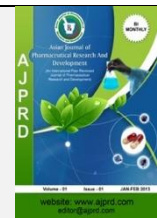


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Review Article

A Comprehensive Review on Medicinal Importance of *Cucumis melo*

Neha Yadav¹, Pinki Jangra², Kirti Yadav^{1*}¹B.M. College of Pharmacy, Farrukhnagar, Gurugram²Sant Kabir College of Pharmacy, Jhajjar, Haryana

ABSTRACT

Cucumis melo which is generally known as musk melon or Kharbuzah belongs to the family Cucurbitaceae. The plant is an annual climber or creeping herb characterized by its angular, scabrous stem, simple soft hairy orbicular-reniform leaves, and persistent tendrils that can be easily trained over trellises. The cultivation of musk melons is widespread throughout India, particularly, in the arid and thermally intense North-Western regions. Main components used include pulp, root, seeds, and seed oil. The compound has diuretic, emmenagogue, and cooling, demulcent effects. Throughout generations, fruit has been used to alleviate kidney problems including kidney and bladder stones, painful and burning urination, urinary tract ulcers, urinary retention, cough, hot inflammation of the liver, liver and bile blockage, dermatitis, and more. The oil extracted from seeds is highly nutritious and specifically contains linoleic acid (60-70%), lecithin, cephalin, and cerebroside. Melon seeds are composed of multiflorenol, isomultiflorenol, and 24-methylenecycloartenol esters. Its antimicrobial, antioxidant, antihyperlipidemic, anti-inflammatory, analgesic, diuretic, anthelmintic, nephroprotective and cytotoxic activity, Analgesic and Anti-inflammatory Activity, Anti-oxidant and free radical scavenging activity, Anti-Vitiligo Effect, Anti-ulcer activity, Anti-cancer activity, Hepato-protective activity, Diuretic effect, Protects against Hypothyroidism, Anti-diabetic activity, Haemagglutination and Haemolysis, Antibacterial and Anthelmintic activity, Antimicrobial activity, Antifungal, Nematicidal have been proved by research studies. *Cucumis melo* Linn., also known as melon, is a highly palatable and succulent fruit with a nutritional composition that provides vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fiber. Its health benefits include enhanced hydration and antioxidant qualities. *Cucumis melo* Linn. also holds significant economic significance, contributing to the agricultural economy by providing jobs and bolstering local markets. The species includes several cultivars, including cantaloupe and honeydew, each with unique taste profiles and textures. This variability highlights the importance of genetic variety in breeding initiatives to enhance yield resilience against pests and environmental stressors. Further research is needed to maximize the potential benefits of *Cucumis melo* Linn.

Keywords: *Cucumis melo*, North-Western regions, Haemolysis, Antibacterial, Anthelmintic activity, Antimicrobial

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*Address for Correspondence:

Ms. Kirti Yadav, Assistant Professor, B.M. College of Pharmacy, Farrukhnagar, Gurugram, India

INTRODUCTION

The melon, scientifically named *Cucumis melo* Linn., is a deciduous plant species that is classified under the Cucurbitaceae family, has attracted considerable interest in both gastronomic and scientific fields (Figure 1) (1). The species is distinguished by its highly palatable and succulent flesh and is farmed in several climatic regions across the globe. The nutritional composition of the fruit is remarkable, providing a substantial supply of vitamins A and C, potassium, and dietary fibre. These characteristics not only multiply its attractiveness as a revitalising dietary choice but also add to its possible health advantages, such as enhanced hydration and antioxidant qualities (2). Furthermore, apart

from its nutritional value, *Cucumis melo* Linn. Possesses significant economic significance. In many locations, the cultivation of melons makes a substantial contribution to the agricultural economy, offering farmers jobs and bolstering local markets (3). This species encompasses several cultivars, including cantaloupe and honeydew, each characterised by unique taste profiles and textures that vary according to the tastes of consumers. The presence of this variability highlights the significance of genetic variety within the species for breeding initiatives that target the enhancement of yield resilience against pests and environmental stressors (4). Moreover, studies on *Cucumis melo* Linn. have broadened scope to include fields like as genetics and phytochemistry.

Scientific investigations have discovered bioactive substances present in the melon that show promising therapeutic properties against chronic conditions such as diabetes and hypertension. Continual investigation of these factors may result in advances in functional meals that enhance health beyond fundamental nutrition (5). Hence, the multifarious importance of *Cucumis melo* Linn. in the fields of nutrition, economy, and science justifies the need for further research to maximally exploit its possible advantages (6).

Geographical Distributions

Native range includes Iran, South Africa, India, Philippines, China, Australia; exotic range includes Pakistan, Japan, India, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Yemen, Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegals, Pacific, Fiji Island, Guam, Tonga, New Britain, and Samoa. In India, particularly, in the arid and thermally intense North-Western regions (7, 8).



Figure 1: *Cucumis melo* Linn.

Vernacular Descriptions

Arabic names: Battikh, Bengali names: Kharmuj; Bombay names: Kharabuja, Chibuda names: Kakadi, Kharbuja, Kharbuj; Cannada names: Kalingada; Chinese names include Kankua, Then kwa, Hiang-kwa, and Tien Kua. English-Sweet melon, Musk melon, Melon; FrenchCantaloup, Melon; German- Melonegurke, Melone; Gujarati- Turbuch, Kharbuja, Teti, Chibdu, Shakarateli, Tarbucha; Hindi-Kharbuza, Sakkarteli, Kharbuja, Kachra, Patkira, Phut, Tuti, Kharbuza, Kakni, Kakri; LatinCucumis melo; Madras-Mulam; Marathi- Kharbuja, Khurbuj, Valuk, Chibunda, Kharbuja; Persian- Kharbuzeh, Kharpaza; Punjabi-Kharbuja, Gilas, Girasa; RussianMelon; Sanskrit- Kalinga, Kharvuja, Kharbuja, Madhupaka, Amritavha, Dashangula, Karkati, Madhupaka, Madhuphala, Phalaraja, Shadbhuja, Shadrekha, Tikta, Tiktaphala, Vrittakarkatti, Vritttervaru; Sindhi- Gidhro; Tamil- Vealapalam, Vellari-verai, Mulampazham, Mulam; TeluguVelipanda, Kharbuzadosa, Putzakova, Velipandu, Mulam; Unani- Khafis; Urdu-Kharbuzah (9, 10).

Taxonomical Classifications

The taxonomy of *Cucumis melo* is complex, as it includes various cultivars and subspecies that exhibit significant phenotypic variation. Taxonomically, this species is classified under the kingdom Plantae, phylum Angiosperms, class Eudicots, order Cucurbitales, family Cucurbitaceae, genus Cucumis, and species melo (11, 12). This hierarchical classification reflects not only its botanical lineage but also

its ecological significance within agricultural systems worldwide.

Kingdom	Plantae
Phylum	Angiosperms
Class	Eudicots
Order	Cucurbitales
Family	Cucurbitaceae
Genus	Cucumis
Species	melo

Botanical Descriptions

This plant species displays a wide variety of cultivars, such as cantaloupe and honeydew, each distinguished by unique morphological characteristics. A comprehensive botanical description of *Cucumis melo* includes several features like its growth pattern, leaf morphology, floral traits, and fruit development. A comprehensive grasp of these characteristics is essential for both horticulture techniques and agricultural activity (13). *Cucumis melo* often has a growth pattern characterised by a spreading or climbing vine, capable of attaining lengths of up to 3 meters when provided with support. The stems are distinguished by their angular shape and are adorned with delicate hairs. The leaves of the plant are alternating, palmate-lobed, and vary in size extensively depending on the specific cultivar. The diameter of these structures can range from 10 to 30 cm and they have a coarse texture produced by the presence of trichomes. The plant exhibits well-developed leaf venation, which significantly enhances its photosynthetic efficiency. The flowers of *Cucumis melo* are monoecious, meaning they incorporate both male and female reproductive components inside a single plant (14). Clusters of male flowers precede the emergence of female blooms, which are often solitary and situated in closer proximity to the vine's base. The yellow petals of these blooms serve as a magnet for pollinators, particularly bees. Upon successful pollination, fruit undergoes development into a succulent berry that exhibits considerable variation in size, shape, and colour among different cultivars. These variations range from spherical to elongated forms with smooth or netted rinds (15, 16).

Traditional Uses

Cucumis melo has been used in traditional medicine for its expected therapeutic advantages. Various cultures ascribe characteristics such as diuretic effects and digestive assistance to the melon. Within Chinese herbal medicine, the seeds of the melon are said to have the ability to relieve coughs and decrease phlegm production by virtue of their cooling properties (17). Furthermore, the pulp is frequently advised to alleviate inflammation and enhance hydration in hot weather situations. The various applications of melons highlight their importance beyond basic nourishment; they have a vital function in comprehensive health regimens (18). *Cucumis melo* functions as a purgative. Indications for its use include dysuria, renal function regulation, blood pressure reduction, dyspepsia, flatulence, leprosy, fever, jaundice, diabetes, obesity, cough, bronchitis, ascites, anaemia, constipation, other abdominal illnesses, amentia, and menorrhagia. The fruit serves as a cooling, cleaning, and

moisturising agent for the skin (19). It functions as a demulsant and stomachic agent (20). Seeds possess antitussive, febrifuge, and vermifuge effects. Fruit pulp is used as a topical therapeutic for both chronic and acute dermatitis. Moreover, *Cucumis melo* carries cultural importance in many civilizations that associate it with wealth and fertility (21). Within several African societies, melons hold a significant position during festivals and ceremonies as a method of summoning and promoting good luck (22). Furthermore, this cultural aspect enhances the significance of the fruit by expanding its worth beyond its nutritional and physical benefits to include social unity and identity (23). Furthermore, gaining knowledge about the conventional applications of *Cucumis melo* offers valuable understanding of the agricultural methods and cultural legacy associated with this extensively grown plant (24).

Phytochemical Constituents

Due to its potential health benefits, such as antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anticancer qualities, the phytochemical components of *Cucumis melo* have attracted significant attention. This article presents an analysis of the primary phytochemicals found in *Cucumis melo* and their corresponding biological effects (25). The main phytochemicals present in *Cucumis melo* are flavonoids, carotenoids, phenolic bioactive compounds, and vitamins. Flavonoids, including quercetin and kaempferol, are well recognised for their antioxidant characteristics. These organic substances aid in the neutralisation of free radicals within the body, so diminishing oxidative stress and potentially mitigating the likelihood of chronic illnesses such as cancer and cardiovascular diseases (26). Furthermore, flavonoids have demonstrated anti-inflammatory properties that could be advantageous for persons afflicted with inflammatory disorders. Carotenoids are a notable category of polyphenolic compounds found in *Cucumis melo*. Furthermore, these pigments serve as precursors to vitamin A, thereby playing a crucial role in human health in addition to contributing to the vivid colours of melons (27, 28). The antioxidant action of carotenoids, such as beta-carotene, is highly effective and they may provide protection against certain degenerative illnesses by improving immune function and fostering skin health (29). The composition of *C. melo* consists of several volatile chemicals that are biosynthetically produced from fatty acids, carotenoids, amino acids, and terpenes. The volatile constituents such as Methyl acetate, Ethyl acetate, Ethanol, Ethylbutanol, Benzaldehyde, Benzyl acetate, Phenylmethylacetate, Benzyl alcohol, Eugenol. Notable terpenoids include β pinene, 1,8-Cineol, Limonene, and p-Cymene (30). Nonvolatile components present in the substance include β carotenes, flavonoids, carbohydrates, linoleic acid, α -linolenic acid, glycolipids, phospholipids, amino acids, and phenolic glycosides. Analysis of *C. melo* seeds using phytochemical methods indicated the existence of phenolic glycoside (E)-4-hydroxycinnmyl alcohol Chemical compound, 4-O-(2'-O-b-Dapiofuranosyl) (1''_2'')Benzoyl O-b-D glucopyranoside, also known as b-D-glycopyranoside (31). These compounds are 3,29-O dibenzoylmultiflor-8-en-3_7b, 29-triol and 3-O-p-amino-benzoyl-29-O benzoylmultiflor-8-en-3a,7b, 29-triol (32). Recent isolations from *C. melo* have yielded six saturated fatty acids, namely astetradecanoic acid, pentadecanoic acid, hexadecanoic acid, heptadecanoic acid, eicosanoic acid, and octadecanoic acid,

as well as three unsaturated fatty acids named 9-hexadecenoic acid, 9-octadecenoic acid (Z), and 11-octadecanoic acid (33).

Pharmacological Activities

Anti-Alzheimer Activities

The study evaluated the anti-Alzheimer effect of *C. melo* seed powder in mice, focusing on brain acetylcholinesterase activity, blood cholesterol, and blood glucose levels. The extract significantly protected animals from memory deficits due to diazepam and scopolamine. The seed kernels showed memory improvement, decreased transfer latency, increased TSTQ, decreased escape latency time, increased discrimination index, and increased step down latency (34). The extract also significantly decreased acetyl cholinesterase activity, indicating total blood cholesterol and blood glucose levels. The study suggests that *C. melo* seeds extract may be a useful remedy for Alzheimer's disease management due to its seven-fold mechanism: flavonoids possessing powerful antioxidant properties, linoleic acid and arachidonic acid responsible for cholinergic neuron growth and regeneration, phosphatidylethanolamine and phosphatidylcholine serving as precursors for acetylcholine synthesis, neuroprotectin D1 release, inhibition of acetylcholinesterase enzyme, lowering blood cholesterol, and anti-hyperglycemic effect, which helps prevent brain damage due to excessive glucose (35).

Analgesic and Anti-inflammatory Activities

Cucumis melo extracts show significant analgesic properties in animal models, modulating nociceptive pathways and inhibiting pro-inflammatory cytokines (36). Some studies suggest that specific phytochemicals in melon can enhance endogenous analgesic mechanisms. In addition to its analgesic properties, *Cucumis melo* has anti-inflammatory effects, reducing inflammation levels in both experimental models and human subjects (37). This suggests that incorporating melon into one's diet may provide a natural approach to managing inflammation and promoting overall health. *Cucumis melo* Linn. presents promising analgesic and anti-inflammatory activities, supported by emerging scientific evidence (38). Further research into its phytochemical composition could lead to innovative dietary strategies or complementary therapies aimed at enhancing pain management and reducing inflammation naturally.

Gastroprotective effect

The peptic ulcer is the prevailing gastrointestinal (GIT) disease in contemporary industrialised societies. The prevention or treatment of peptic ulcers is a paramount challenge being faced by the field of medicine (39). The objective of this work was to assess the gastroprotective properties of an aqueous extract of *C. melo* bypylorus using the ligated preparation method. The results demonstrated notable anti-secretory activity, as indicated by reduced pepsin secretion, gastric juice volume, and acid output in rats with pylorus ligation (40). The results provided evidence that the aqueous extract of *C. melo* has strong antisecretory and gastroprotective properties, therefore supporting the traditional use of this plant for the treatment of peptic ulcers (41).

Anti-Oxidant and Free Radical Scavenging Activity

Cantaloupe methanolic extract has demonstrated DPPH and hydroxyl radical scavenging activities. The observed efficacy of cantaloupe extracts can be attributed mostly to the presence of phenolic chemicals, commonly flavonoids. Considerable antioxidant activity was detected in the leaf and stem extracts of cantaloupe (42). In comparison to methanol extracts of the leaves, stem, skin, and meat of the melon, the methanolic extract of the seeds has the greatest DPPH radical scavenging activity. The water and methanol-water extracts exhibit significant antioxidant activity, maybe attributed to the abundant presence of caffeic acid in both extracts (43). Specialised expression of CmADHs indicated a strong adjustment of the fruit to the developmental processes.

Anti-Vitiligo Effect

In an open observational study assessing the effectiveness and safety of a product containing phenylalanine, C. melo extract, and acetyl cysteine, administered alone or in conjunction with 311-nm narrow band microphototherapy, 38-73% of patients achieved excellent repigmentation (>75%), depending on the treatment regimen. Minor to moderate adverse effects were reported exclusively in patients who received clobetasol 0.05% ointment. The evaluated gel composition shown a high level of effectiveness in enhancing the process of vitiligo repigmentation. Absence of adverse consequences reported (44, 45).

Anti-Diabetic Activity

Administration of the ethanolic extract of the plant at a dosage of 250mg/kg orally did not reduce blood glucose levels in streptozotocin-induced diabetic male albino rats. While the CCT-diet (supplemented with 4% cholesterol, 1% cholic acid, and 0.5% 2-thiouracil) caused a rise in tissue lipid peroxidation, blood lipids, glucose, and creatinine kinaseMB levels, the fruit peel extracts of C. melo inverted this effect (46). Moreover, Musk melon enhances the concentrations of thyroid hormones and insulin, suggesting its capacity to improve the changes in serum lipids, thyroid dysfunctions, and hyperglycemia/diabetes mellitus caused by the diet. These advantageous effects may be attributed to the abundant presence of polyphenols and ascorbic acid in the peel extracts (47). Oxykine is a cantaloupe melon extract that contains a high concentration of vegetal superoxide dismutase (SOD) and is coated with gluten-based polymeric films made from wheat matrix. Administration of oxykine improved the advancement and hastening of diabetic nephropathy in animals with type-2 diabetes. The oxykine mitigated the chronic oxidative stress and renal mesangial cell damage caused by diabetes. Oxykine perhaps represents a new strategy for the prevention of diabetic nephropathy (48).

Diuretic Effect

The diuretic effect of ethanolic seed extracts of *Macrotyloma uniflorum* and C. melo in Albino rats were evaluated. Furosemide (5mg/kg) was used as a drug (49). The diuretic effect was evaluated by measuring the Urine volume, Sodium, Potassium, Chloride and Bicarbonate contents. A significant Diuretic effect was observed treated with extracts of *Macrotyloma uniflorum* and C. melo

individually in experimental animals compared to the control. However, extract of C. melo showed more diuretic effect than standard. The results, therefore, explains the use of *Macrotyloma uniflorum* and C. melo as a cure for renal diseases in traditional medical practice (50).

Antibacterial and Antihelmintic Activity

Cucumis melo, a plant with a rich phytochemical composition, has been found to have antibacterial and antihelmintic properties. Its flavonoids, alkaloids, and phenolic compounds have shown significant inhibitory effects against pathogenic bacteria like *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus* (51). Studies using disc diffusion methods have shown that extracts from different parts of the plant show varying levels of antibacterial activity. Additionally, *Cucumis melo* has been investigated for its antihelmintic effects against parasitic worms, such as *Haemonchus contortus* and *Ascaris lumbricoides* (52). The mechanism behind this effect may involve disrupting the parasites' metabolic processes or interference with their reproductive cycles. Therefore, *Cucumis melo* Linn. has significant potential as an antibacterial and antihelmintic agent, and further research could lead to novel treatments against resistant bacteria and helminth infections (53).

Antimicrobial Activity

The aqueous, heptane, petroleum ether and acetone extract of the whole plant of C. melo Linn, P. daemia Frosk. (Asclepiadaceae) was screened for the antibacterial and antifungal activity by highest Zone of Inhibition was shown by whole plant and fruit extract of C. melo Linn with aqueous and acetone with C. albicans and E. coli 08 and 12 mm respectively. Very poor response was observed with acetone and aqueous extract in other bacterial and fungal stains. Highest zone of inhibition was shown by whole extract of *Pergularia daemia* with heptane with E. coli and C. albicans, 16 and 21 mm respectively (54).

Nutritive Value

Melon, scientifically named *Cucumis melo* Linn., includes a range of cultivars including cantaloupe and honeydew. These fruits are renowned not just for their palatably refreshing flavour but also for their remarkable nutritional content. The primary constituent of melons is water, accounting for around 90% of their weight, thereby facilitating hydration, a crucial element for maintaining nutritional well-being (55). Their elevated water content renders them very attractive in hot weather and helps to regulate fluid equilibrium in the body. The carbohydrate composition of *Cucumis melo* consists mainly of monosaccharides such as glucose and fructose, which facilitate rapid energy production. Furthermore, melons have a low caloric content; for example, 100 grammes of cantaloupe has around 34 calories (56). The combination of low calorie density and high fibre content in melons enhances satiety, making them exceptionally suitable for weight management programs. The presence of dietary fibre in melons is essential for maintaining digestive health as it facilitates regular bowel movements and helps to prevent constipation (57). Moreover, *Cucumis melo* is exceptionally abundant in vital vitamins and minerals. Notably, it is a superb source of vitamin C, which functions as a potent antioxidant that enhances immune system activity and promotes skin health (58). In addition, it includes substantial

quantities of vitamin A obtained from beta-carotene, which is crucial for vision and reproductive health, as well as potassium that aids in blood pressure regulation. Undoubtedly, the wide variety of nutrients present in Cucumis melo highlights its importance as a helpful supplement to a well-rounded diet (59).

CONCLUSIONS

Medicinal plants are used for the therapeutic purpose from the beginning of human civilization. C. melo is a beautiful juicy, tasty and delicious fruit used for its nutritive and medicinal properties. Pharmacological studies conducted on C. melo showed that it exhibited immense potential for the treatment of conditions such as pain, liver disorders, cancer, inflammation, kidney stones and hypothyroidism. This fruit holds extraordinary promise for the future. Therefore, more work is required to explore its therapeutic potential as it has more therapeutic properties which are still not known.

Conflicts of Interest

None

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