

Luffa acutangula : An Overview

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■ **Abstract** : The fruits of *Luffa acutangula* (ridge gourd) which belonging to family Cucurbitaceae are grown, harvested before maturity and is very popular in Asia. Ridge gourd as whole, seeds and dried crusts are all used for medicinal purposes. It is a healthy food and contains good amount of fiber, vitamins and minerals including Vitamin B₂, Vitamin C, carotene, niacin, calcium, phosphorus, iron and small quantities of iodine and fluorine. It is reported to contain many phytochemicals such as flavonoids, saponins, luffangulin, sapogenin, oleanolic acid and cucurbitacin B. Ridge gourd peel, powder and its extracts showed slightly higher antioxygenic activity as compare to ridge gourd pulp powder and its extracts. This may be attributed to the presence of higher amounts of phenolics and flavonoids which have been reported as potential antioxidants. Ridge gourd and there peel have potential to act as a functional food and a source of useful drugs because of the presence of various phytochemical components. *L. acutangula* has been used extensively in Indian traditional system of medicines as diuretic, expectorant, laxative, purgative, hypoglycemic agent and bitter headache agent and bitter tonic. The present review work focused on its botanical characters, ethnobotanical uses, nutritional value, phytochemical constituents and medicinal properties of *L. acutangula*.

■ **Key words** : *Luffa acutangula*, Ridge gourd, Luffa acutangula peel, Torai, Nutritional value of Cucurbitaceae

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