

**The Valuable Medicinal Plants of Northeast India: *Illicium griffithii* Hook. f., *Pothos scandens* L. and *Sarcostemma acidum* (Roxb.) Voigt**Deepjyoti Dutta^{1,2}, Manob Jyoti Bordoloi¹, Nayan Kamal Bhattacharyya^{2*}¹Chemical Science and Technology Division, CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology, Jorhat 785006, Assam, India²Department of Chemistry, Sikkim Manipal University (Sikkim Manipal Institute of Technology), Majitar -737136, Sikkim, India

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ABSTRACT

Illicium griffithii Hook. f., *Pothos scandens* L. and *Sarcostemma acidum* (Roxb.) Voigt are important medicinal plants available in sub-Himalayan region of Northeast India. The study was designed to investigate the plants for their traditional values responsible for the treatment of several diseases along with diverse chemical constituents and biological activities. A bibliographic survey was conducted by exploring recognized books and searching Scientific databases (ScienceDirect, SciFinder, Google Scholar, and PubMed) for the available information on the three species. A total of 80 references were covered with 49 compounds reported from these three plants till date. This review demonstrates the potential of the plants *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. acidum* as a source of therapeutic agents.

Keywords: *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens*, *S. acidum*, Traditional uses, Chemical constituents, Bioactivity.

Introduction

Natural products have been utilized as a source of medicine throughout history. Many modern pharmaceuticals are prepared from natural products.¹ In recent years, the trend of using natural products has increased and the active plant extracts and their isolated constituents are frequently screened for new drug discoveries.^{2,3} Natural product chemists are impressed by the fact that active biomolecules display an unbelievable range of diversity in terms of their structure as well as their biological and physical characteristics.^{4,5} Due to both climatic and geographical variations, the Sub-Himalayan region of Northeast India is endowed with vast flora and fauna.⁶ The ethnic people of this region are widely relying on these widely available natural sources for various health remedies. It is estimated that about 50% of the total flora of India is found in this part of the country. Bestowed with a large number of medicinal endemic plant species, this region is marked as one of the thirty-four mega-center of biodiversity. This region is inhabited by a large number of ethnic tribal groups and they depend on local herbs for their primary health care.^{7,8} As part of our continuing study of medicinal plants in Northeast India⁹⁻¹², it is proposed to review three traditional medicinal plants *Illicium griffithii* Hook. f., *Pothos scandens* L. and *Sarcostemma acidum* (Roxb.) Voigt. *Illicium griffithii* is an important traditional medicinal plant, mainly found in Arunachal Pradesh, a Northeastern state of India.¹³⁻¹⁹ Shikimic acid, isolated from the fruits of *I. griffithii* which is a starting material for the production of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) used against Avian Flu.²⁰ Therefore, it is a growing demand for *I. griffithii* species as a source of shikimic acid for the manufacture of anti-viral drugs. *Pothos scandens* is an epiphyte with climbing and rooting branches.²⁴⁻²⁷

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The plant is mainly native to the Himalayas as well Indo-Burma region and Madagascar. However, it is commonly found on rocks, walls and tree trunks in moist and wet forests in northeastern India. In other parts of India, it is found in Bihar, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.²⁸⁻³³ *Sarcostemma acidum* is a medicinal plant belongs to the family Asclepiadaceae found in India mainly in the areas of Northeast India, Bihar, West Bengal and many places of South India in dry rocky places.⁵²⁻⁵⁵ This comprehensive review covers the traditional uses, chemical constituents and biological activities of *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. acidum* species.

Methodology

The authors collected data from library and digital databases including Science Direct, SciFinder, Google Scholar, PubMed, MDPI, Web of Science, etc. related to *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. acidum* species. Authors explored literature survey of recognized books in CSIR-NEIST, Jorhat from year 1936 to till date to collect available information on the plants.

Results and Discussions

Traditional uses

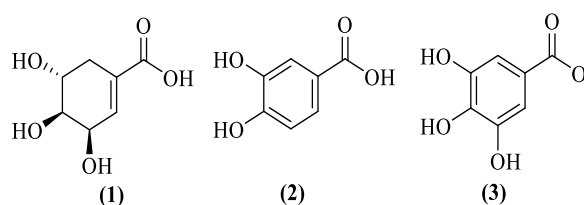
According to Vedic literature, *S. acidum* (local name: Soma) was a sacred plant as the juice (Soma-Rasa) of this plant was offered to Gods as divine drinks. Rig Veda explains the preparation of drinks for several medical purposes. It has been used as a narcotic since the time of India's earliest civilizations. The fruits of *I. griffithii* have a slightly aromatic, bitter and astringent taste and are used to treat several diseases and disorders.¹³⁻¹⁷ The dried seedless fruit has been used as incense and for sweet fragrance while preparing butter-salted tea or sugar tea.¹⁸ The traditional uses of the different parts from three species are listed in Table 1.

Chemical constituents

Diverse chemical compounds, including alkaloids, diterpenoids, flavones, lignans, phytosterols, triterpenoids and steroids have been isolated from the three species. A total 49 different types of compounds have been isolated from these three species (Figures 2-4 and Table 2).

*Pothos scandens**Illicium griffithii**Sarcostemma acidum***Figure 1:** Pictures of the three plants**Table 1:** Traditional uses of *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. acidum*

Plant	Part	Condition	Ref.
<i>I. griffithii</i>	Fruit	To treat avian flu (commonly bird flu), cough, sinusitis, toothache, regurgitating, dyspepsia, abdominal pain, food poisoning, vomiting, carminative, stimulant, stomachic, galactagogic and incense.	[16-20]
<i>P. scandens</i>	Leaves	Heal wounds, swelling, drinks as tea, small pox, snake bites	[29, 31, 43]
	Stem	Asthma	[32]
	Root	Abscesses	[34, 38]
	Whole plant	Bone fracture	[33]
<i>S. acidum</i>	Leaves	Ear ache and dog bite Snakebite, mental diseases, allergic rhinitis and sinusitis	[52-54]
	Latex	Chronic ulcer, lotion, wounds and cuts	[52-55]
	Stem	Rheumatism, arthritis and joints pain, mad dog bite, Vasodilator, diaphoretic, bronchodilator, antifertility	[56] [80]
	Bark	Galactagogue	[58]
	Root	Snake bite	[52]
	Pulpy mesocarp	Epilepsy	[57]
	Fruits, Seeds	Anti-rabies	[59]
	Whole plant	Rheumatic pain, anti-inflammatory narcotic, emetic, pitta, rejuvenating, antiviral, dipsia, hydrophobia, diabetes, antimicrobial, lactation, antidote and edema.	60-69] [74]

**Figure 2:** Compounds isolated from *I. griffithii*

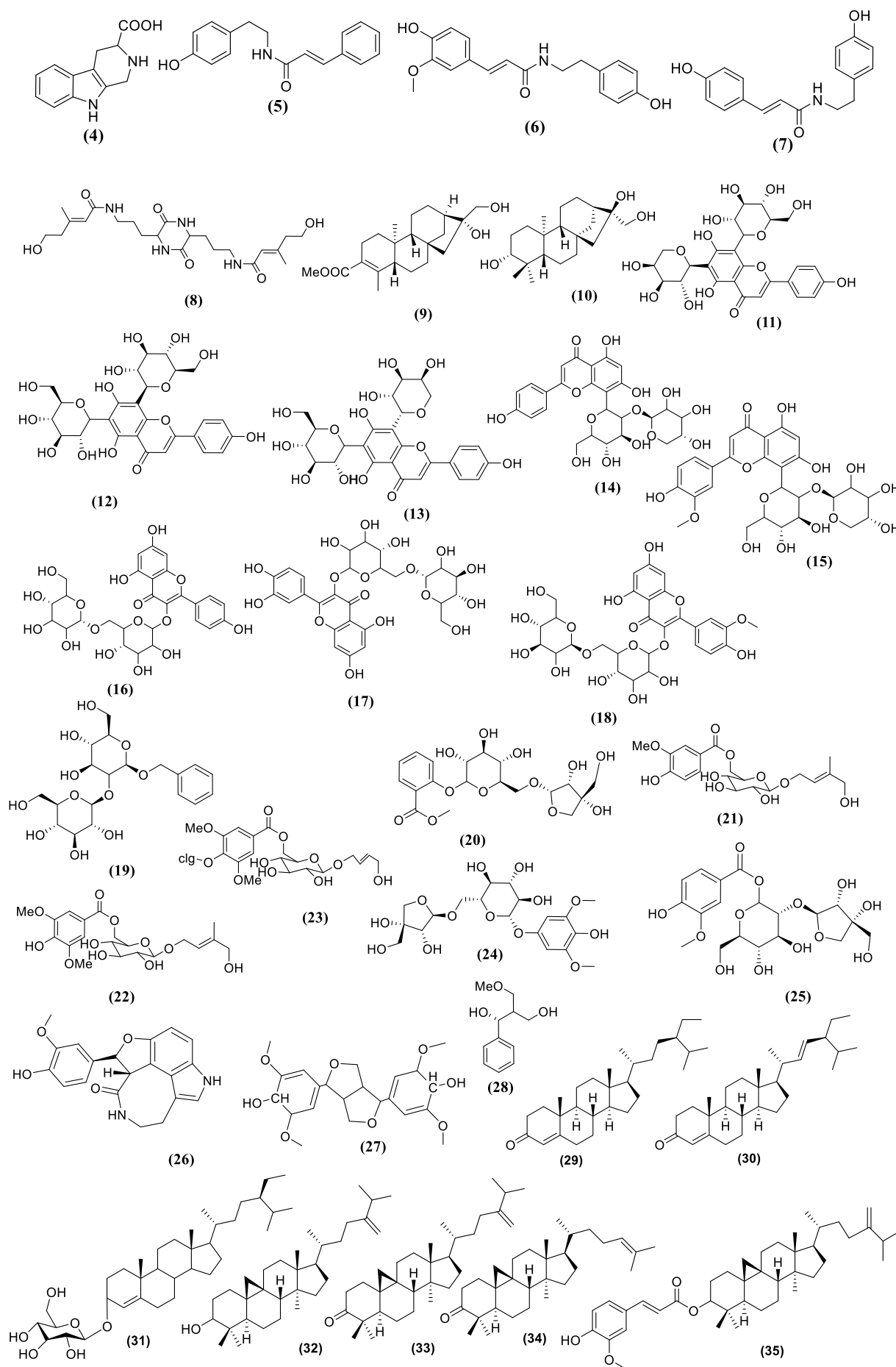


Figure 3: Compounds isolated from *P. scandens*

Table 2: Chemical constituents isolated from *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. Acidum*

Plants	Part	Classification of compounds	Compound names	Ref
<i>I. griffithii</i>	Fruit		Shikimic acid (1)	[20]
	Fruit		3,4-dihydroxybenzoic acid (2)	[16]
	Fruit		3,4,5-trihydroxy benzoic acid (3)	[16]
<i>P. scandens</i>	Stem	Alkaloid	1,2,3,4-tetrahydro-3-carboxy-2 carboline (4)	[34]
	Whole plant	Alkaloid	N-trans-cinnamoyltyramine (5), N-trans-feruloyltyramine (6), N-trans-p-cumaroyltyramine (7)	[31]
		Diketopiperazine	Eleutherazine B (8)	[34]
	Stem	Diterpenoid	Methyl Pothoscandensate (9), (3 β)-ent-kaurane-3,16,17-triol (10)	[31]
	Whole plant	Flavone	Isoschaftoside (11), Vicenin-2 (12), Neoschaftoside (13), Vitexin 2-O-xyloside (14), Scoparin 2-O-xyloside (15)	[34]
	Stem	Flavonol	Kaempferol 3-O-gentiobioside (16), Quercetin 3-O-gentiobioside (17), Isorhamnetin 3-O-gentiobioside (18)	[34]
	Stem	Glycoside	Zizybeoside I (19), Canthoside A (20)	[34]
	Stem	Hemiterpene glucoside	Pothobanoside A (21), Pothobanoside B (22), Pothobanoside C (23), Canthoside B (24)	[34]
	Stem	Hydroquinone	Markhamioside F (25)	[34]
	Whole plant	Indole	(-)-serotobenine (26)	[31]
	Whole plant	Lignan	(+)-syringaresinol (27)	[31]
	Stem part	Phenyl isobutanol	Pothobanol (28)	[34]
	Whole plant	Steroid	stigmast-4-en-3-one (29), stigmast-4,22-diene-3-one (30), β -sitosterolglucoside (31)	[35]
	Whole plant	Triterpenoid	24-methylenecycloartanol (32), 24-methylenecycloartenone (33), 24-en-cycloartenone (34), 24-methylenecycloartanylferulate (35)	[35]
	<i>S. acidum</i>	Twigs	Disaccharide	Brevobiose (36)
Whole plant		Disaccharide	Sarcidumitol (37)	[60]
Whole plant		Lignan	sacidumlignans A–D (38-41)	[71]
Whole plant		Lignan	sacidumols A-B (42-43)	[71]
Whole plant			perforatic acid (44)	[71]
Whole plant			peucenine-7-O-methyl ether (45)	[71]
Whole plant		Lignan	(+)-pinoresinol (46)	[71]
Whole plant		Lignan	9 α -hydroxypinoresinol (47)	[71]
Whole plant		Triterpene	α -amyrin (48)	[71]
Whole plant		Triterpene	β -amyrin (49)	[72]

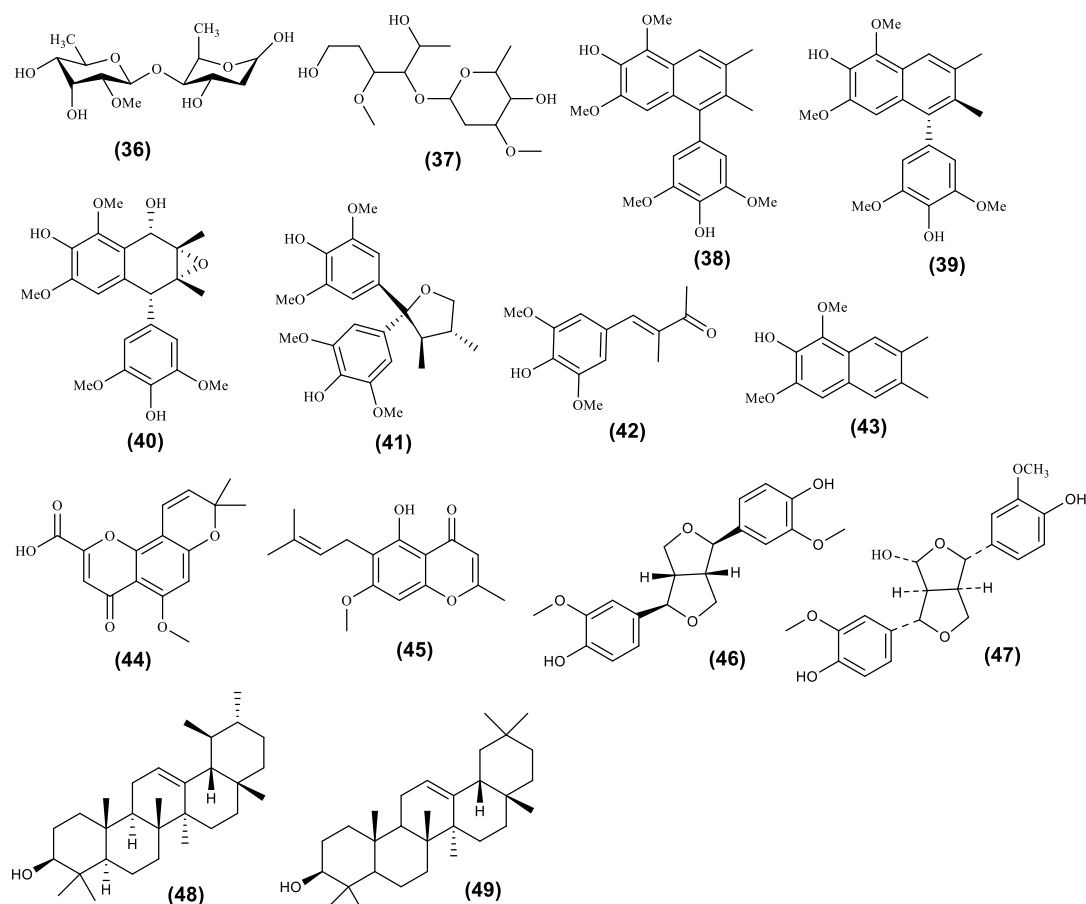


Figure 4: Compounds isolated from *S. acidum*

Table 3: Biological and pharmacological activities of *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens*, and *S. acidum*

Plant	Active constituents/ Extracts	Activity reported	Strain	Data/ value	Ref.
<i>I. griffithii</i>	Ethyl acetate extract (fruits)	Cytotoxicity	A549 human lung cancer cell line	78.7 % toxicity at the dose 500 µg/mL with IC ₅₀ = 300 µg/ml	[16]
	Essential oil (fruits)	Antibacterial	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	Zone of inhibition (ZOI) = 14 mm	[19]
	Essential oil (fruits)	Antifungal	<i>Aspergillus niger</i> , <i>Penicillium spp.</i> and <i>Saccharomyces cerevisiae</i>	ZOI = 9-13 mm	[19]
	Ethyl acetate extract (seeds and fruits)	Antimicrobial	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> , <i>Yersinia enterocolitica</i> , <i>vibrio parahaemolyticus</i> , <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> , <i>Salmonella paratyphi</i> , <i>Enterococcus faecalis</i> , <i>Xanthomonas oryzae</i> , <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i>	ZOI = 12-24 mm	[18]
	Methanol extract (seeds and fruits)	Antibacterial	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> , <i>Bacillus subtilis</i> and <i>Xanthomonas oryzae</i>	ZOI = 11-13 mm	[18]

<i>P. scandens</i>	Hexane fraction	Antimicrobial	MRSA bacteria	ZOI = 6.59 mm	[36]
	Ethyl acetate fraction	Antimicrobial	<i>Candida albicans</i>	ZOI = 8.30 mm	[36]
	Stigmast-4,22-diene-3-one (30)	Antiestrogenic	Cancer cell lines MCF-7 and T47D	90% at 10 µM	[35]
	24-methylenecycloartanol (32)	Antiestrogenic	Cancer cell lines MCF-7 and T47D	90% at 0.01 µM	[35]
	24-methylenecycloartanylferulate (35)	Antiestrogenic	Cancer cell lines MCF-7 and T47D	90% at 0.01 µM	[35]
	Methanol fraction	Antibacterial	Gram positive bacteria (<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i> MTCC-902, <i>Clostridium perfringens</i> MTCC-450)	MIC = 250-200 µg/ml	[38]
			Gram negative (<i>Escherichia coli</i> MTCC-405, <i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i> MTCC-432, <i>Salmonella typhimurium</i> MTCC-1252, <i>Pseudomonas aeruginosa</i> MTCC-1934)	MIC = 400-500g/ml	[38]
	Methanol extract	Antifungal	<i>Aspergillus niger</i> MTCC478, <i>Candida albicans</i> MTCC1637, <i>Microsporium gypsiu</i> MTCC2819, <i>Chrysosporium keratinophilum</i> MTCC1367, <i>Trichophyllum rubrum</i> MTCC3272, <i>Chrysosporium indicum</i> MTCC4965	ZOI = 8-11 mm	[39]
	Methanol fraction, Pothobanoside B (22), Pothobanoside C (23), Canthoside B (24)	Antiestrogenic	Human breast cancer cell lines MCF-7 and T47D	50% suppressive activity at concentrations lower than 0.1 µM	[34]
	50% ethanol fraction	Cytotoxicity	MCF-7	IC ₅₀ = 90.18 ± 5.20 µg/ml	[48]
Methanol fraction	Cytotoxicity	MCF-7	LC ₅₀ = 14.195 µg/ml	[40]	
Methanol extract	Antipyretic	Wistar albino rats	200 and 400 mg/Kg doses	[37]	
Ethanol extract	Burn wound healing	Formulations of extracts (4% w/v)	Epithelized in 22 days	[43]	
Ethanol extract	Burn wound healing	Formulations A1, A2, A3 and A4 at 0.5, 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 %	No signs of irritation	[49]	
Pothobanoside A	Hyaluronidase inhibitory	Type-I allergy	46.7% inhibition rate at 200 µM.	[34]	
Pothobanoside B (22), Pothobanoside C (23), Pothobanol (28)	Histamine release inhibition	Human basophilic KU812F cells	At concentrations of 10, 50, 100 µM	[34]	
Methanol extract	Anti-diabetic	α-amylase enzyme	IC ₅₀ = 1.49 mg/mL	[50]	
Leaf	Anticariogenic	<i>Streptococcus mutans</i>	ZOI = 1.1-1.9mm	[51]	

(methanol)		(SM-1 to SM-13)			
Leaf	Thrombolytic	Clot lysis	19.451±1.711% lysis of clot	[50]	
(methanol)					
Leaf	Bronchodilator	On Wister rat	41.56% protection at 100mg/kg dose	[50]	
(methanol)					
Ethanol extract	Anti-inflammatory	RAW 264.7 cells	Decreased in NO, PGE ₂ production	[25]	
<i>S. acidum</i>	70% methanolic	Antimicrobial	<i>Bacillus cereus</i> , <i>Candida albicans</i> , <i>Escherichia coli</i> , <i>Klebsiella pneumoniae</i> , <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i> , <i>Staphylococci aureus</i> , <i>Salmonella paratyphi</i>	ZOI = 13–22 mm and MIC = 500 µg, 500 µg, 1000 µg (against <i>Staphylococci aureus</i> , <i>Escherichia coli</i> and <i>Candida albicans</i> respectively)	[77]
	Aqueous extract	Antimicrobial	Same microbes as used in 70% methanolic	ZOI = 11–17 mm and MIC = 500 µg, 500 µg, >1000 µg (against <i>Staphylococci aureus</i> , <i>Escherichia coli</i> and <i>Candida albicans</i> respectively)	[77]
	70% methanolic	Antifertility	Male albino rats	80% reduction fertility	[56] [57] [73]
	β-amyirin (49)	Antifeedant	Tobacco cutworm, <i>Spodoptera litura</i>	Inhibition of growth	[72]
	Ethyl acetate extract	Anti-inflammatory	Human red blood cell membrane	30, 42.8, 54 and 67.6% protection of HRBC	[76]
	Ethyl acetate extract	Antipsychotic	Cataleptic Scoring test	Inhibition	[78]
	Ethyl acetate extract	CNS inhibitory	Wistar albino rats	Increase in locomotors activity	[78]
	Ethyl acetate extract	Hepatoprotective	Hepatic damage agent	Elevation levels	[79]
	Ethyl acetate extract	Anxiolytic	Elevated Plus maze and Hole Board	Reduced anxiety	[78]
	Ethanol extract	Antiulcer	Indomethacin induced ulcer models in Wistar rats	Decrease in level (Ulcer index, volume, total acidity and pH of gastric fluid)	[75]

Future Directions

As illustrated in this review, *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. acidum* are abundant source of chemical constituents which have shown promising bioactivities. The study of different biological properties to those isolated compounds with wide range of activities could lead to the identification of promising lead compounds. Though various studies have been carried out for *in vitro* biological activities of the isolated compounds, we can study further for *in vivo* evaluation of toxicity profiles, which will lead to the development of an effective as well as safer herbal drug formulation.

Conclusion

The species *I. griffithii*, *P. scandens* and *S. acidum* provides an attractive bio resource for drug discovery research. The extracts and chemical constituents isolated from them have shown promising

several biological activities and would be potential for further research. Knowing the importance of the plants, in recent years, the scientific interest has increased greatly for further scientific exploration of this species, to ascertain their therapeutic efficacy and commercial exploitation.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Authors' Declaration

The authors hereby declare that the work presented in this article is original and that any liability for claims relating to the content of this article will be borne by them.

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