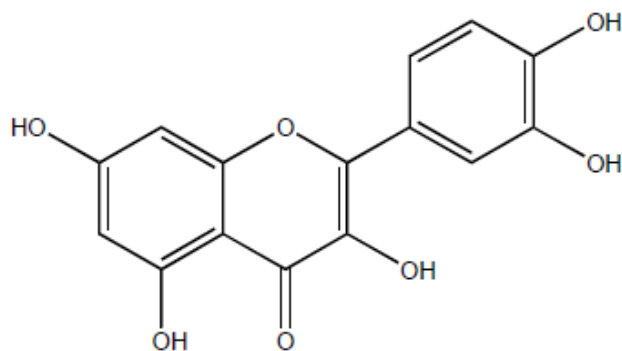


Fig. 6: The chemical structure of quercetin (Kumar et al., 2017).

Medicinal Properties of *P. guajava* Antidiarrhoeal Properties

Many studies have proved that the extract of guava leaves has anti-diarrhoeal properties owing to the presence of quercetin and quercetin-3 arabinose (Gupta & Birdi, 2015; Koriem et al., 2019). At a concentration of 1.6 μ g/mL, these compounds behave like morphine, inhibiting the release of acetylcholine, reducing peristaltic motion of the ileum, and permeability of the capillary in the intestinal lumen. Besides, galactose-specific lectin prevents *E. coli* from adhering to the intestinal wall and therefore, avoids infection that results in diarrhea (Upadhyay & Dass, 2020).

Antimicrobial Properties

Methanolic extract of guava leaves rich in phenolic, flavonoid, and quercetin with its derivatives (Naseer et al., 2018). These compounds exhibit antimicrobial properties against a range of pathogens, including both gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria, as well as fungal strains, yeasts, molds, and bacteria isolated from urine samples (Naseer et al., 2018). Additionally, they have been shown to inhibit spore formation and enterotoxin production by *Clostridium perfringens* type A (Gitika, 2016; Farhana et al., 2017; Bhambar, 2021). According to Shetty et al. (2018), Guava extract may show significant activity against both *P. gingivalis* and *A. actinomycetemcomitans*. Quercetin in guava leaves reported to have inhibitory effects on the growth of *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella enteritidis*, *Streptococcus mutans*, *Pseudomonas aeruginosa* and *Shigella* spp. (Ugbogu et al., 2022).

Antioxidant Properties

Guava leaves are rich in antioxidants (Shori et al., 2018), with their extract demonstrating significant antioxidant activity. This is attributed to the high levels of phenolic compounds present, including protocatechuic acid, ferulic acid, quercetin, guavin B, gallic acid, and caffeic acid (Fernandes et al., 2014; Zahin et al., 2017). Moreover, the polysaccharides in guava leaves may serve as potential antioxidants (Luo et al., 2019; Kumar et al., 2021).

Anti-allergic and Antitumor Effect

A meroterpenoid known as guajadial, isolated from *P. guajava* leaves, exhibited antineoplastic activity against non-small-cell lung carcinoma by inhibiting the proliferation and migration of A549 and H1650 lung cancer cell lines (Wang et al., 2018). Additionally, quercetin demonstrated strong inhibitory effects on SGC-7901 and HeLa cells, with IC₅₀ values of 7.878 and 10.260 μ g/mL, respectively (Feng et al., 2015). The guajadial fraction also showed significant antiproliferative effects against MCF-7 and MCF-7 BUS breast cancer cells, with TGI values of 5.59 and 2.27 μ g/mL, respectively (Bazioli et al., 2020). Furthermore, an aqueous extract of *P. guajava* leaves significantly inhibited MCF-7 cell viability at a concentration of 100 g, indicating its potential for breast cancer treatment (Sukanya et al., 2017). The dichloromethane and methanol (1:1, v/v) extracts of *P. guajava* leaves exhibited the highest inhibitory activity against MCF-7 breast cancer cells, with an IC₅₀ value of 55 μ g/mL after 24 hours (Kaileh et al., 2007). Additionally, benzophenone extracted from *P. guajava* leaves showed significant inhibitory effects on cell viability and a potent ability to induce apoptosis in cancer cells. At a concentration of 100 μ M, benzophenone inhibited 81.4% of HCT116 cell growth after 72 hours, with an IC₅₀ value of 60 μ M (Zhu et al., 2019). Moreover, hexane fractions from a methanolic extract of guava leaves induced cytotoxicity and apoptosis in PC-3 prostate cancer cells, arresting the cell cycle in the sub-G1 phase and causing cell death even at 50 g/mL (Ryu et al., 2012). The methanolic extract of *P.*

guajava leaves also significantly inhibited the viability of leukemia cells, with an IC50 value of 200µg/mL, attributed to the presence of gallic acid and flavonoids such as kaempferol and quercetin (Levy & Carley, 2012). Seo et al. (2005) reported that guava leaf extract has anti-allergic effects against Th2 cell-mediated allergies and provides protective action against tumor development. Additionally, monoterpenes in the essential oil of guava leaves effectively suppress cancer cell growth by reducing T helper cell 1 activity. Several studies have highlighted the potential of guava leaves as chemotherapeutic antitumor and anti-allergic agents (Sato et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2011; Alhamdi et al., 2019; Patil, 2024).

Anti-diabetic Properties

The decoction of guava leaves can induce hypoglycaemic activity and significantly inhibit LDL glycation in a dose-dependent manner (Dange et al., 2020). The hypoglycemic effect of guava leaves are linked to their content of tannins, flavonoids, pentacyclic triterpenoids, ursolic acid, oleanolic acid, arjunolic acid, glucuronic acid, and other bioactive compounds (Hsieh et al., 2007). Research has shown that guava leaves hold promise as a potential anti-diabetic agent (Luo et al., 2019; Shabbir et al., 2020).

Conclusion

The four traditional medicinal plants i.e., *G. mangostana*, *L. barbarum*, *M. grosvenori*, and *P. guajava* contained several chemical compounds. These components have been proven to have excellent properties in maintaining health through various pharmacological activities such as antioxidant, antibacterial, antidiabetic, anti-inflammatory, and antitumor. The use of natural substances presents in *P. guajava* and *L. barbarum* may have the potential to treat and prevent illnesses such as gastroenteritis, dysentery, respiratory disturbances, and protect the eyes. In addition, we recommend using *M. grosvenori* extract as a sweetener in beverages and cooked foods. Further study is needed to investigate how the sweetener from *M. grosvenori* affects the whole body metabolism. Furthermore, due to the phytochemical content of these four plants, it is important to investigate their further use in the food industry as supplements and functional food ingredients.

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