



BLACK CARDAMOM (*AMOMUM SUBULATUM*): A REVIEW

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 25th January, 2021
Received in revised form
08th February, 2021
Accepted 19th March, 2021
Published online 27th April, 2021

Key Words:

Rasa panchak, Terpinene,
Limonene Anti-inflammatory,
Anti-ulcer, Hepatoprotectivity.

ABSTRACT

Amomum subulatum is also known as 'Badi Elaichi' is an aromatic and medicinal spice, used as a flavoring agent in various dishes. It is also known as Queen of spices. It is a native of the Eastern Himalayan region. Traditionally, black cardamom has been utilized as a preventive and remedial measure for throat problems, blockage of lungs, irritation of eyelids, stomach-related problems and in the treatment of aspiratory tuberculosis. It is considered as a conclusive drug in the traditional medicinal system like Unani and Ayurveda since ancient times. Its significance has been explained by Hakeem Kabiruddin in his book "Makhzanul-mufradat". Black cardamom extracts mainly the aqueous ones are known to possess biological activities like anti-inflammatory, anti-ulcer, anti-oxidant, anti-microbial and cardio-adaptogen.

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Citation: Shailja Choudhary, Madhusudan S, Bhawana Walia, Gitika Chaudhary.. "Black Cardamom (*Amomum subulatum*): A Review", 2021. International Journal of Current Research, 13, (04), 17027-17032.

INTRODUCTION

Plants are considered as a natural source of shelter, clothing, food, flavors, scents, medicines\prescriptions from ancient times. Plants are used for traditional medicinal systems like Ayurveda, Unani, and Chinese medicinal system (1). Plants have been known as an extraordinary source of therapeutics or other human clinical focal points since ancient times. Plants are considered a significant source of medicines (2,3). The restorative utilization of plants is very old. The literature demonstrates that remedial utilization of plants is as old as 4000 - 5000 B.C (4). In India, the use of plants for medicines has been an old practice and is important in the medical care system (5). The use of therapeutic plants depends on the great experience of many therapists over hundreds of years, acquired from generation to generation, or created through their own experiences over time (6). Spices are utilized to enhance food flavors yet they may also consider as useful food to boost up health or immunity (7,8,9). Black Cardamom (figure 1) is also known as "Black gold" or "Queen of spices" is a high market value plant that is utilized as an enhancing agent in different food items.

Because of its pleasant fragrance, it has been utilized as a significant ingredient in blended flavors for seasoning vegetables, numerous food arrangements and pickles, in the world mainly in China, India, Nepal, Bhutan. The seed is used for commercial practice. It is also used in the treatment of teeth and gums infection, as medicine for stomach problems and in malaria, and also used as an antidote against snake and scorpion venom (10,11,12). Great cardamom is used in the Ayurveda and Unani medicinal systems to cure diseases including heartburn, vomiting, rectal infections, looseness of the bowels, liver blockage, gastrointestinal issues, and genitourinary grumblings. Black Cardamom helps in improving the metabolic conditions when added to the eating routine. Black cardamom helps to enhance the functioning of the liver (13,14,15,16). Taxonomical classification and vernacular names are shown in table no. 1 and table no. 2

Table 1. Taxonomical features of Black Cardamom (17)

Taxonomical Rank	Taxon
Kingdom:	Plantae
Class:	Liliopsida
Order:	Zingiberales
Family:	Zingiberaceae
Genus:	<i>Amomum</i>
Species:	<i>subulatum</i>

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Fig. 1. *Amomum subulatum*

Table 2. Vernacular Names of *A. subulatum* (18)

English	Black/Greater/Nepal cardamom
Hindi	Bari elachi/bari illayaca
Urdu	Badi Elaichi, Heel Kalan; / poorbi elaichi
Kannada	Dodda Yalakki, Nepdi Elakki
Sanskrit	Bhadra, stulaila Bhadrail
Bengali	Baara aliach
Malayalam	Valiya Elam, Perelam
Gujrati	Elaicho, Mothi Elichi
Marathi	Mothi Elayachi
Oriya	Bada aleicha, Aleicha
Punjabi	Budi Eleichi
Tamil	Periya Elam, Beraelam, Kattu Elam
Telugu	Pedda Elakulu
French	Cardamome
German	Kardamom
Italian	Cardamomo, Cardamone
Spanish	Cardamomo
Burmese	Phalazee
Chinese	Ts"ao-k"ou
Indian	lachi, e(e)lachi, ela(i)chi, illaichi
Persian	Qakilahé kalan
Indonesian	Kapulaga

Botanical description of Black cardamom: It is tall evergreen, perennial, monocot herbaceous plant. The height of the plant reaches up to 1.5-3 meters. Fruits of *Amomum subulatum* are smooth anteroposterior having 15-20 sporadic, dentate-undulate wings which stretch out from the peak to base for 66% of its length (19). The matured natural fruit is red earthy colored, trilobular, and contains a pinkish cultivated capsule (20). Capsules are 20– 25 mm long and oval to globular, echinate, trilobular, dark red-earthly colored in shading, in every cell a few sweet-smelling seeds are available held together by a sticky sweet mash (21). Leaves are oblong and lanceolate, with length 30-60 cm, green glabrous on the two sides. Verdant shoots are molded by long sheath-like stalks encompassing each other. Globose, thick, and presently peduncle spikes are present. Calyx and corolla tube sections are more limited than the cylinder, sub-obtuse, and the upper one is cuspidate. Lip is emarginated, obovate-cuneate, yellowish-white, and to some degree longer than the corolla-part. Rhizomes are stretched and crawling, for certain erect leaf shoots and panicles. Its peduncle is short and buds are encased in close red bracts. The stem is around 90-120cm. Flowering starts mainly in the spring season. The single flower stays open for three days. Simultaneously, new flowers open progressively (22). Fruits and Seeds of *Amomum subulatum* show a slender membranous aril made out of a few layers of flattened cells containing oil globules and kaleidoscopic gems of calcium oxalate.

Testa comprises of the single-layered epidermis of rectangular cells followed by 1-2 layers of imploded, flimsy walled parenchymatous cells, underneath the solitary layer of enormous rectangular cells containing oil globules present that are encircled by few layers of straightened, thin-walled, parenchymatous cells, perisperm comprises of polygonal, dainty walled, parenchymatous cells containing round to oval starch grains estimating 2-5 μ in breadth, and a bunch of calcium oxalate gems perisperm encompassed remotely by slim walled, sclerenchymatous, radially prolonged dim earthy colored measuring glass-like cells, perisperm encase the endosperm and developing organism, both made out of polygonal, slight walled, parenchymatous cells, rich in protein (23).

Geographical Distribution of Black cardamom: It is Native to the Eastern Himalayan district. It is developed in south-east Asia to northern Australia, develops up to the central Pacific. It is distributed in south-east Asia. Assam slopes, Darjeeling, Sikkim, northern West Bengal, Nepal and Bhutan, generally distributed in south-east Asian nations like Thailand, Laos, and Indonesia (24,25,26). The significant manufacturer of this herb is Nepal (52%), India (37%) and Bhutan (11%) of absolute world manufacturing per annum (27). Black cardamom is cultivated in 53 regions of Nepal. Almost 84% of the black cardamom comes from the eastern district, including Islam, Taplejung, Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, Bhojpur, Tehrathum, and Panchthar regions. Ramsai, Dammersai, Jirmale, Saune, Bharlang, Golsai, Ramla, Chebese are generally discovered varieties of black cardamom in the nation. Among them, Dammersai is found in the Bhojpur region of Nepal (28,29,30). In India, Sikkim is the biggest manufacturer (after Nepal) with 23,500 ha of the zone under with 80 to 85% total manufacturing in India (31). It has a high retail price in Pakistan, Singapore, and the Middle East and is also shipped to UAE, US, UK, Afghanistan, Malaysia, South Africa, Japan, Argentina. The major domestic markets are Amritsar, Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Guwahati and Kanpur. The financial outcome from this spice crop is substantially higher than that of other spices (32,33,34).

Phytochemical constituents of Badi Elaichi: The chemical constituents of various extracts of *A. subulatum* revealed the presence of carbohydrates, flavonoids, amino acids, steroids, triterpenoids, glycosides, tannins, (35) anthocyanin's, aurone, flavanone (36) alkaloids, fixed oil and fats (37). The chemical constituents of the Badi Elaichi are 1,8-cineole around (65–80%) and the other phytochemicals are Terpenyl acetate (traces to five percent), Monoterpene hydrocarbon (5-17%) of which limonene, sabinene, terpinenes pinenes and Terpeneols present in 5-7% of the oil, Starch 43.21%, Crude fiber 22.0% and Protein 6.0%. The distribution of the essential oil of black cardamom is 1,8-cineole (65 to 80%) and limonene (10.3%) as a significant constituent (38). The monoterpene hydrocarbon present is 5 to 17% of which limonene, sabinene, terpinenes and pinenes are major components. The terpinols contain around 5 to 7% of the oil. The high cineole and low terpenyl acetate derivatives are responsible for the aroma of this spice (39). The seed of cardamom contains primarily essential oil, flavonoids, carbohydrates and fats (40). All phenolic content in seed was discovered to be 0.00366% w/w (weight by weight) which has been accounted as gallic acid while total flavonoid in seed was seen to be 0.0361% w/w (41). The decoction of seeds also consists of some glycosides such as subulin, petunidin-3,5-diglucoside,

Table 3. Various therapeutic uses of Black Cardamom

Anti-inflammatory	The ethanolic and aqueous extract (100mg/ml and 200mg/ml dose) of black cardamom are good anti-inflammatory agent when tested in rat model (63).
Analgesic	The methanolic extract of seeds (more than 100 mg/kg) and ethyl extract (>200 mg/kg) show analgesic activity (64).
Antimicrobial	Secondary metabolites, for example, tannins, alkaloids and flavonoids, a few of these metabolites are known to have antimicrobial properties. The acetonic, methanolic and ethanolic concentrates of <i>A. subulatum</i> indicated antimicrobial inhibitory action against two microorganisms causing dental caries, <i>Streptococcus mutans</i> and <i>S. aureus</i> ; and two organisms <i>Candida albicans</i> and <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i> (65,66). Petroleum ether concentrates of great cardamom demonstrated antimicrobial activities against <i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> , <i>Escherichia coli</i> , <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> , <i>Bacillus cereus</i> (67,68).
Anti-oxidant	The seed extract 1,8-cineole, alphaterpineol, protocatechualdehyde, protocatechuic acid show anti-oxidant property against lipid peroxidation (69,70). The phenolic compounds of essential oil are associated with the anti-oxidant activity (71). The polyphenolic content has strong lipid peroxidation inhibiting properties against rat liver homogenate (72).
Anti-ulcer	Crude extracts of fruit are associated with the anti-ulcer activity (73).
Hepatoprotectivity	Ethanol induced liver damage in rats was treated with the methanolic extract of seeds which showed the hepatoprotective potential of black Cardamom (74).
Anti-diabetic	<i>A. subulatum</i> has good impact on fructose induced insulin resistance. It decreases that insulin resistance (75).
Cardio-adaptogen activity	<i>A. subulatum</i> is utilized in treatment for patients with Ischemic Heart Disease (IHD), confronting ordinary distressing conditions on daily consumption (76).

leucocyanidin-3-O- β -D-glucopyranoside along with cardamom and alpine (42). Steam refining of seed consists of essential oil having cineole as a major constituent. Other chemical constituents are α and β -pinenes, sabinene, p-cymene, terpinene-4-ol, α - and β -terpineol, nerolidol, terpinene, terpinyl acetate and bisabolene. Protocatechualdehyde, 1,7-bis (3,4-dihydroxy phenyl) hepta-4E,6E-dien-3-one, Protocatechuic acid, and 2,3,7-trihydroxy-5-(3,4-dihydroxy-E-styryl) - 6,7,8,9-tetrahydro - 5H - benzocycloheptene, are separated from large cardamom (43). The structures of some major phytochemicals are shown in figure 2.

Folk uses: Traditionally, black cardamom has been utilized as a preventive and remedial measure for throat problems, blockage of lungs, irritation of eyelids, stomach-related problems and in the treatment of respiratory tuberculosis (44). From ancient times, black cardamom seeds have been utilized to fix dyspnoea, hack, thirst, vomiting, infection of the mouth, nausea, tingling, acid reflux, biliousness, stomach torments and rectal infections in rural areas and cities too (45). *A. subulatum* seeds and fruits are used in the preparation of food items as flavors consistently around the world and prevent gastrointestinal problems, respiratory issues. It increases the palatability and flavor to make food more edible. Residues of charred leaves are used with mustard oil and taken twice for sexually transmitted diseases and hack (46). "Alui" a formulation prepared from the combination of cumin and black cardamom is utilized for the treatment of malaria (47). The seed decoction is helpful as a gargle in infection of the teeth and gums while the pericarp is helpful in cerebral pain and stomatitis (48). The seeds are additionally helpful as an antidote against snake and scorpion venom (49). It is a significant constituent in Arabic coffee. They own coffeepots that can keep a few cardamom seeds in their spouts and use cardamom in blend form with different flavors in their dishes. Scandinavian nations utilize cardamom in biscuits and sweetbreads (50).

Black cardamom in Ayurveda: Badi-Elaychi is an herb that reduces Vata (air component) and Kapha (earth and water component) and increases pitta (digestion and metabolism)

component of human body. In the Ayurvedic medicinal system, it is utilized as a carminative, diuretic, stomachic and stomach related, and for colds and heart stimulation. Cardamom has been utilized in traditional medication against kidney and urinary problems, and as a gastrointestinal defensive. Cardamom oil has revealed calming and antibacterial uses. In India, black cardamom (*A. subulatum*) is comprehensively used to treat contaminations of the teeth and gums and to treat throat inconvenience, blockage of the lungs and pneumonic tuberculosis, asthma, coronary illness, aggravation of the eyelids and stomach related problems. At the point when mixed with neem and camphor, cardamom is utilized as a nasal readiness to treat colds. Implantation of cardamom can be utilized as a rinse to mitigate sore throats, which has prompted its utilization in hack desserts. Cardamom is also utilized as a remedy for the treatment of both snake and scorpion toxins and food contamination. In traditional Chinese medication, it is utilized to treat stomachache, stoppage, loose bowels, and other processing issues. Cardamom seeds when mixed with milk, are used for bladder related issues. The seeds are famously accepted to be a Spanish fly (51,52,53,54,55,56). Other properties of Badi- Elaichi (57)

Abhiyantar-Nadishansthan

-) Pachan-Shanstan: It is used to cure digestive problem.
-) Raktavah-shanstan: It is used to maintain blood circulation.
-) Svashan-shanstan: It is used to cure respiratory problems.
-) Mutrvah-shanstan: It act as a curative agent against various urinogenital disorders.
-) Taapkaram: It is used to maintain body temperature.

Modern View

Modern herbal formulations are usually an alteration of the native classical herbal formulations either by changing the main component and lack of standardization. Consequently, these altered forms in all probability get impaired because of

incongruence, uncertainty, and pollutants prompting some serious side effects because of the toxicity (58). Pollutants get into the modern herbal drug formulations at different phases of preparation including purposeful contamination of the herbal formulation details with manufactured drugs like synthetic chemicals (59,60,61). There is a negligible contribution towards the Global herbal business from the developed nations due to the absence of normalization measures and quality control. The absence of protection and viability information on herbal beauty care products renders it hard to meet the models required for supporting its utilization around the world (62).

Conclusion

Badi-Elaichi (Black cardamom) is an important remedial plant which hold a great position in Ayurvedic medicinal system for anticipation and medications of various human diseases. In the Ayurvedic medicinal system, it is utilized as a carminative, diuretic, stomachic and stomach related, and for colds and heart stimulation. Traditionally, black cardamom has been utilized as a preventive and remedial measure for throat problems, blockage of lungs, irritation of eyelids, stomach-related problems and in the treatment of aspiratory tuberculosis. Due to the presence of phytochemicals constituents, it possesses various therapeutical properties like hepatoprotective, anti-ulcer, anti-diabetic, anti-oxidant, anti-inflammatory.

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