

A Review on Bioactive Constituents of Medicinal Plants

Satya Pal Singh¹, Manu Sikarwar¹, Rajendra K. Gunsaria¹, Ashutosh Sharma², M. P. Dobhal³

¹Department of Chemistry, Government College, Tonk, Rajasthan, India

²Department of Chemistry, Yagyavalkya Institute of Technology, Jaipur, India

³Department of Chemistry, University of Rajasthan, Jaipur

E-Mail - spsingh261069@gmail.com, ashutoshs_912@rediffmail.com

Abstract- Medical plants form the backbone of traditional systems of medicine and are being used as one of the gift of nature to cure a number of human diseases. The knowledge of Ayurveda has led to the discovery of many potent bioactive agents in the history of modern drug development. Herbal drugs constitute a major share of all the officially recognized systems of health in India viz Ayurveda, Yoga, Siddha, Unani, Homeopathy and Naturopathy. The use of plants for cure is also discussed in Rig-Vedas. Medicinal plants are occupy an important role in modern medicines e.g. taxol, vincristicin, vinblastine, artemesin etc. Secondary metabolites show an intense physiological effect on mammalian system. In the present communication, chemical constituents and biological activity of plants has been given.

Keywords- Medicinal plants, Biological Activity, Natural Compounds, Secondary Metabolites

I. INTRODUCTION

Since time immemorial, medicinal plants are being used as one of the gift of nature to cure a number of diseases of human beings. The knowledge of Ayurveda has led to the discovery of many potent bioactive agents in the history of modern drug development. Even today seventy five percent of the population in our country is very much depends on the medicinal plants as population in the rural and remote areas mostly adopts the traditional Indian system of medicine. India's richness in plant diversity and related indigenous knowledge is well recognized. This diversity offers the means for meeting the basic requirements of the Ayurvedic, Unani and Siddha system of medicine.

Plants of medicinal importance are the treasure houses from which future needs will be met with and where new chemical entity may found which forms the basis of new knowledge and technology. Moreover, the global herbal market worth \$120 billion a year. By recognizing the value of medicinal plants and integrating it with frontier science and technology, we can conserve both the dying wisdom and the plant genetic resources thus ensuring a better future of our homeland.

Plants play an important role as a backbone in the healthy life style and provide health food and phytotherapeutics. Nearly 8000 plants are recognised with medicinal value that are being used by various traditional systems of medicine in India. It is well established that about 346 plants products have fungicidal properties, 92 have bactericidal and 90 have antiviral properties [1]. However, they are constantly under threat due to the growth of economic development, population explosion and new human settlements.

Most of the medicinal plants extensively used in traditional systems of medicines are obtained from wild sources leading to the problems of dwindling population of numerous plants and insufficient quantity for manufacturing genuine medicine. Under such circumstances measures have been taken on war footing to promote the commercial cultivation of medicinal plants.

The medicinal importance of the plants has attracted the attention of the chemists who successfully isolated the active principle and established their

structures using modern techniques. Attempts were made to correlate the activity of particular skeleton in its structure. This led to the development of synthetic routes for a number of drugs. In fact, the development of many synthetic therapeutic agents can be traced to their initial isolation from the natural source. Thus, the chemists working in the field of natural products have contributed to the development of the modern therapeutic system in their own way.

Realising the medicinal importance of the plant or plant materials, chemists have been successfully analysed various plants, resulting in the isolation of various organic constituents which have been characterized and classified in different classes viz., alkaloids, steroids, terpenoids, flavonoids, etc., heralding a new branch of studies known as "phytochemistry". It involves the systematic chemical investigation of the plant i.e isolation, purification and characterization of the organic constituents.

The chemistry of natural products has been developed as a major field of scientific endeavour during the last few decades. The systematic work in phytochemistry began with the development of physical and biochemical methods. The discovery of chromatographic techniques e.g., column, thin layer, paper, HPLC, HPTLC has given a big impetus to the phytochemical methods. The phytochemists are provided with indispensable tool for the investigation of structure of compounds available even in small quantities with the discovery of modern spectroscopic techniques like UV, IR, ¹H NMR, ¹³C NMR, 2-DNMR and MS.

The medicinal properties of the plants depend upon the presence of one or more physiologically active compounds. Some plant extracts may be toxic in higher doses, so they might be useful as medicine in lower doses. Research in the field of natural products contributes to the discovery of new drugs and drug development program by providing important structural units to pharmaceutical chemists. The results of these investigations have not only enriched the academic outlook of organic chemist but also equipped modern

medicinal system with a wide range of therapeutic agents. Despite the various advances made in the field of drug synthesis, the use of plant extracts for treatment is still invariably recommended.

Plants and plant products are part of the vegetarian diet and a number of them exhibit medicinal properties. The medicinal properties of several Indian plants have been documented in ancient Indian texts and the preparations have been found to be effective in the treatment of diseases [2,3]. Recent reports indicated that there is an inverse relationship between the dietary intake of antioxidant rich foods and the incidence of human diseases [4-5]. There are many reports which suggest that botanical antioxidants work synergistically if used in combination. Now a days, consumers are frightened of using synthetic antioxidants and therefore industries prefer to use natural antioxidants in their products. Hence search for new natural antioxidants has become essential. Although investigations focused on isolation of pure compounds as an antioxidant agent [6,7]. It has been found that compounds in their natural formulations are more active than isolated form [8]. An attempt has been made to review the antioxidant activity of some plant extracts commonly used in Ayurvedic medicines [9-19].

Flavonoids represent the largest group of plant polyphenols. Their dietary intake through fruits and vegetables has been associated with a lower incidence of cardiovascular disease [20]. Further study suggests that dietary flavonoids may have beneficial effects on human health and disease prevention, which is primarily attributed to their antioxidant properties. Commonly occurring flavonols have received much attention as natural antioxidants and only a few studies have reported on the antioxidant effects of prenylated flavonoids, probably because of their low dietary intake compared to flavonols and anthocyanins [21].

It was suggested recently that generation of free radicals play a major role in the progression of a wide range of pathological disturbances such as brain dysfunction, cancer, cardiovascular disease and inflammation [22,23]. In food industries free radicals

are found to be responsible for lipid oxidation that is a major determinant in the deterioration of foods during processing and storage [24-26]. Due to this fact considerable interest has been given to the addition of antioxidants in food and biological systems to scavenge free radicals. A lot of natural compounds have been found to be antioxidants, including vitamin E, phenolic acid, chlorophyll, carotenoids and flavonoids [27]. Polyphenols from grapes, epigallocatechin (EGC) from tea leaves, curcumin from turmeric and rosmarinic acid extract are used as antioxidants for herbal preparations and cosmetics.

Recently, resveratrol a natural product derived from grapes was found to be antioxidative, antimutagenic and an inducer of phase II drug-metabolizing enzymes [28]. Resveratrol belongs to a class of compounds called stilbenes are widely distributed in nature. Interest in the synthesis of stilbene compounds similar to that of natural stilbenes is increasing due to their antioxidant, antifungal, ichthyotoxic and antileukemic properties [29-31].

Since people are particularly concerned about the quality and the safety of their food. Only selected food additives are added for protecting them from off-flavour. Antioxidants are often used in oils and fatty foods to retard their autoxidation. The synthetic antioxidants were widely used, are now avoided due to their possible toxic effects [32]. So industry have focussed on the use of natural antioxidants [33,34]. In Indian system of medicine, herbs and spices are a major source of natural antioxidants. Approximately 700 species of herbs have been screened for natural antioxidants. Among them, 64 have been found to possess significant antioxidant activities, and 24 showed strong antioxidant activities [35-37].

Everybody knows that food spoils by oxidation reaction due to the presence of atmospheric oxygen. Thus the food which contains antioxidant in good amount spoils later. Benzoic acid, ascorbic acid are also good example of antioxidant compounds. Fruits and vegetables contains many chemical substances having antioxidant properties. Thus the natural food

antioxidants have anticancer properties or they protected against cancer. Some of the examples of antioxidants are being given below.

1. Lycopene - red colour of tomatoes.
2. β - Carotene - the pigment in carrots
3. Resveratrol - red wine pigment
4. Flavonoids - tea leaves
5. Quercetin - red onions, apples
6. Proanthocyanidins - colouring matter of many fruits
7. Catechins - oak tree (stem bark)

Recent studies showed that antioxidants are useful in lowering the incidence of cardiovascular diseases and are good anticancer agents. They also prevent aging and are used to prevent and treat atherosclerosis and coronary artery diseases. Antioxidants are beneficial for better living and thus average human life span would be extended to more active years. The list of some plants possessing antioxidant activity and their active constituents are given in Table I.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Plants are still to retain the significance as an important source of new drugs/lead compounds. The structural modification on lead compounds may be done to get better chemical entity for pharmaceutical chemist.

III. REFERENCES

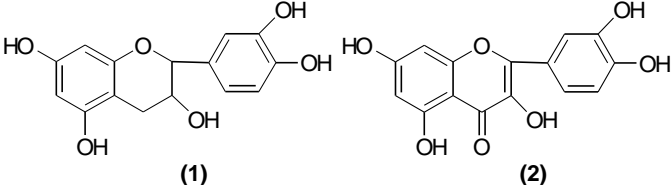
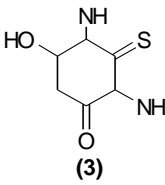
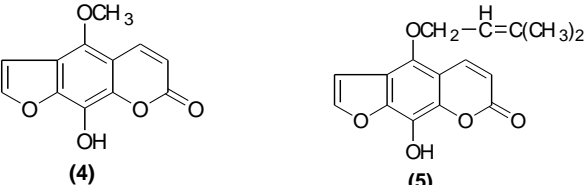
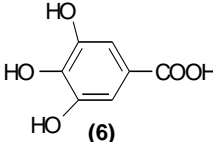
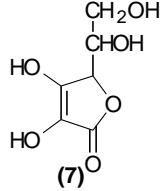
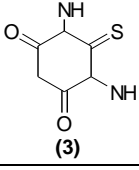
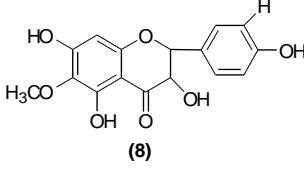
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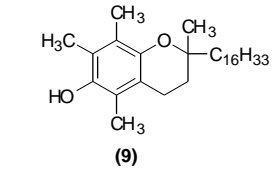
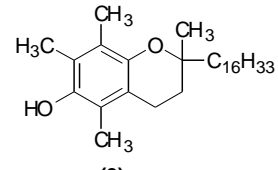
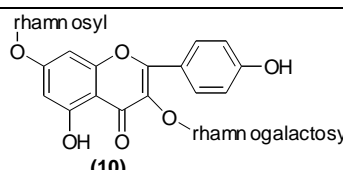
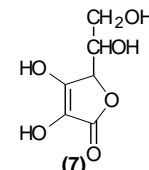
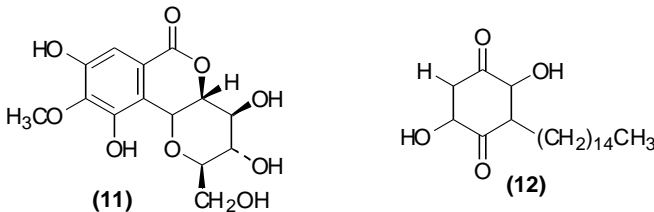
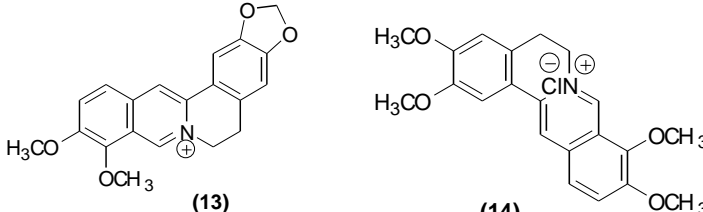
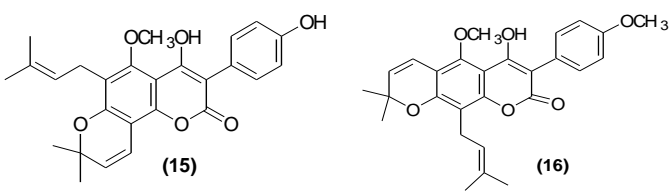
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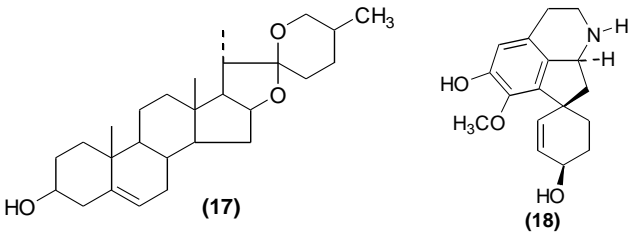
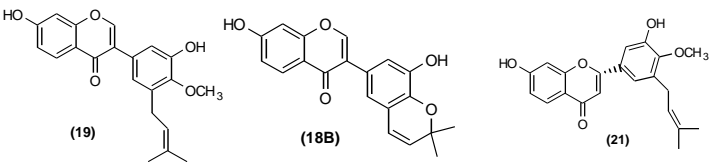
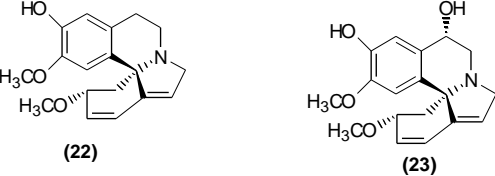
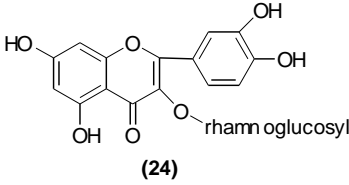
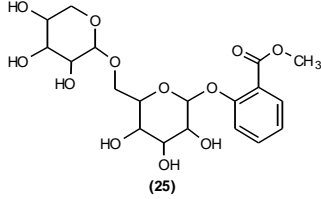
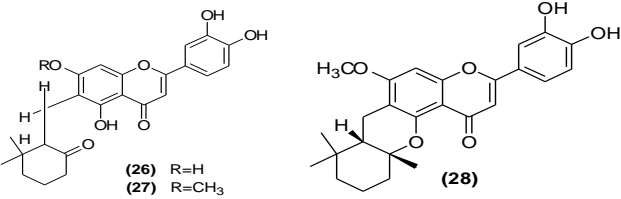
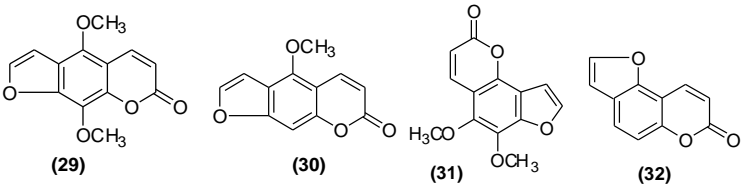
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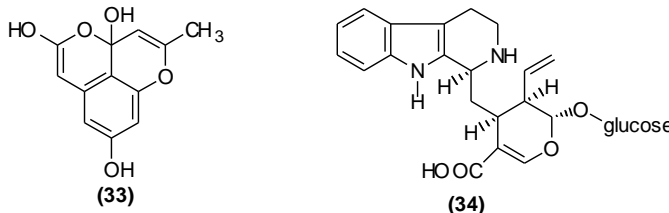
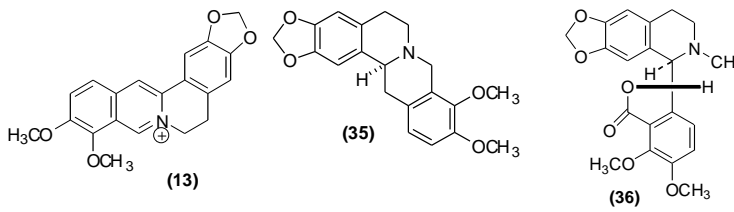
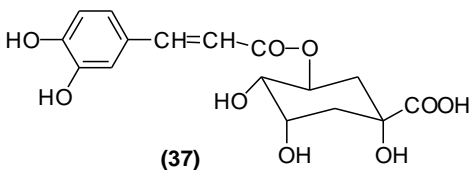
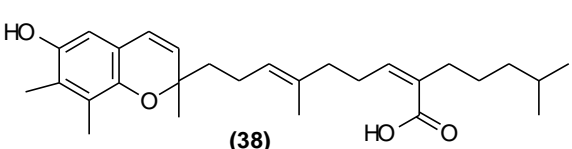
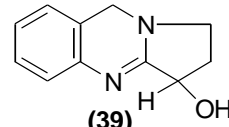
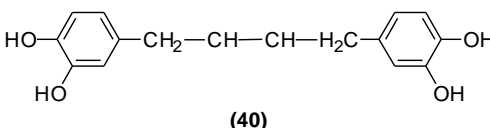
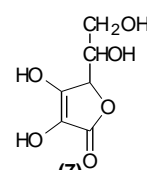
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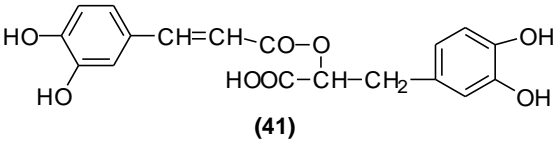
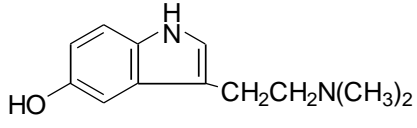
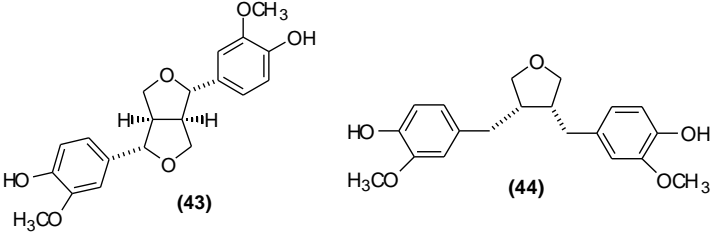
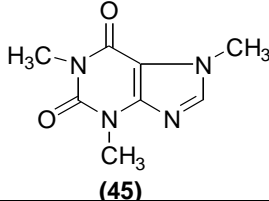
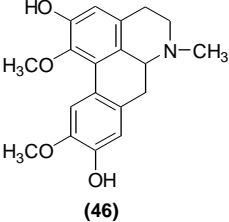
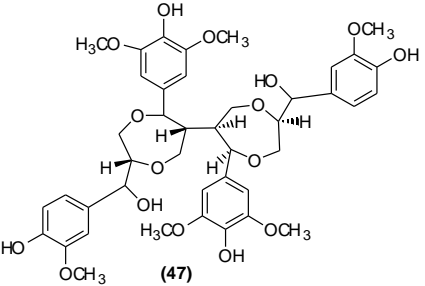
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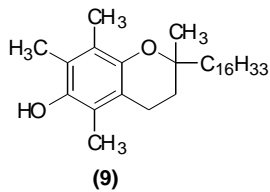
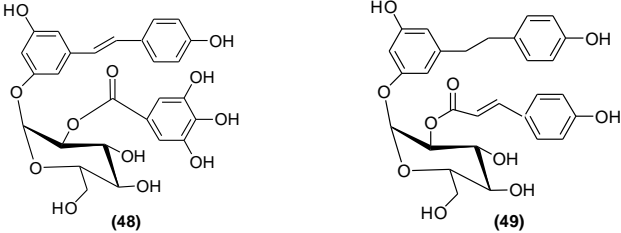
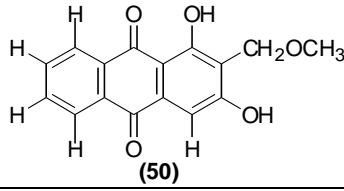
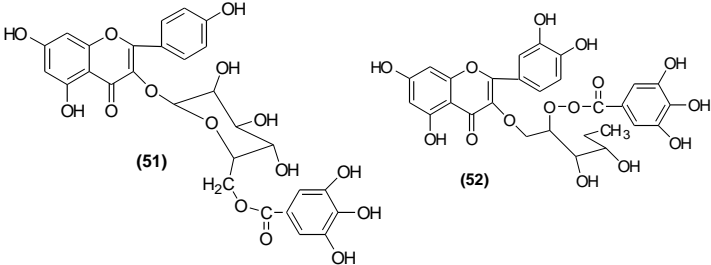
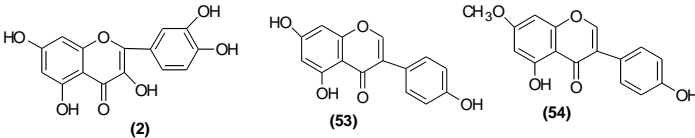
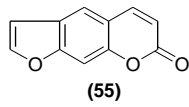
S. No.	Name of plant	Part of Plant	Active principle	Structure of active principle	Ref.
1.	Acacia catechu	Whole plant	Catechin (1) Quercetin (2)	 <p>(1) (2)</p>	39
2.	Anadenanthera macrocarpa	Bark	Thiobarbituric acid (3)	 <p>(3)</p>	40
3.	Angelica dahurica	Root	9-Hydroxy-4-methoxy psorlen (4) Alloisimperatorin (5)	 <p>(4) (5)</p>	41
4.	Anogeissus latifolia	-	Gallic acid (6)	 <p>(6)</p>	39,42
5.	Asparagus racemosus	-	Ascorbic acid (7)	 <p>(7)</p>	43
6.	Astronium urundeuva	Bark	Thiobarbituric acid (3)	 <p>(3)</p>	40
7.	Baccharis grisebachii (Asteraceae)	Aerial parts	5,7,4'-Trihydroxy-6-methoxy flavone quercetin (8)	 <p>(8)</p>	44

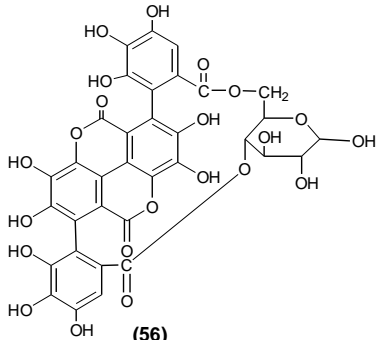
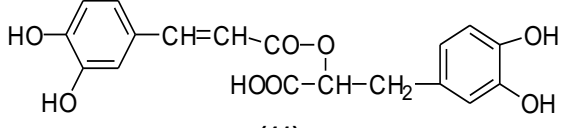
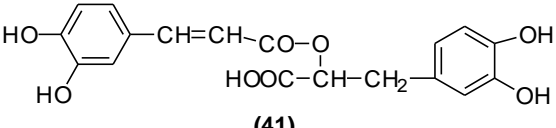
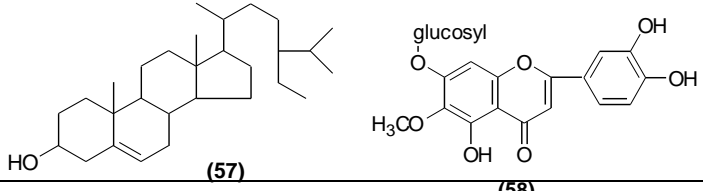
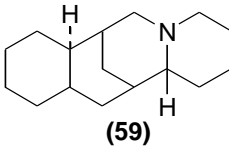
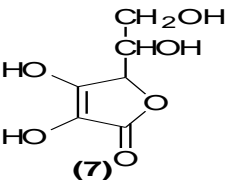
8.	Ballota acetabulosa (Lamiaceae)	-	α -Tocopherol (9)	 (9)	44
9.	Ballota pseudictamnus (Lamiaceae)	-	α -tocopherol (9)	 (9)	44
10.	Bauhinia forticate	Leaves	Kempferol-3,7-O-dirhamnoside (10)	 (10)	45
11.	Carica papaya L.	Fruit	Ascorbic acid (7)	 (7)	46
12.	Connarus semidecandrus	Stem	Bergenin (11) Homorapanone (12)	 (11) (12)	47
13.	Coptis spp.	Root	Berberine (13) Palmatine (14)	 (13) (14)	48-51
14.	Derris scandens	-	Scandenin (15) Lonchocarpin (16)	 (15) (16)	52-55

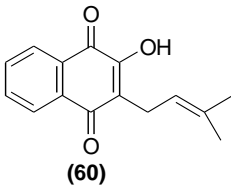
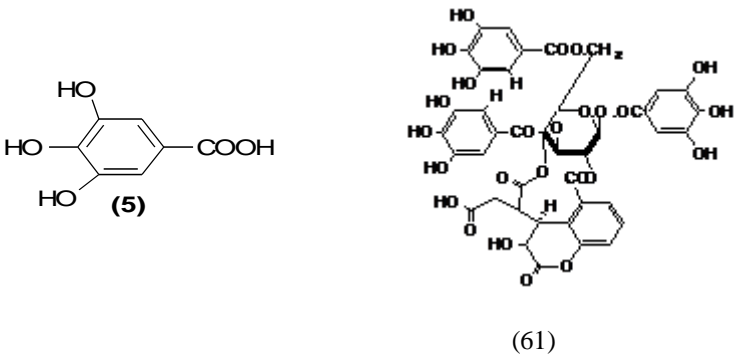
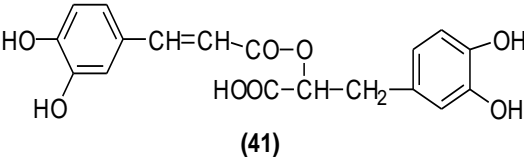
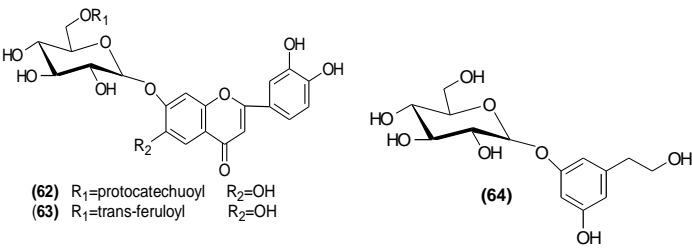
15.	Dioscorea spp.	Rhizomes	Diosgenin (17) Dioscorin (18)		56-59
16.	Erythrina latissima	Stem wood	Erylatissin A (19) Erylatissin B (20) Erylatissin C (21)		60
17.	Erythrina lysistemon	Flowers	(+) Erysodine ((22), α -Hydroxy erysodine (23)		61
18.	Fogophyrum esculentum	Seeds	Rutin (24)		62,63
19.	Gaultheria procumbens	-	Gaultherin (25)		64
20.	Helminthostachys zeylanica	-	Ugonin J (26) Ugonin K (27) Ugonin L (28)		65
21.	Heracleum persicum	-	Isopimpinellin (29) Bergapten (30) Pimpinellin (31) Bakuchicin (32)		66

22.	<i>Hunteria zeylanica</i>	Leaves	Barakol (33) Strictosidinic acid (34)		47
23.	<i>Hydrastic canadensis</i>	-	Berberine (13), Canadine (35), β - Hydrastine (36)		67-70
24.	<i>Hypericum perforatum</i>	-	Caffeoylquinic acid (37)		40,71
25.	<i>Iryanthera jurerensis</i>	Fruits	Tocotrienol (38)		72
26.	<i>Justica adhatoda</i>	Leaves	Vasicine (39)		73
27.	<i>Larrea divarticata</i>	-	Nordihydro guaiaretic acid (40)		74-77
28.	<i>Mangifera indica</i> L.	-	Ascorbic acid (7)		78

29.	Melissa officinalis	-	Rosmarinic acid (41)	 <p style="text-align: center;">(41)</p>	40 79-81
30.	Mucuna prurines	Seeds	Bufotenine (42)	 <p style="text-align: center;">(42)</p>	82-84
31.	Pandanus odoratissimus	Root	Pinoresinol (43) 3,4-bis (4-Hydroxy-3-methoxybenzyl) tetrahydrofuran (44)	 <p style="text-align: center;">(43) (44)</p>	85
32.	Paullinia cupana	-	Caffeine (45)	 <p style="text-align: center;">(45)</p>	86
33.	Peumus boldus	Leaves	Boldine (46)	 <p style="text-align: center;">(46)</p>	87-89
34.	Phyllostachys edulis	Stem	Phyllostadimers A (47)	 <p style="text-align: center;">(47)</p>	90

35.	<i>Picea abies</i> (L)	Leaves	α -Tocopherol (9)	 <p>(9)</p>	91
36.	<i>Pleuropterus ciliinervis</i>	-	Piceid-2''-O-gallate (48) Piceid-2''-O-coumarate (49)	 <p>(48) (49)</p>	92
37.	<i>Prismatomeris malayana</i>	Root	Lucidin- β -methylether (50)	 <p>(50)</p>	47
38.	<i>Polygonum hydropiper</i> L.	Leaves	Galloylkaempferol 3-glucoside (51) Galloylquercetin (52)	 <p>(51) (52)</p>	93
39.	<i>Prunus domestica</i>	Leaves	Prunetin (54) Genistein (53) Quercetin (2)	 <p>(2) (53) (54)</p>	94
40.	<i>Psoralea corylifolia</i>	Seed & Leaves	Psoralen (55)	 <p>(55)</p>	95-98

41.	<i>Punica granatum</i>	Seed	Punicalin (56)	 <p>(56)</p>	99-101
42.	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	Herb	Rosmarinic acid (41)	 <p>(41)</p>	40,102
43.	<i>Salvia officinalis</i> L. (Lamiaceae)	Herb	Rosmarinic acid (41)	 <p>(41)</p>	40,102
44.	<i>Salvia plebeia</i>	Herb	β -Sitosterol (57) , 6-methoxy luteolin-7-O- glucoside (58)	 <p>(57) (58)</p>	103
45.	<i>Sopora pachycarpa</i>	-	Pachycarpine (59)	 <p>(59)</p>	104-106
46.	<i>Syzygium jambos</i> (Alstron)	Fruit	Ascorbic acid (7)	 <p>(7)</p>	46

47.	Tabebuio spp.	Bark	Lapachol (60)	 <p>(60)</p>	107-109
48.	Terminalia chebula	Whole plant	Gallic acid (5) Chebulinic acid (61)	 <p>(5)</p> <p>(61)</p>	39
49.	Teucrium polium (Lamiaceae)	Herb	Rosmarinic acid (41)	 <p>(41)</p>	39-102
50.	Vernonia thymoides	-	3'-Hydroxy scutellarein-7-O-(6''-O-protocatechuoyl)-β-glucopyranoside (62), 3'-Hydroxy scutellarein-7-O-(6''-O-trans-feruloyl)-β-glucopyranoside (63), 3,5-Dihydroxyphenethylalcohol 3-O-β-glucopyranoside (64)	 <p>(62) R₁=protocatechuoyl R₂=OH (63) R₁=trans-feruloyl R₂=OH</p> <p>(64)</p>	110