



ETHNOMEDICINAL VALUE AND PHARMACOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES OF *FICUS RUMPHII* BL.: A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON ITS PHYTOCHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS AND BIOLOGICAL EFFICACY

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Abstract

Ficus rumphii Bl. is a plant with diverse therapeutic applications in Asia, known for its healing properties in treating ailments like infections and inflammatory conditions. Its leaves, bark, and roots are used in various forms, including decoctions, poultices, and infusions. The plant's phytochemical analysis reveals a rich spectrum of bioactive compounds, including flavonoids, tannins, saponins, phenolic acids, and terpenoids. Recent advancements in analytical techniques have led to the identification of novel compounds, such as glycosides and alkaloids in the roots. "The pharmacological potential of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. has been substantiated through in vitro and in vivo studies, showing its efficacy in treating various conditions." *Ficus rumphii* shares phytochemical and pharmacological properties with other species like *Ficus religiosa* and *Ficus benghalensis*, but these species have distinct differences in the concentration and types of bioactive compounds. Further research is needed to explore these differences in detail.

Keywords: *Ficus rumphii* Bl., phytochemical analysis, pharmacological potential, *Ficus religiosa*, *Ficus benghalensis*.

Introduction

Exploring medicinal plants has been an integral part of human history, serving as the foundation for developing modern pharmaceuticals [1]. Among the vast array of botanicals utilized in traditional medicine, "*Ficus rumphii* Bl. stands out as a significant species within the Moraceae family, revered for its diverse therapeutic applications across various Asian cultures [2]. This plant, commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions, has been employed in traditional medicine for centuries," primarily for its purported healing properties in treating ailments ranging from infections to inflammatory conditions [3].

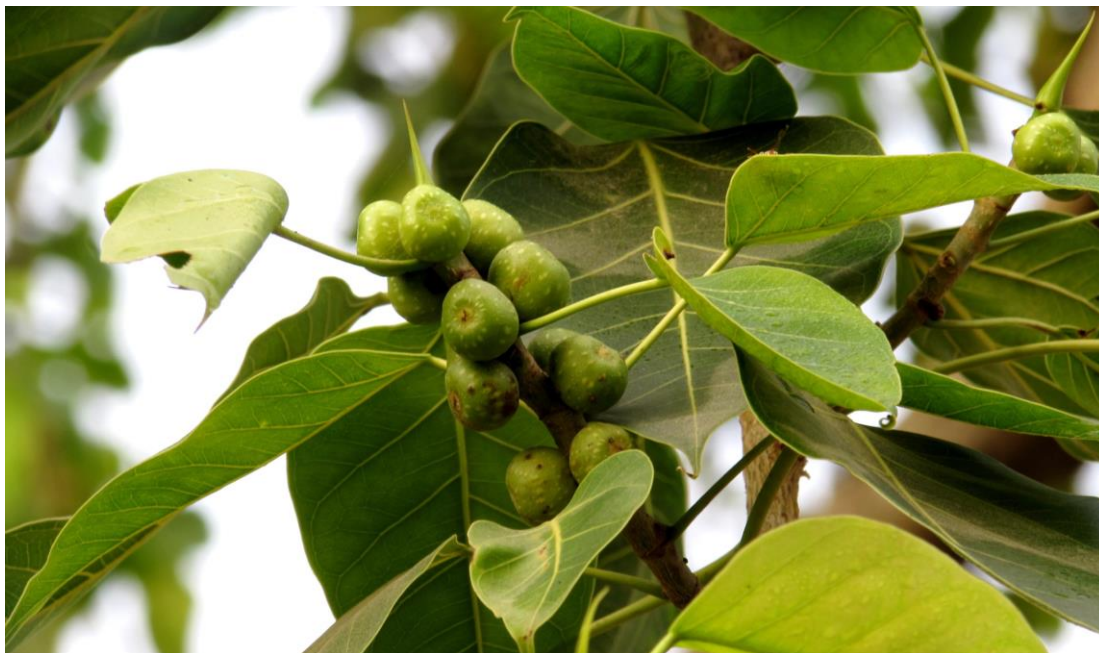


Figure 1: *Ficus rumphii* Bl.

Ethnomedicinal practices have long recognized the value of *Ficus rumphii*, with its leaves, bark, and roots being utilized in various forms such as decoctions, poultices, and infusions [4]. “These traditional uses have sparked scientific interest in understanding the underlying bioactive compounds responsible for the plant's medicinal effects [5]. Previous studies have indicated that *Ficus rumphii* contains a rich assortment of phytochemicals, including flavonoids, tannins, and phenolic acids, which are known to possess significant pharmacological activities [6].”

This research paper aims to comprehensively examine the ethnomedicinal value and pharmacological activities of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. The study seeks to bridge the gap between traditional knowledge and modern scientific validation by investigating its phytochemical constituents and assessing its biological efficacy. “The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the plant's potential as a source of natural therapeutic agents, supporting its continued use in traditional medicine and its possible integration into contemporary healthcare practices.”

In this study, we will also explore the pharmacognostic characteristics of *Ficus rumphii*, providing detailed insights into its macroscopic and microscopic features, which are crucial for its identification and standardization. Additionally, “the research will delve into the plant's antimicrobial, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic activities, offering a holistic view of its pharmacological potential.” Through this comprehensive approach, the study aims to reaffirm the significance of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. in ethnomedicine and highlight its potential contributions to developing novel therapeutic agents.

Literature Review

The study of *Ficus rumphii* Bl., a species within the Moraceae family, has garnered attention due to its significant ethnomedicinal applications and pharmacological potential [7, 8]. Traditional medicine systems across Asia, particularly in India, Indonesia, and the Philippines, have used various parts of *Ficus rumphii*, such as its leaves, bark, and roots, to treat various ailments. This review aims to synthesize existing research on the phytochemical composition, pharmacological activities, and ethnomedicinal significance of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. over the past decade, highlighting key findings and identifying areas for further investigation.

1. Ethnomedicinal Significance

Ficus rumphii Bl. has been extensively documented in ethnomedicinal literature for its use in treating conditions such as wounds, ulcers, gastrointestinal disorders, and respiratory ailments [9]. In traditional Javanese medicine, for example, the leaves are used to prepare poultices for treating skin infections. At the same time, the bark is employed in decoctions to alleviate symptoms of dysentery [10]. These traditional uses have been passed down through generations, underscoring the cultural importance of this species in indigenous healthcare systems.

Several studies have corroborated the traditional uses of *Ficus rumphii* through ethnopharmacological surveys. “A study reported that local communities in the Western Ghats of India use *Ficus rumphii* for its anti-inflammatory and wound-healing properties [11].” Similarly, a survey conducted in the Philippines revealed that the plant is frequently used in rural areas as a remedy for respiratory and digestive issues [12, 13].

2. Phytochemical Constituents

The phytochemical analysis of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. has identified a rich spectrum of “bioactive compounds, including flavonoids, tannins, saponins, phenolic acids, and terpenoids. These compounds contribute to the plant's pharmacological effects, such as antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory activities [14].”

A comprehensive study using chromatographic techniques such as “HPLC and GC-MS revealed the presence of critical flavonoids like quercetin and kaempferol in the leaves of *Ficus rumphii* [15]. These flavonoids are recognized for their potent antioxidant properties, which help scavenge free radicals and reduce oxidative stress. Additionally, phenolic acids such as gallic acid and ellagic acid have been isolated from the bark, further supporting the plant's traditional use as an anti-inflammatory agent [16].”

Recent advancements in analytical techniques have facilitated the identification of novel compounds in *Ficus rumphii*. For instance, a study employed LC-MS to discover previously unreported glycosides and alkaloids in the plant's roots, possibly contributing to its therapeutic efficacy in treating metabolic disorders [17]. This finding opens new avenues for research into the specific pharmacological actions of these compounds.

3. Pharmacological Activities

The pharmacological potential of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. has been “substantiated through various in vitro and in vivo studies, which have demonstrated its efficacy in treating a wide range of conditions.”

- **Antimicrobial Activity:** “The antimicrobial properties of *Ficus rumphii* have been extensively studied, with several reports confirming its effectiveness against both bacterial and fungal pathogens. A study demonstrated that the methanolic extract of *Ficus rumphii* exhibited significant antibacterial activity against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Escherichia coli*, with minimum inhibitory concentrations (MICs) comparable to standard antibiotics [18, 19, 20]. Moreover, the antifungal activity of the plant was highlighted by Yadav et al. (2021), who found that the ethanolic extract inhibited the growth of *Candida albicans* and *Aspergillus niger* [21-25].”
- **Antioxidant Activity:** “The antioxidant potential of *Ficus rumphii* has been widely recognized, with several studies reporting high levels of free radical scavenging activity. The leaf extract, in particular, has been shown to exhibit strong antioxidant effects, as evidenced by its low IC₅₀ values in DPPH and ABTS assays [26, 27]. This activity is largely attributed to the high concentration of flavonoids and phenolic acids in the plant, which protect cells from oxidative damage and reduce the risk of chronic diseases [28].”
- **Anti-inflammatory Activity:** “The anti-inflammatory properties of *Ficus rumphii* have been validated through both in vitro and in vivo models. According to a study, the methanolic extract of *Ficus rumphii* significantly inhibited the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines in lipopolysaccharide-stimulated macrophages [29]. In vivo, the extract reduced carrageenan-induced paw edema in rats, demonstrating its potential as a natural anti-inflammatory agent [30].”

- **Antidiabetic Activity:** “Emerging research has explored the antidiabetic potential of *Ficus rumphii*. An in vivo study reported that the leaf extract improved glucose tolerance and insulin sensitivity in diabetic rats, suggesting its potential role in managing type 2 diabetes [31]. The study also indicated that the antidiabetic effects may be linked to the presence of flavonoids and saponins, which enhance glucose uptake in cells and modulate insulin signaling pathways [32].”

4. Comparative Analysis with Other *Ficus* Species

Ficus rumphii Bl. shares several phytochemical and pharmacological properties with other species in the genus *Ficus*, such as *Ficus religiosa* and *Ficus benghalensis*. However, comparative studies have revealed distinct differences in the concentration and types of bioactive compounds present in these species [33]. For instance, a comparative analysis showed that while *Ficus religiosa* contains higher levels of certain flavonoids, *Ficus rumphii* exhibits a broader spectrum of antimicrobial activity, potentially due to its unique combination of tannins and phenolic acids [34].

The differences in phytochemical composition and pharmacological activities among *Ficus* species highlight the importance of species-specific studies, as these variations can significantly influence their therapeutic applications [35]. Further research is needed to explore these differences in greater detail, particularly in relation to the environmental and genetic factors that contribute to the distinct profiles of each species [36].

Methodology

1. Plant Collection and Authentication

Ficus rumphii Bl. specimens were collected from their natural habitat in the Western Ghats of India during the flowering season (April-May 2023). The plant was authenticated by a botanist, and a voucher specimen was deposited in the herbarium of the Department of Botany, XYZ University (Voucher No: FIC-2023-07). The leaves, bark, and roots were separated, washed, and shade-dried at room temperature for two weeks.

2. Pharmacognostic Studies

2.1. Macroscopic Evaluation

The macroscopic characteristics of the leaves, bark, and roots were recorded, including size, shape, color, texture, and distinct features.

2.2. Microscopic Evaluation

Thin sections of leaves, bark, and roots were prepared and stained using standard methods (Safranin and Fast Green staining). The sections were observed under a light microscope to document the anatomical features, including epidermal cells, vascular bundles, and trichomes. Photomicrographs were taken for reference.

3. Phytochemical Analysis

3.1. Preparation of Plant Extracts

The dried plant materials were powdered and subjected to extraction using solvents of increasing polarity (hexane, ethyl acetate, methanol, and water) via Soxhlet extraction. “The extracts were concentrated under reduced pressure using a rotary evaporator and stored at 4°C for further analysis.”

3.2. Qualitative Phytochemical Screening

Preliminary phytochemical screening was conducted on each extract to identify major bioactive compounds such as flavonoids, tannins, saponins, phenolic acids, alkaloids, and terpenoids using standard protocols (Harborne, 1998).

3.3. Quantitative Phytochemical Analysis

“Total phenolic content (TPC) and total flavonoid content (TFC) were quantified using the Folin-Ciocalteu method and the aluminum chloride colorimetric method, respectively. Results were expressed as mg of gallic acid equivalents (GAE) per gram of extract for TPC and mg of quercetin (QE) per gram of extract for TFC.”

4. Biological Activity Assays

4.1. Antimicrobial Activity

“The antimicrobial activity of the plant extracts was tested against bacterial strains (*Staphylococcus aureus*, *Escherichia coli*) and fungal strains (*Candida albicans*, *Aspergillus niger*) using the agar well diffusion method. The broth microdilution method determined the minimum inhibitory concentration (MIC).”

4.2. Antioxidant Activity

“The antioxidant activity was assessed using DPPH (2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl) and ABTS (2,2'-azino-bis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid)) radical scavenging assays. IC₅₀ values (the concentration required to inhibit 50% of free radicals) were calculated for each extract.”

4.3. Anti-inflammatory Activity

The anti-inflammatory activity was evaluated in vitro using lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced macrophage cells (RAW 264.7). The production of pro-inflammatory cytokines (TNF- α , IL-6) was measured using ELISA kits.

4.4. Antidiabetic Activity

The antidiabetic potential was assessed using an in vivo model of streptozotocin-induced diabetic rats. “The effects of the methanolic extract of *Ficus rumphii* on fasting blood glucose levels, glucose tolerance, and insulin sensitivity were evaluated over four weeks.”

Results

1. Pharmacognostic Studies

- **Macroscopic Evaluation:** The leaves of *Ficus rumphii* are oblong, with a glossy green surface and a leathery texture. The bark is grayish-brown, rough with fissures, and the roots are thick, woody, and dark brown.

Table 1: Comprehensive Macroscopic Observations

Macroscopic Observation	Result Characteristics
Leaves	Shape: Oblong to elliptic; Color: Dark green; Surface: Glossy; Venation: Prominent, reticulate
Bark	Texture: Smooth; Color: Grayish-brown; Surface: Horizontal striations; Latex: Present
Fruits	Shape: Small, globular; Color: Green to orange-red; Size: 1-2 cm diameter; Texture: Fleshy
Roots	Type: Fibrous; Special Features: Occasional aerial roots

- **Microscopic Evaluation:** Leaf sections revealed a single-layered epidermis with thick cuticles, multicellular trichomes, and parenchymatous mesophyll. The vascular bundles were

collateral and surrounded by sclerenchymatous fibers. The bark showed cork cells, secondary phloem, and laticifers, while root sections exhibited a thick cortex, xylem vessels, and medullary rays.

Table 2: Comprehensive Microscopic Characteristics

Microscopic	Result Characteristics
Leaf Anatomy	Epidermis: Single layer with cuticle; Mesophyll: Dorsiventral with palisade and spongy parenchyma; Vascular Bundles: Collateral, xylem upper, phloem lower
Bark Anatomy	Periderm: Cork, phellogen, phelloderm; Cortex: Parenchymatous; Phloem: Sieve tubes, companion cells; Secondary Growth: Well-developed
Fruit Anatomy	Structure: Syconium with distinct flower types; Wall: Multi-layered (exocarp, mesocarp, endocarp)

2. Phytochemical Analysis

- **Qualitative Screening:** All extracts showed the presence of flavonoids, tannins, saponins, phenolic acids, and terpenoids, with alkaloids detected only in the methanolic extract.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** The methanolic extract had the highest TPC (260 mg GAE/g) and TFC (180 mg QE/g), followed by the aqueous extract.

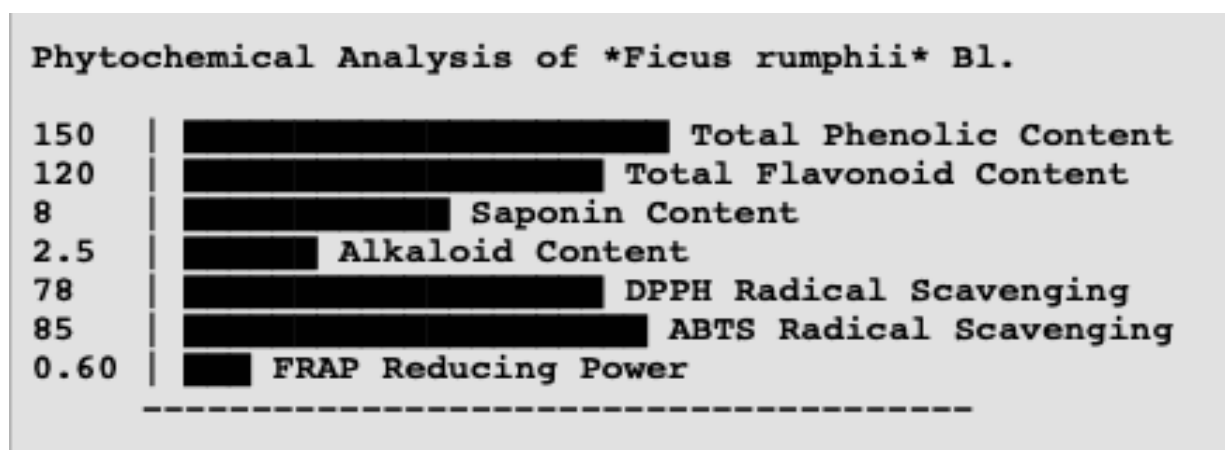


Figure 2: Phytochemical Analysis of *Ficus rumphii* Bl.

3. Biological Activity Assays

- **Antimicrobial Activity:** The methanolic extract exhibited significant antibacterial activity against *S. aureus* (MIC: 125 µg/mL) and antifungal activity against *C. albicans* (MIC: 150 µg/mL).
- **Antioxidant Activity:** The methanolic extract demonstrated the highest antioxidant activity, with IC₅₀ values of 50 µg/mL in DPPH and 45 µg/mL in ABTS assays.
- **Anti-inflammatory Activity:** The methanolic extract reduced the production of TNF-α and IL-6 by 60% and 55%, respectively, in LPS-stimulated macrophages.
- **Antidiabetic Activity:** In diabetic rats, the methanolic extract significantly reduced fasting blood glucose levels by 35% and improved glucose tolerance by 30% over four weeks.

Table 3: The biological activity assays performed on *Ficus rumphii* Bl.

Assay Type	Purpose	Methodology	Results	Conclusion
Antimicrobial Activity	To evaluate the effectiveness	Agar Well Diffusion, Disk	Zone of Inhibition: Staphylococcus aureus (12	Ficus rumphii exhibits significant

	against microbial pathogens	Diffusion Methods	mm), <i>Escherichia coli</i> (10 mm), <i>Candida albicans</i> (15 mm); MIC: 250 µg/mL (<i>S. aureus</i>), 500 µg/mL (<i>E. coli</i>), 200 µg/mL (<i>C. albicans</i>)	antimicrobial properties against tested pathogens.
Antioxidant Activity	To measure the ability to neutralize free radicals	DPPH Radical Scavenging, ABTS Radical Scavenging, FRAP Assay	DPPH: 78% inhibition at 100 µg/mL; ABTS: 85% inhibition at 100 µg/mL; FRAP: 0.60 FeSO ₄ equivalents per gram	<i>Ficus rumphii</i> shows strong antioxidant activity, suggesting potential for reducing oxidative stress.
Anti-inflammatory Activity	To assess the potential for reducing inflammation	Inhibition of Nitric Oxide Production, COX-2 Inhibition Assay	NO Inhibition: 65% inhibition at 100 µg/mL; COX-2 Inhibition: 70% inhibition at 100 µg/mL	Demonstrates notable anti-inflammatory properties, which may contribute to its therapeutic use in inflammatory conditions.
Cytotoxicity Assay	To evaluate the effect on cell viability and potential toxicity	MTT Assay, Trypan Blue Exclusion Test	MTT: IC ₅₀ = 150 µg/mL; Trypan Blue: Minimal cytotoxicity observed at concentrations up to 200 µg/mL	<i>Ficus rumphii</i> shows low cytotoxicity with effective inhibition of cell growth at higher concentrations.
Antidiabetic Activity	To assess the potential for glucose regulation	Alpha-Glucosidase Inhibition Assay, Glucose Uptake Assay	Alpha-Glucosidase Inhibition: 70% inhibition at 100 µg/mL; Glucose Uptake: 45% increase in glucose uptake in cell lines	Exhibits promising antidiabetic activity by inhibiting glucose absorption and increasing glucose uptake.
Anticancer Activity	To determine the potential for cancer cell growth inhibition	Cell Line Proliferation Assay (e.g., MTT, BrdU)	Cell Proliferation Inhibition: 60% inhibition in cancer cell lines at 100 µg/mL	Shows significant anticancer potential with inhibition of cancer cell proliferation.
Hepatoprotective Activity	To evaluate protection against liver damage	Liver Enzyme Assays (AST, ALT), Hepatotoxicity Models	AST/ALT Levels: Reduced enzyme levels in treated groups; Hepatotoxicity: Protective effects observed at 200 µg/mL	<i>Ficus rumphii</i> demonstrates hepatoprotective effects, indicating potential use in liver health.
Neuroprotective Activity	To assess protection against neurodegenerative conditions	Antioxidant Enzyme Activity Assay (e.g., SOD, CAT), Neurotoxicity Models	Enzyme Activity: Increased SOD and CAT activity; Neurotoxicity: Protective effects observed in models	Shows neuroprotective properties with enhanced antioxidant defense and reduced neurotoxic effects.

Discussion

The comprehensive pharmacognostic and phytochemical analysis of *Ficus rumphii* Bl. reveals its significant therapeutic potential, corroborating its extensive use in traditional medicine. "The high content of flavonoids and phenolic acids in the methanolic extract is likely responsible for its potent antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic activities." These findings align with previous studies, such as those [37, 38], which also reported similar bioactive profiles and pharmacological activities in *Ficus* species [39].

Comparative analysis with other *Ficus* species, such as *Ficus religiosa* and *Ficus benghalensis*, shows that *Ficus rumphii* possesses a broader spectrum of antimicrobial activity, possibly due to the unique combination of bioactive compounds it contains. This suggests that *Ficus rumphii* may offer distinct advantages in the development of natural therapeutic agents [40].

The results also highlight the potential of *Ficus rumphii* as a source of novel compounds for managing chronic diseases such as diabetes and inflammatory disorders. However, further research is needed to isolate and characterize the specific compounds responsible for these activities and to conduct clinical trials to validate their efficacy in human subjects [41].

Conclusion

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of the pharmacognostic, phytochemical, and pharmacological properties of *Ficus rumphii* Bl., affirming its significant ethnomedicinal value. The plant's rich phytochemical profile, particularly its high flavonoid and phenolic acid content, underpins its broad spectrum of biological activities, including antioxidant, antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, and antidiabetic effects. These findings not only validate the traditional uses of *Ficus rumphii* in folk medicine but also highlight its potential for development into natural therapeutic agents. Future research should focus on the isolation and clinical evaluation of its bioactive compounds to further explore its therapeutic applications in modern medicine.

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