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A UPDATED REVIEW ON EXPLORING THE ROLE OF MEDICINAL PLANTS IN SCALP AND HAIR WELLNESS

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ABSTRACT

This review comprehensively explores the traditional and modern applications of medicinal plants in promoting scalp and hair health, emphasizing their pharmacological properties, bioactive compounds, and therapeutic efficacy. The plants reviewed include Reetha (Sapindus mukorossi), Fenugreek (Trigonella foenum-graecum), Orange Peel (Citrus sinensis), Flaxseed (Linum usitatissimum), Hibiscus (Hibiscus rosa-sinensis), and Castor Oil (Ricinus communis). These botanicals, each with a unique profile of bioactive compounds such as saponins, flavonoids, fatty acids, and antioxidants, have demonstrated multifaceted benefits for hair care. Reetha acts as a natural cleanser, Fenugreek stimulates hair growth and prevents hair loss, while Orange Peel promotes scalp health with its antioxidant-rich content. Flaxseed provides nourishment to hair follicles, Hibiscus enhances hair strength and shine, and Castor Oil improves thickness and reduces hair breakage.

The review emphasizes the ability of these plants to address common hair and scalp concerns such as dryness, dandruff, hair fall, and weak strands through their cleansing, moisturizing, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties. Unlike synthetic hair care solutions, these natural remedies are eco-friendly, cost-effective, and gentle on the scalp. By bridging traditional knowledge with modern pharmacological studies, this work highlights their mechanisms of action and potential applications in sustainable personal care products. Furthermore, it identifies gaps in current research and advocates for the standardization of formulations and clinical trials to validate these remedies' efficacy and safety. This review not only reinforces the relevance of medicinal plants in hair care but also supports the growing trend toward natural and comprehensive wellness practices.

INTRODUCTION

The use of medicinal plants in hair care has a rich history across diverse cultures, driven by their effectiveness in maintaining and enhancing hair health. For generations, people have turned to nature for solutions to common hair problems, such as hair loss, dandruff, dryness, and weak hair strands. Unlike synthetic hair products that often contain harsh chemicals, natural remedies derived from plants are gentle, eco-friendly, and rich in bioactive compounds that support hair vitality.Among the most notable botanicals used in traditional and modern hair care are Reetha (Sapindus mukorossi), Fenugreek (Trigonella foenum-graecum), Orange Peel (Citrus sinensis), Flaxseed (Linum usitatissimum), Hibiscus (Hibiscus rosa-sinensis), and Castor Oil (Ricinus communis). These plants are renowned for their specific benefits, such as cleansing the scalp, promoting hair growth, reducing dandruff, and improving hair texture and shine.For example, Reetha, commonly known as soapnut, is rich in saponins, which provide natural cleansing and antimicrobial properties. Fenugreek seeds are a powerhouse of nutrients, including proteins and flavonoids, that stimulate hair growth and reduce hair fall. Similarly, Orange Peel's high vitamin C content promotes collagen production, strengthening hair follicles. Flaxseed, with its omega-3 fatty acids, nourishes the scalp and prevents hair thinning. Hibiscus is celebrated for its ability to stimulate hair growth and combat dandruff, while Castor Oil deeply moisturizes hair, reducing breakage and improving thickness.

These botanicals not only address the root causes of hair issues but also offer a holistic approach by improving scalp health and supporting overall wellness. Their versatility in forms such as oils, powders, masks, and rinses make them accessible for various hair care routines. This review explores the properties of these plants, their traditional uses, and the science behind their effectiveness in hair care. By bridging traditional knowledge with modern research, this paper aims to highlight the potential of natural botanicals as sustainable and effective solutions for hair health.

Plant Profile

1) Reetha (Sapindus Mukorossi)

Reetha (Sapindus mukorossi), commonly known as soapnut or Indian soapberry, belongs to the family Sapindaceae and is widely valued for its versatile applications in traditional medicine, cosmetics, and sustainable cleaning solutions. Native to tropical and subtropical regions, particularly India and Nepal, it thrives in warm climates with well-drained soils and moderate rainfall.This deciduous tree grows up to 20 meters, with pinnate leaves, small yellowish flowers, and round, wrinkled fruits rich in saponins—a natural surfactant responsible for its cleansing properties. [1]

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Reetha is extensively used in hair care due to its gentle cleansing and conditioning properties, helping to remove excess oil, prevent dandruff, and promote strong, shiny hair. It is a key ingredient in natural shampoos and herbal hair masks. Besides hair care, it is used in eco-friendly detergents, shampoos, and skincare products and has medicinal benefits like antibacterial and anti-inflammatory effects. Its cultivation involves seed propagation, with fruits typically harvested in winter. A symbol of sustainability, reetha plays a vital role in promoting chemical-free and environmentally conscious lifestyles.[2]

Botanical Classification

Category	Details
Kingdom	Plantae
Subkingdom	Tracheobionta
Superdivision	Spermatophyta
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Subclass	Rosidae
Order	Sapindales
Family	Sapindaceae
Genus	*Sapindus*
Species	*Sapindus mukorossi*

Table 1: Botanical Classification of Reetha.

Fig 1: Reetha Powder

Botanical Description: [3]

Reetha, commonly known as Indian Soapnut, is a plant of significant ethnobotanical andcommercial importance. Below is a detailed botanical description is given.

1) **Habit**
   Sapindus mukorossi is a medium to large-sized deciduous tree, growing up to 20 meters in height with a spreading crown.
2) **Leaves**
   Pinnately compound leaves, 30–50 cm long, alternate in arrangement. The leaflets are lanceolate, smooth, and shiny with entire margins.
3) **Flowers**
   Small, bisexual, or unisexual, pale greenish-white flowers arranged in terminal or axillary panicles. The flowers are fragrant and bloom during the summer months.
4) **Fruit**
   The fruit is a round, fleshy drupe, about 1.5–2.5 cm in diameter. When ripe, it turns yellowish to reddish-brown. The fruit contains a single black, hard seed.
5) **Bark**
   The bark is smooth, light brown, and exfoliating in mature trees.
6) **Roots**
   Taproot system, anchoring the tree deeply into the soil.
7) **Special Features**
   The fruit is rich in saponins, which produce a natural lather when in contact with water, making it a popular natural detergent and cleansing agent.

Vernacular names: [4]

Language	Vernacular Names
English	Soapnut, Reetha, Indian Soapberry
Hindi	Reetha, Aritha, Ritha, Aritak
Sanskrit	Arishtak, Reetha, Ritha, Dharmashakti
Bengali	Ritha, Reetha, Aritha
Tamil	Kottamalli, Aritha, Kottamalli Muthu, Aritham
Telugu	Ritha, Poondu, Aritha, Ritha Kottamalli
Gujarati	Ritha, Aritha, Ritho, Kottamalli, Rithaka
Kannada	Aritha, Kottamalli, Kottamalle, Arithaa
Marathi	Reetha, Ritha, Kottamalli
Punjabi	Reetha, Ritha, Aritha, Kottamalli, Poondu
Malayalam	Aritha, Kottamalli, Reetha, Poondu, Kottamalliyam
Urdu	Reetha, Aritha, Ritha

Table 2: Vernacular names of Reetha.

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Geographical Source

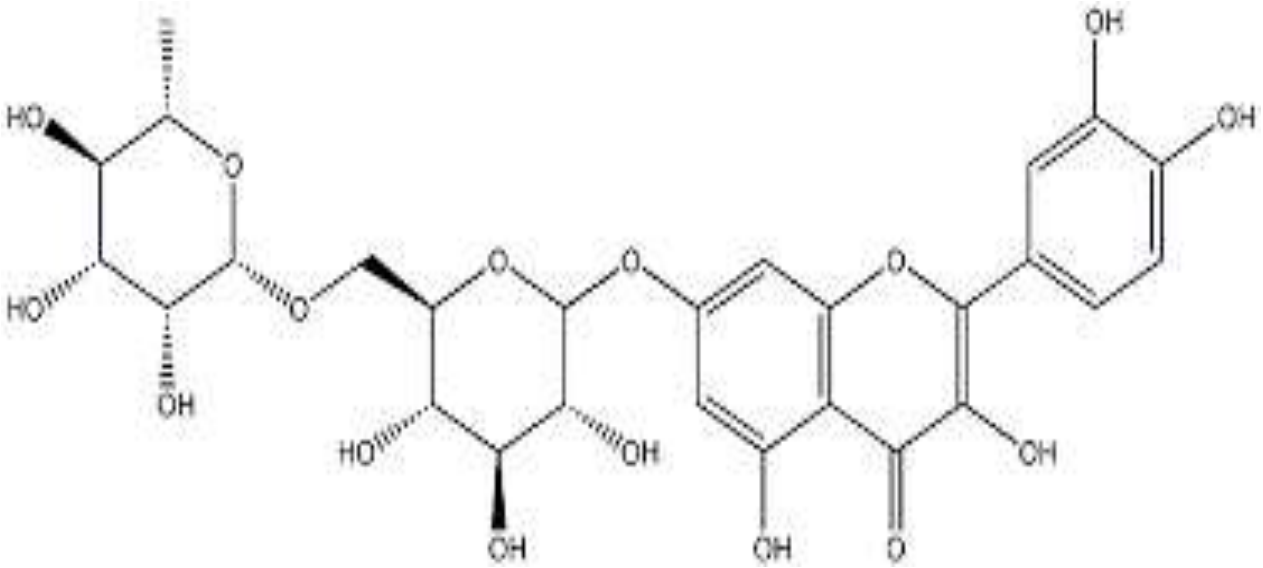
Sapindus mukorossi (Reetha) is native to the tropical and subtropical regions of Asia, with its primary geographical sources in India, Nepal, China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and parts of Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Indonesia, and the Philippines. It thrives in well-drained soils, typically at elevations ranging from 200 to 1500 meters above sea level. Reetha is commonly found in forests and hilly areas where the climate is warm and conducive to its growth. Beyond its natural habitat, the plant is also cultivated in subtropical regions for its commercial value, especially for the saponins found in its fruits, which are used in detergents, personal care products, and traditional medicines.[5]

Chemical Constituents: [5,6]

Part of the Plant	Chemical Constituents	Benefits for Hair Care
Fruit	Saponins (sapindosides A, B, C, D, E), Sugars (10%), Mucus	Cleansing, foaming, and antimicrobial properties; removes dirt and excess oils without stripping natural oils.
Seeds	Fatty acids (arachidic, behenic, linoleic, oleic, palmitic, stearic, oleanolic, sapindic acid), Trifoliosides A, B, C, D, E, Glucopyranoside of stigmasterol, Kaempferol, Quercetin, β-sitosterol, Hederagenin	Moisturizes and conditions the hair; strengthens and nourishes the scalp and hair follicles; prevents breakage.
Fruit Sac	Emarginatoside B & C (hederagenin glycosides), Hederagenin, Oleanolic acid, Sapindic acid	Cleansing and nourishing properties; promotes scalp health and shiny hair.
Leaf	3-O-rutinoside of isorhamnetin, Quercetin	Antioxidant effects that protect the scalp and promote healthy hair growth.
Peels	Triterpenoid saponins	Antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties; helps maintain a healthy scalp.

Table 3: Chemical Constituents of Reetha.

Chemical Structure



Rutinoside

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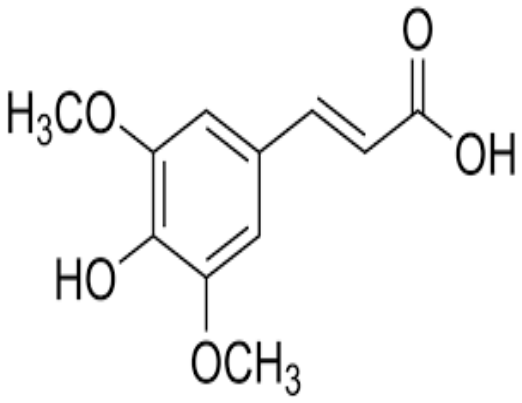
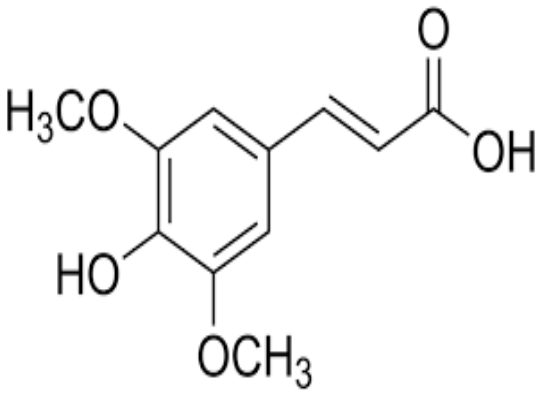
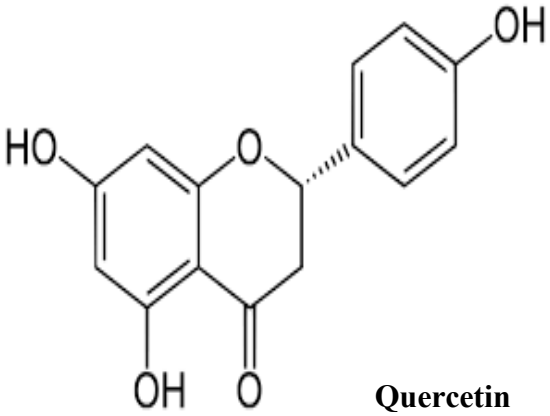


Sapindic acid



Oleanolic acid



Quercetin

Pharmacological Activities

1. Cleansing and Detoxifying

Sapindus mukorossi (Reetha) is widely known for its natural cleansing properties, thanks to its high saponin content. Saponins are natural surfactants that have a foaming ability when mixed with water. When used on the hair and scalp, Reetha forms a rich, mild lather that effectively removes excess oil, dirt, sweat, and environmental pollutants. The saponins in Reetha gently cleanse the scalp without disrupting the natural oil balance. Unlike synthetic shampoos, which may contain harsh detergents and chemicals that strip hair of its natural oils, Reetha helps maintain the scalp's moisture, preventing dryness and irritation. By purifying the scalp, it helps to create a healthier environment for hair growth and reduces the risk of clogged hair follicles, which can lead to scalp conditions like seborrheic dermatitis or folliculitis.[7]

2. Hair Growth Promotion

Reetha is not only a natural cleanser but also plays an important role in stimulating hair growth. The fruit of *Sapindus mukorossi* is rich in bioactive compounds that improve blood circulation to the scalp, ensuring that hair follicles receive a steady supply of oxygen and nutrients. This enhanced circulation helps to nourish the follicles, promoting the growth of healthier and stronger hair. Additionally, the antioxidants found in Reetha, such as flavonoids and phenolic compounds, help protect the hair follicles from oxidative stress and free radical damage. This protection helps prevent premature hair aging and thinning by preserving the integrity of the hair follicle cells. The overall result is thicker, stronger, and more vibrant hair. Furthermore, Reetha has been shown to be effective in balancing the pH of the scalp, which contributes to a better environment for hair growth. Regular use of Reetha in hair care can help in the long-term promotion of hair regeneration. [7,8]

3. Anti-dandruff Activity

Dandruff is a common scalp condition that can cause flakiness, irritation, and itching, often due to an overgrowth of fungi like *Malassezia* on the scalp. *Sapindus mukorossi* has demonstrated strong antifungal and antimicrobial properties, particularly due to the saponins, phenolic acids, and flavonoids it contains. These active compounds help to reduce the fungal load on the scalp by

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inhibiting the growth of dandruff-causing fungi. By eliminating the excess fungi, Reetha helps to reduce scalp inflammation and irritation, which are often the root causes of itching and redness associated with dandruff. Moreover, its soothing and anti-inflammatory properties further help in reducing the irritation that often accompanies dandruff. Reetha also helps control the excess oil secretion in the scalp, which is another factor contributing to dandruff formation. As a result, the scalp remains clean, free from excess oil, and less prone to fungal infections, leading to a healthier and dandruff-free scalp. [9]

Other Activities

Activity	Description
Antimicrobial Activity	Reetha exhibits significant antimicrobial properties, which help in preventing infections and supporting overall scalp and skin health.
Anti-fungal Activity	Effective against fungal infections such as ringworm and seborrheic dermatitis, primarily due to its antimicrobial compounds.
Anti-inflammatory Activity	The saponins and triterpenes in Reetha help reduce inflammation, making it useful in treating conditions like acne, psoriasis, and general skin irritation.
Antioxidant Activity	Reetha contains phenolic compounds like quercetin and kaempferol that act as antioxidants, helping protect cells from oxidative damage, contributing to overall health and anti-aging.
Anti-cancer Activity	Some studies suggest that Reetha's saponins and other compounds may have potential anti-cancer effects by inhibiting the growth of cancer cells.
Hepatoprotective Activity	Reetha has been traditionally used to support liver health, with evidence suggesting it may help protect the liver from damage caused by toxins.

Table 4: Other activities of Reetha.

2) Fenugreek (*Trigonella Foenum-Graecum*)

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), a member of the Fabaceae family, is a herbaceous annual plant native to the Mediterranean region, southern Europe, and western Asia. In addition to being a widely used culinary ingredient, Fenugreek is highly regarded for its therapeutic properties, especially for hair care. The seeds and leaves of Fenugreek are known for their rich nutrient content, including fiber, protein, and essential fatty acids, which contribute to its health benefits. Fenugreek has been used for centuries in traditional medicine to promote healthy hair growth, combat dandruff, and enhance scalp health. [10]

The seeds are particularly valued in hair care for their ability to stimulate hair follicles, leading to stronger, thicker hair. Additionally, Fenugreek contains high levels of lecithin, an emollient that helps moisturize and nourish the scalp and hair strands. The plant is also recognized for its anti-inflammatory, antifungal, and antioxidant properties, which support scalp health by reducing scalp irritation, controlling excess oil production, and preventing hair loss. These attributes make Fenugreek a valuable ingredient in various hair care formulations, including shampoos, conditioners, and oils. [11]

Fenugreek's therapeutic potential extends beyond its culinary uses, offering significant health benefits, especially in the realm of hair care, making it an accessible and effective plant for promoting healthy, nourished hair. Its widespread cultivation across diverse climates, such as in India, the Middle East, and North Africa, has led to its global recognition as a versatile herb with both gastronomic and medicinal importance.[11]

Fig 2: Fenugreek

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Botanical Classification

Domain	Eukarya
Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Order	Fabales
Family	Fabaceae
Sub-Family	Trifoliae
Genus	Trigonella
Sub-genus	Foenumgraecum
Species	Trigonella foenum graecum

Table 5: Botanical Classification of Fenugreek.

Common Names

Language	Common Names
Marathi	Methi
Kannada	Menthya
Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi	Methi
Hindi	Methi, Saag methi, Kasuri methi
Sanskrit	Methika
Telugu	Menthulu
Tamil	Meti
English	Fenugreek

Table 6: Common Names of Fenugreek.

Morphology

Fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*), a small annual herbaceous plant, exhibits characteristic morphology that aids in its identification and cultivation. It typically grows to a height of 30–60 cm, with erect, hollow stems that branch at the base. The plant bears trifoliate, pinnately compound leaves, each consisting of three obovate to oblong leaflets with a rounded apex and a slightly serrated margin.[12] Its flowers are small, yellowish-white, and solitary, emerging from the leaf axils. These flowers eventually give way to slender, elongated pods containing 10–20 small, angular seeds, which are yellow to amber in colour.[13]

The seeds possess a distinctive, slightly bitter taste and are aromatic, which is why they are highly valued for culinary and medicinal uses. Fenugreek's root system is shallow and tap-rooted, enabling it to tolerate a range of soil conditions, although it thrives in well-drained, loamy soils.[14]

Chemical Constituent [15.16]

Chemical Constituent	Description
Saponins	Includes compounds like diosgenin and trigonelline, known for stimulating blood circulation in hair follicles, promoting hair growth and nourishing the scalp.
Alkaloids	Trigonelline: A nitrogenous compound that helps improve blood flow to the scalp and enhances overall scalp health.
Flavonoids	Quercetin and Kaempferol: Antioxidants that protect hair follicles from oxidative stress and free radical damage, promoting healthy hair growth.
Amino Acids	Lysine, Arginine, and Histidine: Essential for keratin production, promoting stronger and healthier hair.
Fiber	Soluble and Insoluble Fiber: Nourish hair follicles and promote scalp health, contributing to hair growth and overall hair health.
Fatty Acids	Linoleic Acid and Oleic Acid: Hydrate the scalp, prevent dryness, and protect against hair thinning and breakage.
Polysaccharides	Mucilage: A moisturizing agent that helps to keep the scalp and hair hydrated, improving texture and preventing frizz.
Vitamins and Minerals	Vitamin C, Vitamin A, Iron, and Magnesium: These nutrients improve blood circulation to the scalp and support healthy hair growth by aiding nutrient absorption.

Table 7: Chemical Constituents of Fenugreek.

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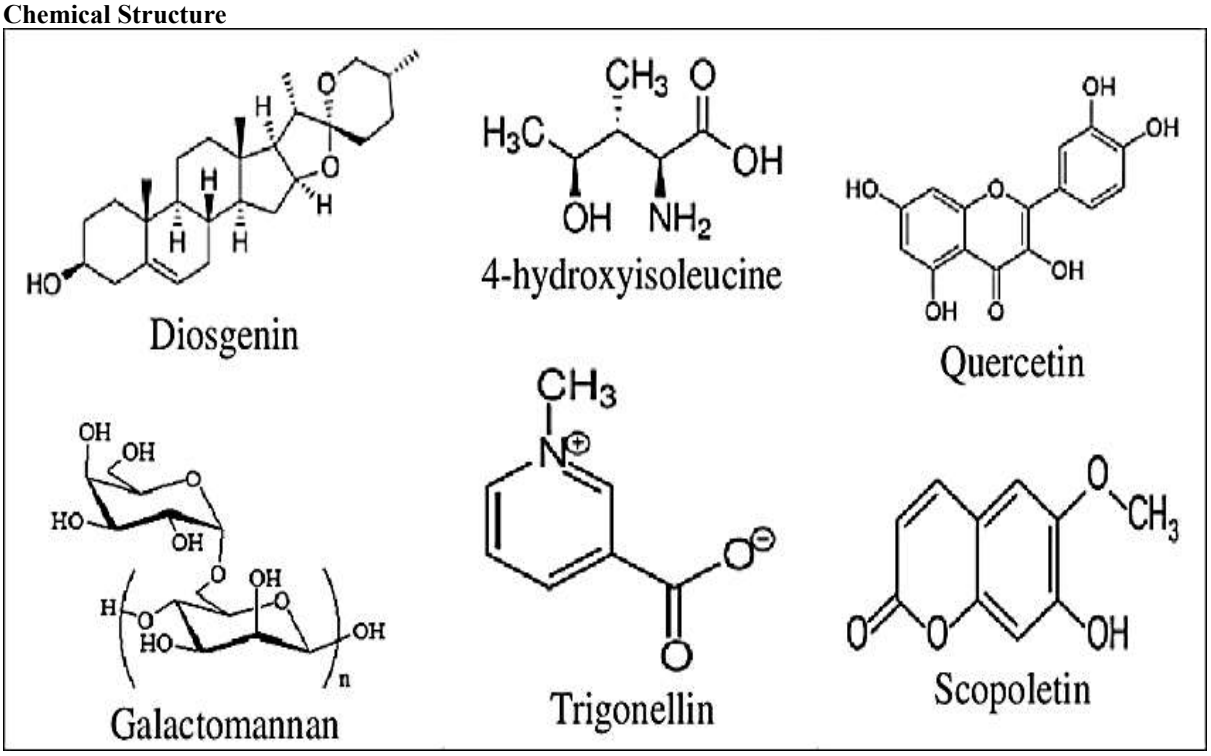
Chemical Structure



Pharmacological Activities

1. Hair Growth Stimulation

Fenugreek seeds contain **saponins**, such as diosgenin, which stimulate hair follicles and promote hair growth. These compounds enhance blood circulation to the scalp, leading to stronger and healthier hair. Fenugreek's nourishing effect on hair follicles results in reduced hair loss and improved hair thickness. [10]

2. Dandruff Reduction

Fenugreek has **antifungal** and **antibacterial** properties, which help in reducing dandruff and preventing scalp infections. This promotes a healthier scalp, creating an ideal environment for better hair growth and reducing scalp irritation. [11]

3. Scalp Hydration and Moisturization

Fenugreek contains **mucilage**, a natural moisturizing agent, which helps hydrate the scalp, preventing dryness, itchiness, and flakiness. This hydration promotes healthy hair growth by maintaining scalp health and improving hair texture. [10]

Other Pharmacological Activities:

Activity	Description
Anti-Inflammatory and Analgesic	Fenugreek has strong anti-inflammatory and analgesic effects, helping to reduce scalp irritation and inflammation, which contributes to healthier hair follicles and promotes better hair growth.[11]
Antioxidant Activity	Flavonoids like quercetin and kaempferol along with vitamin C provide significant antioxidant activity. They protect hair follicles from oxidative stress and free radical damage, helping prevent hair thinning and loss.[10][11]
Cholesterol-Lowering and Cardiovascular Health	Fenugreek has lipid-lowering effects, contributing to better cardiovascular health. Improved blood circulation to hair follicles enhances hair growth.[11]
Blood Sugar Regulation	Fenugreek helps regulate blood sugar levels due to its fiber and flavonoid content. This supports overall hair health by stabilizing blood glucose levels, which can otherwise contribute to hair loss.[10]
Anti-Diabetic Activity	Fenugreek improves insulin sensitivity and helps regulate blood glucose levels. This reduces the risk of hair loss associated with diabetes and metabolic disorders.[10]
Anti-Cancer Activity	Some studies suggest that Fenugreek has anticancer properties, which help reduce oxidative stress and inflammation. These factors are linked to hair loss, making Fenugreek beneficial for overall scalp and hair health.[11]
Antimicrobial and Antifungal Activity	Fenugreek's antimicrobial and antifungal properties combat scalp infections like dandruff, maintaining scalp hygiene and promoting optimal conditions for healthy hair growth.[11]

Table 8: Other activities of Fenugreek.

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3) Orange Peel (Citrus Sinensis)

Orange peel, a byproduct of the sweet orange (*Citrus sinensis*), is valued for its aromatic and medicinal properties. It contains bioactive compounds like essential oils, flavonoids, and antioxidants, contributing to its health benefits. Originally native to Southeast Asia, orange cultivation has spread globally to regions with warm, tropical, and subtropical climates. Major producers of sweet oranges include Brazil, the U.S., Mexico, Spain, and India, making orange peel widely available for use in various industries such as food, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals.[17]

Fig 3: Orange Peel

Botanical Classification

Category	Details
Domain	Eukarya
Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Order	Sapindales
Family	Rutaceae
Genus	Citrus
Species	Citrus sinensis

Table 9: Botanical Classification of Orange Peel.

Botanical Description

- **Plant Type:** Evergreen tree, 3 to 15 meters tall.
- **Leaves:** Simple, glossy, oblong, and dark green with a characteristic aromatic smell when crushed.
- **Flowers:** White, fragrant, and appear in clusters, typically in spring.
- **Fruit:** The orange is a spherical fruit with a tough, aromatic rind (peel) that is orange in color when ripe. The peel is thick and contains aromatic oils.
- **Root System:** The tree has a shallow root system that allows it to spread over a wide area.

Vernacular Names

Language	Common Name
English	Orange Peel
Hindi	Santra Chilka
Gujarati	Santra Ni Chilka
Marathi	Santra Chhal
Tamil	Orangu Poo
Telugu	Oranga Chilaka
Bengali	Komola Chhoda
Urdu	Santra Ka Chilka

Table 10: vernacular name of Orange Peel.

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Chemical Constituents

Orange peel contains several bioactive compounds with diverse health benefits. The most notable constituents include **flavonoids** (such as **hesperidin**, **naringin**, and **rutin**), which have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties. The peel also contains **essential oils** like **limonene** and **pinene**, which give it its characteristic fragrance and contribute antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory effects. Other important constituents include **vitamin C** (ascorbic acid), which supports immune function and skin health, **carotenoids** like **beta-carotene**, and **pectin**, a soluble fiber known for its cholesterol-lowering effects. Additionally, the peel contains **phenolic compounds** such as **ferulic acid** and **caffeic acid**, which have antioxidant properties.[17]

Pharmacological Activities

1. **Antioxidant Activity**
   Orange peel is rich in flavonoids (e.g., **hesperidin**, **naringin**) and **vitamin C**, which contribute to its potent antioxidant properties. These compounds help neutralize free radicals, reduce oxidative stress, and protect cells from damage, which supports overall skin and hair health.
2. **Anti-inflammatory Effects**
   The flavonoids present in orange peel, such as **hesperidin**, have anti-inflammatory properties. These compounds help alleviate inflammation, which can be beneficial for soothing irritated skin, calming scalp inflammation, and improving the overall health of hair follicles.
3. **Antimicrobial Activity**
   The essential oils in orange peel, including **limonene** and **pinene**, exhibit strong antimicrobial and antifungal properties. These compounds are effective in combating scalp infections like dandruff, promoting a healthy scalp, and preventing microbial growth that could impair hair health.
4. **Cholesterol-lowering Effects**
   Orange peel contains **pectin**, a type of soluble fiber known to help lower LDL cholesterol levels. By reducing cholesterol, it contributes to better blood circulation, which enhances the supply of nutrients and oxygen to hair follicles, thereby supporting healthy hair growth.
5. **Digestive Health**
   The **pectin** and fiber content in orange peel promote healthy digestion and detoxification. By aiding in the removal of toxins from the body, orange peel indirectly supports clearer skin and a healthier scalp, both of which can improve hair health.
6. **Calming and Stress-relieving Effects**
   The **limonene** and **linalool** terpenes in orange peel have calming and anti-anxiety properties. Reducing stress can help prevent stress-induced hair loss, making orange peel beneficial in promoting hair health by supporting mental well-being.
7. **Skin and Hair Care**
   The high vitamin C content in orange peel promotes collagen production, which enhances skin elasticity and supports hair follicle strength. The moisturizing and nourishing properties of orange peel help improve the texture and quality of both skin and hair.

4) Flax Seed

Flaxseed, scientifically known as *Linum usitatissimum*, is an ancient crop belonging to the **Linaceae** family. Native to the Mediterranean region, flax has been cultivated for thousands of years for both its seeds and fibers. It is renowned for its nutritional and therapeutic value, making it one of the most important functional foods worldwide.

Flaxseed is a rich source of **omega-3 fatty acids** (particularly **alpha-linolenic acid**, ALA), which promote heart health and reduce inflammation. Additionally, it contains a high level of **lignans**, fiber, and essential vitamins and minerals, contributing to digestive health, cholesterol regulation, and overall well-being. These compounds are also known to promote hair health by improving scalp circulation and preventing hair loss.

Flaxseed's versatility extends beyond nutrition and hair care, as it is also utilized for its fibers in the textile industry, and its oil is used in various industrial applications. The widespread cultivation of flaxseed spans regions across North America, Europe, and Asia, further underscoring its global importance. [27,28]

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Fig 4: Flax Seed

Botanical Classification

Category	Classification
Domain	Eukarya
Kingdom	Plantae
Division	Magnoliophyta
Class	Magnoliopsida
Order	Malpighiales
Family	Linaceae
Genus	Linum
Species	Linum usitatissimum

Table 11: Botanical Classification of Flax Seed

Vernacular Names

Language	Vernacular Name
English	Flax seed
Hindi	Alsi
Sanskrit	Tisi
Marathi	Alshi
Tamil	Ali Vithai
Telugu	Aviseegudlu
Kannada	Agase
Bengali	Tisi

Table 12: Vernacular Name of Flax Seed

Botanical Description

Flax is an annual herbaceous plant that grows up to 1.2 meters in height. It has slender, erect stems with alternate, narrow lanceolate leaves. The leaves are smooth, light green, and have a slightly rough texture. Flax flowers are small, pale blue or purple, with five petals, and typically bloom in late spring to early summer. These flowers produce small, round fruits (capsules) that contain 6–10 shiny, brown or golden oval-shaped seeds, which are rich in Omega-3 fatty acids. The plant's fibers are extracted from the stem and used for making linen. Flax thrives in well-drained, sandy loam soil and cooler climates, preferring moderate rainfall conditionsGeographical Source.[26]

Chemical Constituents

Flax seeds contain a variety of bioactive compounds, including:

1. **Omega-3 Fatty Acids:** Mainly alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), beneficial for heart health.
2. **Lignans:** Secoisolariciresinol diglucoside (SDG), with antioxidant and anticancer properties.
3. **Proteins:** High-quality globulins and albumins.
4. **Fiber:** Both soluble and insoluble, aiding in digestion and cholesterol regulation.
5. **Vitamins:** Vitamin B1, B2, B6, and folate, supporting metabolic health.
6. **Minerals:** Magnesium, potassium, and phosphorus for bone and cardiovascular health.
7. **Phenolic Acids:** Caffeic acid and p-coumaric acid, providing antioxidant effects.
8. **Amino Acids:** Glutamic acid and aspartic acid, vital for protein synthesis. [26,27]

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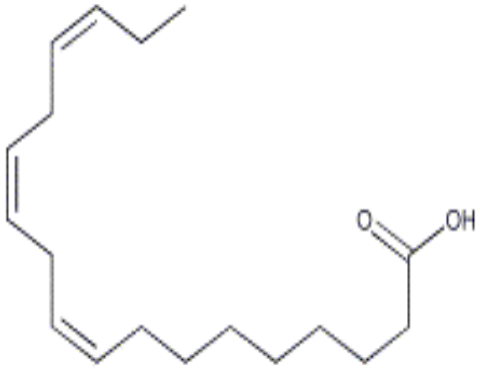
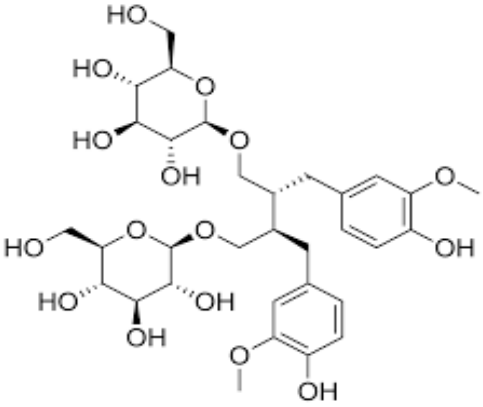
Chemical Structure



Alpha-Linolenic Acid (ALA),



Secoisolariciresinol diglucoside (SDG),

Pharmacological Activities: [25,26,27]

1. **Promotes Hair Growth**
   Flax seeds are rich in **Omega-3 fatty acids** (alpha-linolenic acid), which nourish hair follicles and improve scalp health. This can help promote hair growth and prevent hair thinning. Regular consumption of flaxseed or its oil helps enhance hair texture and strength.
2. **Prevents Hair Loss**
   The **lignans** in flax seeds act as phytoestrogens, which help balance hormones that can affect hair loss, particularly in cases of hormonal imbalances, such as those during menopause. They may also help reduce inflammation in the scalp, further preventing hair loss.
3. **Improves Scalp Health**
   Omega-3 fatty acids in flaxseed oil provide essential nutrients to the scalp, improving circulation and reducing inflammation. This creates a healthy environment for hair follicles, contributing to overall scalp health and reducing issues like dandruff and dryness.
4. **Enhances Hair Shine and Softness**
   The high content of **essential fatty acids** in flaxseed helps maintain scalp hydration and enhances the natural shine and smoothness of the hair, reducing frizz and breakage.

Other Pharmacological Activities

5. **Cardioprotective Effects**
6. **Anti-inflammatory Properties**
7. **Antioxidant Activity**
8. **Digestive Health**
9. **Hormonal Balance**
10. **Skin Health**
11. **Weight Management**

5) Hibiscus (Hibiscus Rosa-Sinensis) [29,30,31]

Hibiscus (*Hibiscus rosa-sinensis*) is a vibrant flowering shrub belonging to the Malvaceae family, native to East Asia and widely cultivated in tropical and subtropical regions around the world. Known for its large, colorful blooms in shades of red, pink, yellow, and white, hibiscus is a popular ornamental plant. In addition to its aesthetic value, hibiscus has been used for centuries in traditional medicine for its various therapeutic properties. The flowers, leaves, and stems of the hibiscus plant are rich in bioactive compounds such as anthocyanins, flavonoids, and organic acids, which contribute to its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and antimicrobial effects. Hibiscus is also commonly used in hair care products to promote hair growth, improve scalp health, and prevent dandruff, making it a valuable ingredient in both culinary and cosmetic applications.

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Fig 5: Hibiscus

Botanical Classification

1. Kingdom: Plantae
2. Phylum: Angiosperms
3. Class: Dicotyledons
4. Order: Malvales
5. Family: Malvaceae
6. Genus: Hibiscus
7. Species: Hibiscus rosa-sinensis

Botanical Description

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis is a flowering shrub native to tropical and subtropical regions of Asia. It grows up to 3–4 meters in height and produces large, showy flowers, usually in colors such as red, pink, yellow, and white. The plant has smooth, dark green, ovate leaves. The flowers are large, funnel-shaped, and have five petals with prominent stamens that extend outward. Hibiscus is also known for its use in traditional medicine, where its flowers and leaves are commonly used for various therapeutic purposes.

Pharmacological Activities

1. Antioxidant
2. Anti-inflammatory
3. Hair Care (Promotes hair growth, strengthens hair follicles, prevents dandruff)
4. Antimicrobial (Antibacterial and antifungal)
5. Hypotensive (Reduces blood pressure)

6) Castor Oil (Ricinus communis) [32,33,34]

Castor oil, derived from the seeds of the *Ricinus communis* plant, is a versatile oil used in various industries, including medicine, cosmetics, and manufacturing. Native to Africa and widely grown in tropical and subtropical regions such as India and Brazil, castor oil has been used for centuries for its medicinal properties. The oil is rich in **ricinoleic acid**, a unique fatty acid known for its anti-inflammatory, analgesic, and antibacterial effects. Castor oil is most notably used in hair care to stimulate hair growth, prevent hair loss, and enhance hair thickness and shine. Its moisturizing properties also make it beneficial for skin care, where it is used to treat dry skin, acne, and other skin conditions. Furthermore, castor oil has laxative properties and has been traditionally used to relieve constipation.

Fig 6: Castor Oil

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Botanical Classification

1. Kingdom: Plantae
2. Phylum: Angiosperms
3. Class: Dicotyledons
4. Order: Euphorbiales
5. Family: Euphorbiaceae
6. Genus: Ricinus
7. Species: Ricinus communis

Botanical Description

Castor oil comes from the seeds of the castor bean plant, *Ricinus communis*. The plant is a large shrub that can grow up to 12 meters in height, with palmate leaves and red, spiky flowers. The seeds of the castor bean plant are toxic due to the presence of ricin, but the oil extracted from the seeds is safe for use and has a variety of medicinal, industrial, and cosmetic applications.

Pharmacological Activities

1) Hair Growth Stimulation (Prevents hair loss, improves hair thickness)
2) Anti-inflammatory (Relieves joint pain and muscle soreness)
3) Antibacterial and Antifungal
4) Skin Care (Hydrates skin, reduces acne, treats eczema and psoriasis)
5) Laxative (Stimulates bowel movements)

CONCLUSION

Medicinal plants like Reetha, Fenugreek, Orange Peel, Flaxseed, Hibiscus, and Castor Oil offer immense potential for improving hair and scalp health due to their natural bioactive compounds. These plants are effective in cleansing, nourishing, reducing dandruff, and promoting hair growth, making them an eco-friendly alternative to synthetic hair care products. Their rich composition of saponins, flavonoids, fatty acids, and antioxidants provides a natural and sustainable way to tackle common hair issues like hair loss, dryness, and weak strands.Looking forward, the future formulation of hair serums using these medicinal plants presents an exciting opportunity. By combining these botanicals in innovative ways, it is possible to create targeted, multifunctional serums that address hair health comprehensively. Such formulations can focus on improving scalp hydration, promoting hair growth, enhancing strength and shine, and preventing hair fall. The key lies in optimizing the extraction of active compounds, ensuring they retain their potency and stability in serum products. Collaboration between traditional knowledge and modern technology will be essential in achieving this goal. As interest in natural and sustainable personal care products continues to grow, these formulations could play a significant role in shaping the future of hair care.

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