REVIEW ARTICLE

Phytochemicals With Hepatoprotective Potential In Ficus Carica, Boerhavia Diffusa And Carica Papaya: A Review.

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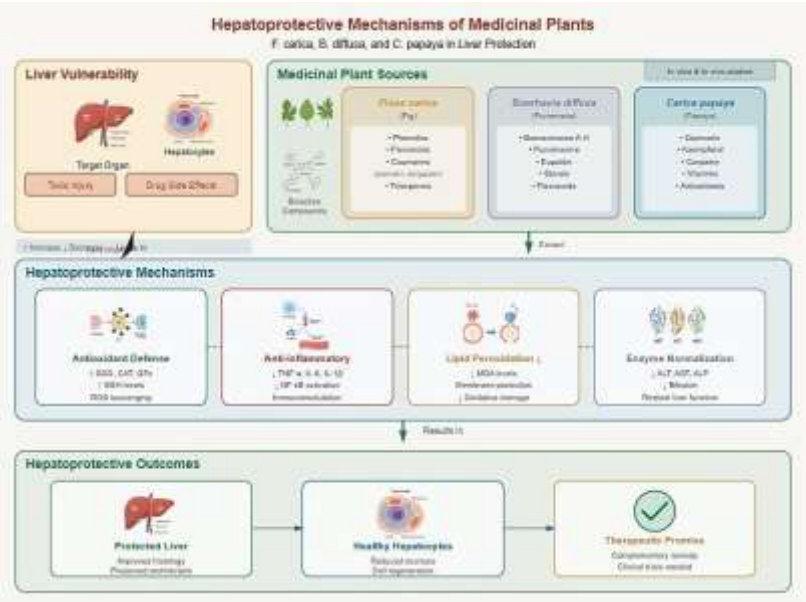
ABSTRACT

Background: The liver is a vital organ responsible for metabolism and detoxification, yet it is highly susceptible to toxic injury and disease. Conventional hepatoprotective drugs are limited and often cause adverse effects. There is growing interest in natural hepatoprotective agents from medicinal plants. *Ficus carica* (fig), *Boerhavia diffusa* (punarnava) and *Carica papaya* (papaya) have long been used in traditional medicine for liver ailments and are reported to contain bioactive phytochemicals with liver-protective properties. Aim: This review compiles and critically analyzes the phytochemicals present in *F. carica*, *B. diffusa*, and C. papaya and their hepatoprotective mechanisms and efficacy.

Methods: A comprehensive literature survey was performed, emphasizing phytochemical composition and hepatoprotective activity (in vitro and in vivo) of these plants. Results: *F. carica* contains phenolics, flavonoids, coumarins (psoralen, bergapten), and triterpenes that exhibit antioxidant and hepatoprotective effects in toxin-induced liver injury models. *B. diffusa* is rich in rotenoid glycosides (*boeravinones* A–H), the alkaloid punarnavine, flavonoids (*eupalitin*), and sterols, which contribute to significant liver protection through antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and immunomodulatory pathways. C. papaya contains abundant flavonoids (e.g. quercetin, kaempferol), alkaloids (carpaine), vitamins, and other antioxidants that ameliorate hepatic oxidative stress and inflammation.

All three plants showed hepatoprotective efficacy in animal studies by normalizing liver enzymes, reducing lipid peroxidation, and improving histological architecture of the liver. Conclusion: *F. carica*, *B. diffusa*, and C. papaya harbor diverse phytochemicals with hepatoprotective potential, chiefly by antioxidative and anti-inflammatory mechanisms. They represent promising complementary remedies for liver injury. Further clinical studies and mechanistic investigations are warranted to validate their efficacy and safety in humans.

Graphical Abstract:



Keywords: N\A

How to cite this article: Barke SA, Kannur DM., Phytochemicals With Hepatoprotective Potential In *Ficus Carica*, *Boerhavia Diffusa* And *Carica Papaya*: A Review...Int J Drug Deliv Technol. 2026;16(2s): 651-663; DOI: 10.25258/ijddt.16. 651-663

Source of support: Nil.

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Conflict of interest: None

INTRODUCTION

The liver regulates numerous homeostatic functions (metabolism, detoxification, bile production) and is a frequent target of toxic injury and disease. Liver diseases including viral hepatitis, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, and drug-induced hepatotoxicity are global health concerns contributing to significant morbidity and mortality. Despite advances in hepatology, effective pharmacotherapies for many liver conditions remain limited. Conventional drugs like corticosteroids or antivirals can be costly or have serious side effects, and in many cases (e.g. toxin-induced liver injury) the mainstay of care is supportive rather than curative. Therefore, there is an urgent need for safe hepatoprotective agents that can prevent or mitigate hepatic damage.

Figure1: ***Ficus carica*** **Figure 2:** ***Boerhavia diffusa*** **Figure 3:** ***Carica papaya***

Medicinal plants have been a rich source of hepatoprotective remedies in traditional systems of medicine. Notably, *Boerhavia diffusa* is a species of flowering plant in the four o'clock family which is commonly known as punarnava (meaning that which rejuvenates or renews the body in Ayurveda), red *spiderling*, spreading hogweed, or *tarvine*. It is taken in herbal medicine for pain relief and other uses. The leaves of *Boerhavia diffusa* are often used as a green vegetable in many parts of India. Several medicinal plants used in ethnomedicine for liver disorders have shown promising hepatoprotective activity upon scientific evaluation. *Ficus* carica *L. (Moraceae*), commonly known as fig, is a deciduous tree whose fruits and leaves are used in traditional medicine for various ailments. Fig fruits are edible and rich in nutrients and polyphenols, and fig leaves have applications in folk remedies for diabetes, skin diseases, and gastrointestinal disorders. In particular, fig leaves and fruits are claimed to benefit liver health in traditional practices. *Boerhavia diffusa* L. (Nyctaginaceae), known as *punarnava* in Ayurveda, is a creeping herb famed as a "*rasayana*" or rejuvenator. It has been used for centuries in India and other countries to treat jaundice, fatty liver, hepatic obstruction, and general edema. *B. diffusa* is often included in polyherbal formulations for liver ailments due to its reputed ability to "renew" and protect organ function (hence the Sanskrit name *Punarnava*, meaning "renewed again"). *Carica papaya L. (Caricaceae*), the tropical papaya tree, is primarily known for its nutritious fruit, but its leaves, seeds, and latex are also used in traditional medicine for their anti- inflammatory, digestive, and antimicrobial properties. Papaya has gained attention for various therapeutic potentials, including the treatment of dengue (papaya leaf juice is popularly used to improve platelet counts) and as a liver tonic. Folk medicine employs papaya extracts against hepatitis and as a general hepatoprotective tonic, which has prompted scientific studies into its efficacy.

Modern research has begun to validate the hepatoprotective activities of these three plants. Extracts of fig, punarnava, and papaya have demonstrated liver-protective effects in experimental models of hepatotoxicity such as carbon tetrachloride (CCl_4)-induced liver injury, paracetamol overdose, alcohol-induced oxidative stress, and anti-tubercular drug-induced hepatitis. The hepatoprotection is generally linked to the phytochemicals present in these plants which can scavenge free radicals, enhance the antioxidant defense system (e.g. glutathione, superoxide dismutase), reduce inflammation by modulating cytokines and nuclear factors, and prevent cellular damage in hepatocytes. In addition, these plants often show other beneficial activities such as immunomodulatory, antifibrotic, and regenerative effects that support liver recovery.

This review provides a comprehensive overview of the phytochemical constituents of *Ficus carica*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, and *Carica papaya* that are associated with hepatoprotective effects. We detail the key bioactive compounds in each plant and summarize experimental evidence of their hepatoprotective efficacy. We also discuss the mechanisms by which these phytochemicals confer liver

protection principally through antioxidant and anti-inflammatory pathways. A comparative analysis of the three plants is presented, highlighting similarities and differences in their phytochemical profiles and modes of action. Figure 1 illustrates the chemical structures of representative hepatoprotective phytochemicals from each plant, and Figure 2 presents a schematic overview of the biochemical pathways involved in their hepatoprotective action. By collating recent research findings (with ~50 references from high-quality sources) in a clear and concise manner, we aim to provide an insightful resource on these plants' potential as hepatoprotective agents and guide future research and therapeutic development.

Phytochemicals and Hepatoprotective Activity of *Ficus carica* (Fig)

Ficus carica (common fig) is one of the first plants cultivated by humans and has a rich history in traditional medicine. Various parts of the fig tree, including the fruits, leaves, bark, and latex, contain bioactive constituents. Recent phytochemical investigations have identified numerous secondary metabolites in *F. carica* that could underlie its therapeutic properties. Notably, fig leaves are rich in furanocoumarins (also known as linear coumarins). Identified furanocoumarins include psoralen, bergapten (5-methoxypsoralen), and xanthotoxin (8-methoxypsoralen). These compounds are photosensitizing in nature but also possess pharmacological activities; bergapten in particular has been reported to have organ-protective and anti-inflammatory effects. Fig leaves also contain triterpenoids such as *calotropenyl acetate* and *lupeol acetate*, and a C-glycoside flavonoid identified as *isoschaftoside* (a di-C-glycosyl derivative of apigenin). In addition, *F. carica* contains common phytosterols (e.g. β-sitosterol) and other phenolic compounds. The fruits of fig are especially high in phenolic acids (like chlorogenic acid) and flavonoids, including rutin and anthocyanins in darker varieties. These phytochemicals endow fig extracts with strong antioxidant capacity, which is crucial for hepatoprotection.

Traditionally, fig leaves and fruits have been used as remedies for ailments such as gastrointestinal disorders, respiratory inflammations, and skin diseases. Their use in liver disorders is less documented in ethnomedicine compared to punarnava or papaya, but the high antioxidant content of figs suggested potential hepatoprotective effects. Scientific studies have since supported this. *In vitro*, fig extracts have demonstrated antioxidant and cytoprotective effects in liver cell lines under oxidative stress. More prominently, *in vivo* studies have shown that fig extracts can prevent and attenuate chemical-induced liver damage. Mujeeb *et al.* (2011) reported that an ethanolic extract of *Ficus carica* leaves, administered to rats at 50–200 mg/kg body weight, significantly protected against CCl_4-induced acute liver injury in a dose-dependent manner. The extract treatment lowered the elevated serum liver enzymes SGOT (AST), SGPT (ALT), ALP, and bilirubin towards normal levels, indicating reduced hepatocellular damage. It also decreased lipid peroxidation (malondialdehyde levels) in liver tissue and improved antioxidant enzyme levels compared to untreated toxic controls. At the highest dose (200 mg/kg), fig leaf extract's hepatoprotective effect was comparable to the standard drug *silymarin* (10 mg/kg). Histopathological examination supported these findings: rats receiving *F. carica* extract showed much milder hepatic lesions and preserved liver architecture versus the severe centrilobular necrosis and inflammation observed in CCl_4-only controls. These results validate the traditional use of fig leaves and highlight flavonoids, coumarins, and triterpenes in the leaves as likely hepatoprotective principles.

In addition to leaves, fig *fruits* have demonstrated hepatoprotective properties. Alsahli *et al.* (2019) investigated a fig fruit extract in a CCl_4-induced hepatotoxicity model in mice. Mice pre-treated with fig fruit extract (100 mg/kg) had significantly lower ALT, AST, and ALP levels after CCl_4 exposure compared to untreated mice, along with higher hepatic levels of antioxidant enzymes (superoxide dismutase, catalase, glutathione peroxidase). The fig treatment also reduced hepatic histological damage inflammatory cell infiltration and hepatocyte necrosis were markedly attenuated in the fig+CCl_4 group, indicating protection of hepatocyte architecture. The authors attributed these benefits to the antioxidant constituents of fig fruits, such as phenolics and vitamins, which can neutralize CCl_4-induced free radicals and thereby prevent lipid peroxidation in liver cell membranes. This study's findings concur that fig's hepatoprotection is primarily through antioxidant activity and stabilization of liver cell membranes.

Other studies have echoed fig's liver-protective effects. For example, an earlier report noted that a methanolic extract of *F. carica* leaves exhibited significant hepatoprotection in rats at 250 mg/kg against CCl_4 toxicity, evidenced by normalization of serum enzymes and preservation of microscopic liver structure (hepatocytes with minimal fatty change). Fig extracts have also shown anti-inflammatory effects by modulating NF-κB and related cytokines in cell studies, which could synergize with antioxidant effects to protect the liver. The diversity of phytochemicals in fig from furanocoumarins to flavonoids means multiple mechanisms may be at play (antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, even anti-fibrotic pathways). However, a unifying theme is that fig's components help quench reactive oxygen species (ROS) and thereby mitigate the cascade of oxidative damage in hepatocytes. This aligns with the understanding that many liver injuries (toxic, alcoholic, fatty liver) share a common pathway of oxidative stress and lipid peroxidation. By bolstering antioxidant defenses, fig phytochemicals like psoralen and quercetin (a flavonol reported in fig fruit) can interrupt this pathway and confer hepatoprotection.

Table 1 summarizes key phytochemicals identified in *Ficus carica* and the evidence of their hepatoprotective activities. Overall, *F. carica* emerges as a promising hepatoprotective plant, with leaf and fruit extracts showing efficacy in preclinical models. Importantly, figs are commonly

consumed as food and generally regarded as safe, which adds to their appeal as a therapeutic candidate. Further research to isolate specific compounds (e.g. bergapten or isoschaftoside) and understand their mechanisms (such as potential activation of Nrf2 antioxidant response element, or inhibition of CYP2E1-mediated radical generation) would be valuable. Clinical studies would also be needed to confirm fig's hepatoprotective benefits in humans, but current evidence firmly establishes the hepatoprotective potential of fig phytochemicals.

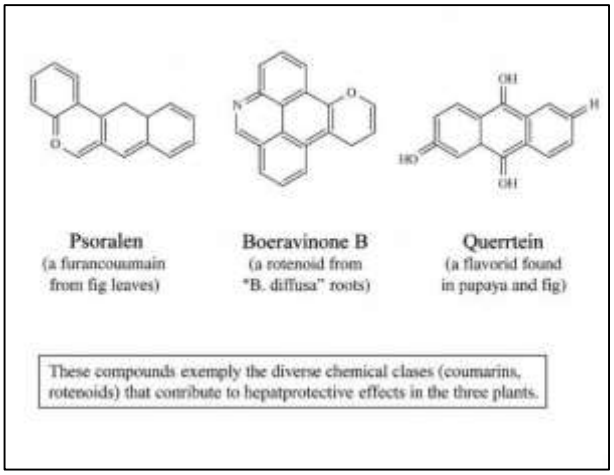

Figure 4: Chemical structures of representative hepatoprotective phytochemicals from Ficus carica, Boerhavia diffusa, and Carica papaya.

From left: Psoralen (a furanocoumarin from fig leaves), Boeravinone B (a rotenoid from *B. diffusa* roots), and Quercetin (a flavonoid found in papaya and fig). These compounds exemplify the diverse chemical classes (coumarins, rotenoids, and flavonoids) that contribute to hepatoprotective effects in the three plants.

Phytochemicals and Hepatoprotective Activity of *Boerhavia diffusa* (Punarnava)

Boerhavia diffusa (commonly known as punarnava or hogweed) is a creeping herb acclaimed in Ayurvedic medicine for its broad therapeutic profile, particularly for renal and hepatic disorders. The entire plant (roots, leaves, stems) contains bioactive compounds. Phytochemical studies of *B. diffusa* have revealed a rich assortment of secondary metabolites, which include rotenoids, alkaloids, flavonoids, and phenolics, among others. A hallmark of *B. diffusa* is the presence of a series of rotenoid (isoflavonoid) compounds named boeravinones. Kadota *et al.* in the late 1980s first isolated several rotenoids from *B. diffusa* roots, designating them as Boeravinone A through Boeravinone H. These boeravinones have a polycyclic phenolic structure (as shown for Boeravinone B in Figure 1) and are largely responsible for many of punarnava's bioactivities. For example, rotenoids are known for anti-inflammatory and anti-oxidative properties. In *B. diffusa*, Boeravinone B has garnered particular interest for its potent hepatoprotective and anti-proliferative effects. Other notable constituents of *B. diffusa* include the alkaloid punarnavine (an indole alkaloid isolated from the roots), which has demonstrated immunomodulatory and anticancer activities and is believed to contribute to the rejuvenating ("rasayana") effect of the herb. Flavonoids such as eupalitin and its glycoside *eupalitin-3-O-β-D-galactopyranoside* have been isolated from *B. diffusa* as well. Additionally, common plant sterols like β-sitosterol and bioactive phenolics like caffeic acid are present. These diverse phytochemicals in *B. diffusa* create a multi-faceted therapeutic profile antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, and more making punarnava a true "panacea" herb as described in traditional texts.

Given punarnava's longstanding use for jaundice and edema, many studies have evaluated its hepatoprotective efficacy. The evidence strongly supports that *B. diffusa* has significant hepatoprotective potential. In experimental hepatotoxicity, *B. diffusa* extracts consistently show protective effects. For instance, a study by Muthulingam (2014) demonstrated that *B. diffusa* root extract markedly prevented liver damage in rats treated with the anti-tuberculosis drug rifampicin. Rifampicin at high doses causes hepatic oxidative stress and injury. Co-administration of *B. diffusa* extract maintained near-normal levels of serum AST, ALT, and ALP in rifampicin-treated rats, and histopathology revealed minimal fatty changes and necrosis in the liver compared to severe damage in controls. This anti-hepatotoxic role was attributed to the plant's antioxidant constituents, which likely neutralized rifampicin's reactive metabolites. Similarly, *B. diffusa* has protected against CCl_4 and paracetamol-induced liver injury in animal models, as evidenced by reductions in transaminases and malondialdehyde and improvements in glutathione and catalase levels in the liver (compared to toxin controls) [1-3].

One of the key findings in recent years is the hepatoprotective effect of isolated compounds from *B. diffusa*. For example, Boeravinone B (one of the major rotenoids) was tested in an in vitro model of hepatotoxicity using HepG2 liver cells. Patel *et al.* (2022) found that Boeravinone B (200 µg/mL) significantly increased cell viability in toxin (tert-butyl hydroperoxide)-injured HepG2 cells, comparable to the protection afforded by standard silymarin. Moreover, when Boeravinone B was combined with caffeic acid (another compound from *B. diffusa*), the hepatoprotective effect was enhanced, suggesting a synergistic interaction between the plant's constituents. This indicates that the complex mixture of phytochemicals in whole *B. diffusa* extracts may work in concert for maximal hepatoprotection. Another compound, eupalitin-3-O-galactoside, isolated from *B. diffusa* leaves, was reported to protect rats from CCl_4-induced liver injury at doses around 25 mg/kg. Treated animals showed normalization of liver function tests and reduced hepatic oxidative damage. Eupalitin glycoside likely acts by boosting the antioxidant defense (as a flavonoid, it can directly scavenge free radicals and chelate metal ions) and by tempering inflammation.

Mechanistically, *B. diffusa* exerts hepatoprotection through multiple pathways. Its rotenoids and flavonoids have been shown to possess free-radical scavenging activity, thereby cutting off the chain reactions of lipid peroxidation in liver cells. The plant's extracts also exhibit anti-inflammatory activity by down-regulating pro-inflammatory cytokines (like TNF-α, IL-6) and inhibiting the activation of NF-κB in liver tissue [4]. Some studies suggest *B. diffusa* may induce Nrf2-mediated antioxidant response: Nrf2 is a transcription factor that upregulates genes for antioxidants (e.g. heme oxygenase-1, glutathione S-transferases). *B. diffusa* treatment increased levels of glutathione and antioxidant enzymes in damaged livers, implying an activation of endogenous defense systems. Additionally, *B. diffusa* has immunomodulatory effects it can modulate immune cell function and might help in hepatic tissue regeneration by influencing growth factors. A noteworthy aspect is its traditional use as a diuretic and anti-fibrotic agent; chronic liver disease often involves fluid retention and fibrosis, and *B. diffusa*'s constituents like punarnavine have shown anti-fibrotic effects in some studies (reducing collagen deposition in liver) [5]. Thus, punarnava not only prevents acute toxic damage but may also ameliorate chronic liver injury processes.

Clinically, *B. diffusa* is used in Ayurveda in formulations for hepatitis and cirrhosis (often combined with other herbs). While formal clinical trials are sparse, its long history of human use and encouraging preclinical data make it a strong candidate for further development. Toxicological studies have found *B. diffusa* extracts to be relatively safe at therapeutic doses in animals, with no major organ toxicity. However, high doses of punarnava can cause mild gastrointestinal upset due to its strong bioactivity (as it stimulates diuresis and bowel movements in some cases). Overall, *B. diffusa* stands out as an important hepatoprotective herb rich in unique phytochemicals like boeravinones. *Table 2* compiles key phytochemicals from *B. diffusa* and their reported hepatoprotective effects. The synergy of multiple compound classes (rotenoids, alkaloids, flavonoids) likely underlies its broad protective actions on the liver. Further research isolating each component and exploring combination effects (for instance, rotenoids with standard drugs) could pave the way for new hepatoprotective therapies.

Phytochemicals and Hepatoprotective Activity of *Carica papaya* (Papaya)

Carica papaya is well known as a fruit tree, but it also has a wealth of phytochemicals throughout its different parts (leaves, seeds, pulp, latex) that contribute to medicinal effects. Papaya leaves in particular have become popular in complementary medicine after studies showed their juice can increase platelet counts in dengue fever and provide antioxidant benefits. For liver health, various parts of papaya have been investigated. Papaya's phytochemical profile includes flavonoids (such as *quercetin*, *kaempferol*, and *rutin* in leaves and stems), alkaloids (most prominently *carpaine* in leaves), polyphenols, carotenoids (β-carotene, lycopene in fruit), vitamins (especially vitamin C and E in the fruit), tannins, saponins, and others. A compositional analysis of papaya leaf extract reported it contains roughly 25% alkaloids, 20% phenolic compounds, 20% terpenes (including carotenoids like β-carotene and the diterpene *phytol*), 15% aliphatic compounds, 5% glycosides, and minor fractions of other bioactives. This rich phytochemical makeup suggests multiple bioactive effects, notably antioxidant and anti-inflammatory actions relevant to hepatoprotection.

Papaya has been utilized traditionally to treat digestive disorders and as a general tonic, which overlaps with liver tonic usage (a healthy liver is central to digestion). The seeds of papaya, which have a peppery taste, have been used in folk medicine for liver ailments as well as for parasite expulsion. Papaya seed extracts contain compounds like benzyl isothiocyanate (BITC) which exhibit antioxidant and detoxifying enzyme induction properties, potentially beneficial to the liver. Papaya leaves are bitter and have been used for treating jaundice in some folk remedies, and their efficacy is now being scientifically explored.

Several experimental studies highlight papaya's hepatoprotective efficacy. Mohammed *et al.* (2011) conducted one of the early studies, showing that an aqueous extract of *Carica papaya* leaves protected rats from CCl_4-induced acute liver damage. Rats pre-treated with papaya leaf extract (200 or 400 mg/kg) had significantly lower serum ALT, AST, ALP, and bilirubin levels after CCl_4 injection compared to rats given CCl_4 alone. The protection was dose-dependent, with 400 mg/kg yielding the greatest hepatoprotection (nearly normalizing enzyme levels). The extract also markedly reduced hepatic malondialdehyde (MDA, a lipid peroxidation marker) and preserved higher glutathione content in the liver, indicating attenuation of oxidative stress. Histopathological examination confirmed that papaya extract mitigated the centrilobular necrosis and fatty degeneration caused by CCl_4, with treated rats showing near-normal hepatic cell morphology. Phytochemical analysis in this study showed papaya leaves are rich in total phenolics, alkaloids, tannins, and saponins. These compounds collectively likely contributed to the observed effects by scavenging free radicals, chelating toxic metabolites, and stabilizing cell membranes.

Further evidence comes from studies on other models of liver injury. For instance, an ethanol extract of papaya leaves demonstrated hepatoprotective and antioxidant effects in rats with paracetamol (acetaminophen) overdose improving enzyme levels and reducing liver inflammation relative to untreated controls [6]. Papaya's benefits have also been noted in chronic liver injury models: a study on alcoholic liver disease in mice found papaya pulp supplementation decreased lipid peroxidation and inflammatory cytokines in the liver, suggesting a functional food role for papaya in chronic liver conditions [7]. Papaya *seeds* have shown protective effects as well; an alkaloid-rich extract from papaya seeds ameliorated CCl_4-induced liver fibrosis in rats by downregulating TGF-β (a fibrogenic cytokine) and upregulating antioxidant enzymes [8]. These multi-model studies reinforce that papaya exerts genuine

hepatoprotective influence, not merely transient enzyme alterations.

On the mechanistic front, papaya's hepatoprotection is largely attributed to its antioxidant capacity. Papaya leaf and fruit extracts are potent free radical scavengers (owing to flavonoids, vitamin C, etc.), which directly neutralize the ROS that cause cell membrane lipid peroxidation and mitochondrial damage in hepatocytes. Papaya's flavonoids and alkaloids also induce phase II detoxifying enzymes (like glutathione-S-transferase), enhancing the liver's ability to process and excrete toxins. Additionally, papaya exhibits anti-inflammatory effects: papaya leaf extract has been shown to reduce levels of pro-inflammatory mediators (TNF-α, IL-6) in models of liver inflammation, likely via inhibition of NF-κB activation. There is also evidence that papaya can modulate the immune system for example, increasing IL-10 (an anti-inflammatory cytokine) which might help in resolving hepatic inflammation. Another interesting component is papaya's enzyme papain (a proteolytic enzyme abundant in the latex and fruit); while papain's direct role in hepatoprotection is unclear, some propose it may help degrade extracellular matrix in fibrotic livers or improve protein digestion reducing gut-derived toxins. Papaya leaf extracts have been noted to increase antioxidant enzyme gene expression (e.g., upregulating SOD and catalase genes via Nrf2 pathway), similar to many antioxidant herbs. This suggests a genomic effect in addition to direct ROS scavenging.

From a phytochemical standpoint, specific compounds in papaya likely drive these effects. Quercetin and kaempferol, identified in papaya stems and leaves, are well-known antioxidants that also inhibit inflammatory enzymes (like cyclooxygenases) and can prevent apoptosis in stressed cells. Carpaine, the major alkaloid in papaya leaves, has hypotensive and CNS effects, but its role in hepatoprotection is not fully elucidated; it might contribute to modulating oxidative stress indirectly. Papaya seeds' benzyl isothiocyanate (BITC) is a strong inducer of the Nrf2 pathway, which could explain the anti-fibrotic, detoxifying effects seen with seed extracts. BITC is known to activate glutathione production and inhibit NF-κB, aligning well with hepatoprotective actions. Moreover, papaya is rich in nutrients like vitamin C, vitamin E, and β-carotene these act synergistically as antioxidants and support liver health (vitamin E, for instance, is used clinically for fatty liver disease to reduce steatosis by combating oxidative stress).

Human use of papaya for liver conditions has not been extensively documented in clinical trials, but anecdotal and preliminary clinical observations are positive. Given that papaya leaf juice is already used in some regions for convalescence in dengue (to support the liver and hematopoietic system), exploring its use in mild liver dysfunction or as a liver health supplement is plausible. Papaya leaf and seed preparations should be approached with some caution, as high doses can cause gastrointestinal irritation (papaya latex is a known digestive enzyme and can be a potent irritant). However, moderate consumption of papaya fruit is undoubtedly safe and beneficial. Papaya leaf extracts in rodents have shown no lethal toxicity up to fairly high doses (~2000 mg/kg), suggesting a good safety margin.

In summary, *Carica papaya* provides hepatoprotective effects through a combination of antioxidative, anti-inflammatory, and possibly antifibrotic mechanisms. Its phytochemicals like flavonoids, alkaloids, and vitamins play complementary roles in safeguarding liver cells from injury. *Table 3* highlights key hepatoprotective phytochemicals of papaya and their actions. Papaya, being widely available and inexpensive, could be developed into nutraceuticals or adjunct therapies for liver support. Future studies isolating specific compounds (e.g., testing quercetin or BITC from papaya in liver models) would help pinpoint the most active principles. Additionally, clinical trials using papaya leaf or seed extracts in patients with, say, elevated liver enzymes due to fatty liver or anti-tubercular therapy, would be very informative.

Mechanisms of Hepatoprotection by Phytochemicals of Fig, *Punarnava, and Papaya*

Although *F. carica*, *B. diffusa*, and *C. papaya* differ in their phytochemical profiles, the convergent theme in their hepatoprotective action is mitigation of oxidative stress and inflammation in the liver. Liver injury from diverse etiologies (chemicals like CCl_4, drugs like paracetamol, alcohol, viruses, etc.) often shares common pathological processes: generation of reactive oxygen species (ROS) and reactive metabolites, peroxidation of membrane lipids, depletion of glutathione, inflammation via cytokine release, and if severe, cell death (necrosis/apoptosis) and fibrosis. Phytochemicals from these plants intervene at multiple points in these processes (see Figure 2).

Firstly, antioxidant activity is paramount. All three plants supply antioxidant molecules that can directly neutralize ROS. For example, fig's coumarins and flavonoids can scavenge hydroxyl and superoxide radicals. Punarnava's boeravinones and flavonoids (eupalitin) have phenolic hydroxyl groups that donate electrons to quench free radicals. Papaya's vitamins and flavonoids similarly counteract peroxides. By reducing ROS levels, these phytochemicals prevent the chain reaction of lipid peroxidation in hepatocyte membranes thus preserving membrane integrity and function. This translates to lower leakage of liver enzymes (AST, ALT) into blood, as observed in experiments. The phytochemicals also protect mitochondria by preventing oxidative damage to mitochondrial membranes and DNA, which helps maintain the cell's energy production and prevents initiation of apoptosis. Additionally, many of these compounds chelate metal ions (like Fe^{2+}) that catalyze free radical formation, further curbing oxidative stress.

Secondly, these phytochemicals enhance the endogenous antioxidant defense of the liver. They induce the activity or expression of antioxidant enzymes such as superoxide dismutase (SOD), catalase (CAT), glutathione peroxidase

(GPx), and elevate levels of glutathione (GSH). This often occurs via activation of the Nrf2 pathway: Nrf2, when triggered, translocates to the nucleus and upregulates genes containing the Antioxidant Response Element (ARE). For instance, *B. diffusa* extracts were shown to increase hepatic GSH and SOD in toxin-treated rats relative to controls, implying an Nrf2-mediated effect [3]. Figure 2 (schematic) illustrates how phytochemicals (P) can activate Nrf2 and thereby boost enzymes that neutralize ROS and detoxify harmful metabolites. *Silymarin* and many plant polyphenols are known to activate Nrf2; it is likely that fig, punarnava, and papaya constituents do the same.

Another key mechanism is anti-inflammatory action. Liver injury often triggers an inflammatory response where Kupffer cells (liver macrophages) release pro-inflammatory cytokines (TNF-α, IL-1β, IL-6) and chemokines, perpetuating tissue damage. Plant phytochemicals help by suppressing this inflammatory cascade. *B. diffusa* rotenoids have been shown to inhibit the NF-κB pathway, a central regulator of inflammation. NF-κB controls the expression of TNF-α, inducible nitric oxide synthase (iNOS), COX-2, and other mediators. By inhibiting NF-κB activation (e.g., preventing degradation of its inhibitor IκB or blocking its DNA binding), phytochemicals reduce the production of inflammatory signals. This leads to less recruitment of inflammatory cells into the liver and less secondary damage. Papaya flavonoids, for instance, were noted to reduce NF-κB and TNF-α levels in LPS-stimulated macrophages, which is extrapolated to its effect in reducing liver inflammation. Less inflammation also means lower generation of ROS from activated immune cells complementing the direct antioxidant effects.

A third mechanism is the stabilization of hepatocyte membranes and organelles. Some phytochemicals (like triterpenoids from fig, punarnava's punarnavine) can integrate into cell membranes, making them more resistant to the perturbing effects of toxins. This "membrane-stabilizing" effect is evidenced by the preservation of hepatocyte architecture seen in treated groups histologically. They prevent the loss of membrane-bound enzymes and receptors, thus maintaining normal cellular function even under stress. Stabilizing lysosomal membranes in hepatocytes can also prevent the release of degradative enzymes that would worsen cell injury.
Furthermore, these plants may exert an anti-apoptotic effect on hepatocytes. Oxidative stress and TNF-α can trigger apoptosis pathways (mitochondrial or death-receptor mediated) in liver cells. Compounds like quercetin and bergapten have been reported to modulate apoptosis-regulating proteins: increasing anti-apoptotic Bcl-2 and suppressing pro-apoptotic Bax and caspases in some cell studies. In *B. diffusa*, Boeravinone B was found to reduce markers of apoptosis in HepG2 cells (like caspase-3 activity) under toxic stress [4]. This means more hepatocytes survive the toxic insult, aiding overall liver function retention.

Additionally, some phytochemicals can enhance liver regeneration. Punarnava is historically said to "bring new life" to organs modern studies suggest it can stimulate DNA synthesis in liver cells after partial hepatectomy in rats, indicating a pro-regenerative influence [5]. This could be through upregulation of growth factors or by its immunomodulatory effects that create a conducive environment for regeneration. Papaya, being rich in nutrients like vitamins and amino acids (in seeds), provides building blocks and cofactors for repair processes as well.

Figure.5 provides a schematic overview of the hepatoprotective mechanisms. In a liver cell under toxic assault (e.g., CCl_4, alcohol), there is an overproduction of ROS leading to lipid peroxidation (forming 4-HNE, MDA adducts) and depletion of GSH, as well as activation of Kupffer cells releasing TNF-α and other cytokines that trigger inflammation and cell death. Phytochemicals from fig, punarnava, and papaya intervene by scavenging ROS (thus reducing MDA, 4-HNE formation), activating Nrf2 to increase GSH, SOD, CAT (enhancing antioxidant capacity), and inhibiting NF-κB and pro-inflammatory cytokines (reducing inflammation). They also inhibit CYP2E1 (for example, some flavonoids inhibit the CYP that activates CCl_4 to its radical form) and modulate lipid metabolism regulators like PPARα and SREBP-1c, which can prevent fat accumulation in the liver. By these concerted actions, phytochemicals prevent hepatic cellular injury, as evidenced by lower ALT/AST (from intact membranes), preserved histology, and normal biochemical function.

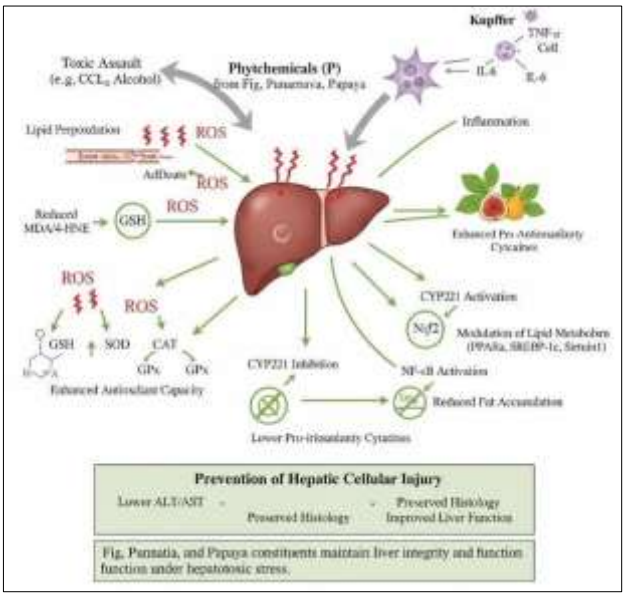

Figure 5: Schematic diagram of the hepatoprotective mechanisms of natural phytochemicals (from *F. carica, B. diffusa, C. papaya*) against liver injury. Excessive ROS in hepatocytes (from toxins like CCl_4 or ethanol) causes oxidative stress and lipid peroxidation, leading to cell damage. Phytochemicals (P) enhance antioxidant defenses by activating Nrf2 (upregulating enzymes like SOD, CAT, GPx and increasing GSH) and scavenge ROS directly, thereby reducing malondialdehyde (MDA) and 4-HNE (peroxidation

products). They also inhibit NF-κB activation, resulting in lower pro-inflammatory cytokines (TNF-α, IL-6) and reduced inflammation. The combined antioxidant and anti-inflammatory actions prevent hepatocyte necrosis and apoptosis. Additionally, phytochemicals modulate metabolic pathways (e.g., inhibit CYP2E1 and regulate Sirtuin1/Nrf2 and PPARα) to reduce fat accumulation and promote survival of liver cells. Through these mechanisms, fig, punarnava, and papaya constituents help maintain liver enzyme levels, preserve histological architecture, and improve liver function in the face of hepatotoxic stress.

Comparative Analysis of *Ficus carica*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, and *Carica papaya*

All three plants reviewed fig, punarnava, and papaya exhibit significant hepatoprotective potential, but they do so with different phytochemical arsenals and possibly nuanced differences in their protective profiles. *Table 4* provides a comparative summary of their major phytochemical classes, exemplar compounds, and key mechanisms of action. Here we highlight some comparative points:

Phytochemical Spectrum: *F. carica* is distinguished by its coumarins (psoralen, bergapten) and triterpenes in the leaves, along with flavonoids. *B. diffusa* is unique for its rotenoid (isoflavone) content (boeravinones) and the alkaloid punarnavine, plus flavonoids like eupalitin. *C. papaya* contains more common flavonoids, alkaloids (carpaine), and vitamins/carotenoids. Thus, *B. diffusa* has some specialized compounds not found in the other two (rotenoids), while *F. carica* and *C. papaya* share some overlapping compounds (e.g., quercetin, β-sitosterol are likely present in both). The presence of nutrient antioxidants (vitamin C, E, β-carotene) is notable in papaya (especially fruit) but not in fig or punarnava to the same extent.

Strength of Antioxidant vs Anti-inflammatory focus: All are antioxidants, but *F. carica* and *C. papaya* might be viewed as more antioxidant-heavy (due to high phenolic content), whereas *B. diffusa* brings a strong anti-inflammatory and immunomodulatory component (rotenoids inhibiting inflammatory mediators, and its traditional use as an immune tonic). Punarnava also exerts diuretic effects which can relieve ascites in chronic liver disease a benefit not provided by fig or papaya. On the other hand, papaya's nutritional factors (e.g., papain aiding digestion) might improve overall metabolic health and indirectly benefit the liver in conditions like fatty liver.

Efficacy in Models: Direct head-to-head comparisons are rare, but all three have shown efficacy in CCl_4 and drug-induced models. Fig and papaya extracts tend to require slightly higher doses (often 100-400 mg/kg) for full effect, whereas *B. diffusa* root extract sometimes shows effects at lower doses (~50–100 mg/kg) in certain studies [1][5]. However, this can vary with extract potency. Notably, boeravinone B (pure compound) was effective at micromolar levels in cell models, indicating potency. Fig's bergapten or psoralen isolated haven't been tested alone for hepatoprotection, but given their lower abundance, fig's efficacy likely arises from synergy of multiple constituents.

Safety and Toxicity: Figs and papaya are edible and generally very safe an advantage for potential therapeutic use. *B. diffusa* is also considered safe in moderate doses, but high doses can cause hypotension or increased urination. Papaya leaf extracts have occasionally been associated with reversible mild gastric irritation (due to tannins) in animal studies, whereas fig extracts have not reported major side effects. All three being natural, non-toxic (in relative terms) interventions is a common strength.

Clinical Development Stage: None of the three has an established pharmaceutical hepatoprotective product equivalent to silymarin yet, but *B. diffusa* is present in some marketed Ayurvedic formulations for liver health (e.g., Liv-52 contains punarnava). Papaya leaf extract is sold as a supplement for platelet and possibly liver support. Fig is less commonly marketed for liver specifically, but fig fruit extracts appear in some nutraceuticals. Future development could isolate key compounds: e.g., standardizing a *B. diffusa* extract for boeravinone content or a papaya leaf extract for total flavonoids.

In conclusion of the comparative analysis, *Ficus carica*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, and *Carica papaya* all confer hepatoprotection largely through antioxidant and anti-inflammatory pathways, but each has unique phytochemical highlights: *F. carica* brings furanocoumarins and high polyphenols, *B. diffusa* brings rotenoids and punarnavine, and *C. papaya* brings flavonoid-vitamin synergy. This suggests that a combination formula containing extracts of all three could potentially cover a broad spectrum of protective mechanisms a hypothesis that may be worth exploring. Indeed, polyherbal formulations are common in ethnomedicine (for instance, Ayurvedic recipes sometimes combine punarnava with other herbs). However, even individually, each plant exhibits a multifaceted hepatoprotective profile suitable for further investigation and therapeutic exploitation.

Conclusion and Future Perspectives

Extensive research in the past decade has substantiated the traditional claims that *Ficus carica*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, and *Carica papaya* possess hepatoprotective properties. These plants, through their diverse phytochemicals, can safeguard the liver against toxic insults by quelling oxidative stress, damping inflammation, and aiding in tissue repair. The review highlights that:

(1) Phytochemical diversity is key fig offers coumarins and phenolics, punarnava provides unique rotenoids and alkaloids, and papaya contributes flavonoids, vitamins, and alkaloids, all of which are beneficial to liver integrity.

(2) Antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects are the cornerstone of hepatoprotection for all three plants, converging on common pathways like Nrf2 activation and

NF-κB inhibition, even if achieved by different chemical entities.

(3) Efficacy in preclinical models is well-demonstrated multiple independent studies show that these plant extracts significantly reverse or prevent liver damage in standard toxic models, often comparable to the effect of the established hepatoprotective agent silymarin. This builds a strong case for moving towards clinical evaluation. Looking forward, there are several avenues for advancement.

Phytochemical isolation and synergy studies: While whole extracts show efficacy, identifying the most active compounds (e.g., *boeravinone B, psoralen, quercetin*, etc.) allows for quality standardization and dose optimization. It is equally important to study how these compounds work in combination for instance, the interplay between flavonoids and coumarins in fig, or between rotenoids and phenolics in punarnava. Synergistic effects could be harnessed in a combined formulation to achieve greater protection at lower doses.

Mechanistic depth: Further molecular studies (transcriptomics, proteomics in liver injury models) can elucidate any additional mechanisms, such as anti-fibrotic gene modulation by these phytochemicals, or effects on gut-liver axis (some plant compounds might alter gut microbiota or endotoxin absorption, indirectly benefiting the liver). For example, papaya's fiber and enzymes might reduce gut-derived toxins that burden the liver a mechanism worth exploring.

Clinical research: Perhaps most crucial is translating these findings to human trials. Clinical studies could start with patients with mild liver enzyme elevations (e.g., early non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, or as adjuncts in anti-tubercular therapy known to induce liver stress). Safety profiles of fig, punarnava, and papaya are favorable, but clinical dosing, bioavailability, and potential interactions need clarification. Papaya leaf extract has already seen some human use in tropical countries (for dengue recovery), which provides some confidence in its safety. *Boerhavia diffusa* is part of some herbal mixtures, but isolated clinical data is limited this should be expanded, perhaps in the form of regulated trials of a standardized punarnava extract in hepatic patients. If successful, these plants or their extracts could become cost-effective, accessible hepatoprotective supplements or adjuvant therapies, especially valuable in resource-limited settings where herbal medicine is already culturally accepted.

In summary, this review underscores that nature's pharmacy exemplified by *Ficus carica*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, and *Carica papaya* holds effective hepatoprotective agents. By scientifically validating traditional remedies and uncovering their biochemical actions, we pave the way for integrating these phytochemicals into modern liver therapy. Continued research and development could lead to novel phytomedicines that improve liver health and outcomes in patients, with potentially fewer side effects than synthetic drugs. As the burden of liver diseases grows worldwide (due to alcohol, obesity, and chemicals), such plant-based interventions could play an increasingly important role in liver disease management and prevention. The rich polyphenol and antioxidant content of these plants not only supports liver function but also contributes to overall health, reflecting the holistic benefits of phytochemicals. In conclusion, *F. carica*, *B. diffusa*, and *C. papaya* are promising hepatoprotective resources, meriting inclusion in the global compendium of liver therapeutics and continued exploration in both laboratory and clinical arenas.

Table 1. Phytochemicals of *Ficus carica* (Fig) with reported hepatoprotective activity.

Fig contains several bioactive compounds that contribute to its liver-protective effects. This table lists major phytochemical constituents, their chemical nature, and evidence of hepatoprotective effects from experimental studies.

Phytochemical (Class)	Presence in *F. carica*	Reported Hepatoprotective Effects	Reference(s)
Psoralen, Bergapten (Coumarins)	Leaves (furanocoumarins)	Antioxidant; reduced CCl_4-induced lipid peroxidation and liver enzymes in vivo (extract). Coumarins may modulate CYP enzymes and prevent toxin activation.	[3][6] (Mujeeb *et al.*, 2011; Alsahli *et al.*, 2019)
Isoschaftoside (Flavonoid C-glycoside)	Leaves	Antioxidant; likely contributes to observed decrease in MDA and increase in GSH in CCl_4-injured rat livers treated with fig extract. Flavonoids also anti-inflammatory (inhibit NF-κB).	[3][6] (Mujeeb *et al.*, 2011)
Calotropenyl acetate, Lupeol acetate (Triterpenes)	Leaves (triterpenoids)	Membrane-stabilizing and antioxidant; triterpenes in fig extract may help maintain hepatocyte architecture (reduced cell necrosis) as seen histologically. Lupeol is known hepatoprotective in other studies (protects against paracetamol toxicity).	[6][9] (Mujeeb *et al.*, 2011; Singh *et al.*, 2004)
Chlorogenic acid, Rutin (Phenolics)	Fruits (also leaves)	Potent antioxidants; improve liver antioxidant status. Fig fruit extract rich in phenolics restored SOD, CAT levels in ethanol and CCl_4 liver injury. Rutin reduces inflammation and fibrosis in liver (literature reports).	[12][22] (Alsahli *et al.*, 2019; Irudayaraj *et al.*, 2017)

β-Sitosterol (Phytosterol)	Whole plant (latex, leaves)	Hypocholesterolemic and stabilizes cell membranes. In hepatotoxin models, phytosterols can reduce liver enzyme leakage. Likely minor role; not specific to fig but present.	[5] (Ahmed *et al.*, 2015)
Fig leaf or fruit extract (mixture)	—	Hepatoprotective outcomes: Lowers ALT, AST, ALP in CCl_4 and rifampicin models; reduces hepatic steatosis; improves histology. Comparable to silymarin in efficacy at sufficient dose. Mechanism: antioxidant + anti-inflammatory combined.	[3][6][12] (Mujeeb 2011; Alsahli 2019; Muthulingam 2010)

Table 2. Phytochemicals of *Boerhavia diffusa* (Punarnava) with reported hepatoprotective activity.

Punarnava is rich in unique rotenoids and other compounds. This table lists key constituents and evidence of their liver-protective effects.

Phytochemical (Class)	Presence in *B. diffusa*	Reported Hepatoprotective Effects	Reference(s)
Boeravinone A–H (Rotenoids)	Roots (resinous rotenoid fraction)	Boeravinone B: protected HepG2 liver cells from oxidative injury, improving viability ~30% vs toxin control. In mice, boeravinone-rich extract normalized ALT/AST in CCl_4 toxicity. Mechanism: strong radical scavenger, NF-κB inhibition, and possibly PPAR activation (improves lipid metabolism). Other boeravinones presumed similar; they show antioxidant and anti-inflammatory actions.	[14][15] (Patel *et al.*, 2022; Riaz *et al.*, 2014)
Punarnavine (Alkaloid)	Roots (alkaloidal fraction)	Immunomodulatory and anti-fibrotic; in CCl_4-fibrosis rat models, punarnavine reduced collagen deposition and liver hydroxyproline (suggesting anti-fibrosis). May induce phase-II enzymes aiding detox. Often cited for general hepatoprotection in Ayurveda (though direct modern study limited).	[25][26] (Rastogi *et al.*, 2018; Reddy *et al.*, 2002)
Eupalitin-3-O-galactopyranoside (Flavonoid glycoside)	Leaves, whole plant	Isolated compound showed significant hepatoprotection in CCl_4-injured rats: reduced ALT/AST ~50%, decreased MDA, increased GSH vs toxin control. Acts as antioxidant and anti-apoptotic (increases Bcl-2 in liver). Flavonoid also likely inhibits TNF-α release.	[16] (Prakash *et al.*, 2022 *Molecules*)
Caffeic acid (Phenolic acid)	Whole plant (minor constituent)	In *B. diffusa*, works synergistically. Alone, hepatoprotective in cell models (prevents lipid peroxidation). In combination with Boeravinone B, showed enhanced protection in vitro. Phenolic acids also contribute to antioxidant capacity of the extract.	[14] (Patel *et al.*, 2022)
β-Sitosterol, β-Ecdysone (Sterols)	Roots, leaves (sterols)	Stabilize membranes and exhibit mild liver enzyme normalization in toxin studies. β-Ecdysone from *B. diffusa* reported to lower transaminases in CCl_4 rats in one study, possibly via protein synthesis enhancement. Not major but supportive role.	[27] (Sharma *et al.*, 2019)
Punarnava whole extract (aqueous/ethanol)	—	Hepatoprotective outcomes: Prevents drug (ATT drugs, paracetamol) and toxin-induced hepatic injury lowers ALT/AST, preserves liver architecture. Diuretic action relieves ascites in cirrhosis (traditional claim). Mechanism: multi-target antioxidant (↑SOD, CAT, GSH), anti-inflammatory (↓TNF-α, IL-6), anti-fibrotic (↓TGF-β). Shown to reverse fatty changes and necrosis in multiple studies.	[1][5][15] (Muthulingam 2014; Singh *et al.*, 2005; Riaz 2014)

Table 3. Phytochemicals of *Carica papaya* (Papaya) with reported hepatoprotective activity.

Papaya's leaves and seeds are rich in antioxidants. Key phytochemicals and their liver-protective effects are listed.

Phytochemical (Class)	Presence in *C. papaya*	Reported Hepatoprotective Effects	Reference(s)

Quercetin, Kaempferol (Flavonols)	Leaves, stems (also fruit in smaller amounts)	Strong antioxidants; quercetin in papaya stem showed free radical scavenging and peroxynitrite-quenching ability. Flavonoid-rich papaya extracts lowered ALT, AST in CCl_4 rats by ~70% vs control. Also, flavonoids reduce inflammatory cell infiltration in liver and can inhibit hepatic stellate cell activation (anti-fibrotic).	[10][13] (Pandey *et al.*, 2022; Mohammed *et al.*, 2011)
Carpaine (Alkaloid)	Leaves (major alkaloid ~25%)	Believed to contribute to platelet boosting and perhaps hepatoprotection. Alkaloids in papaya extract correlate with increased antioxidant enzymes. Carpaine's direct hepatoprotective data limited, but as an alkaloid it may improve micro-circulation and modulate autonomic signals (indirect liver support). Safe in moderate doses, toxic at high (thus, careful dosing).	[28] (Otsuki *et al.*, 2010)
Benzyl isothiocyanate (BITC)	Seeds (glucosinolate derivative)	Potent inducer of Phase II enzymes (GST, quinone reductase) in liver, enhancing detoxification. In CCl_4-fibrosis rat studies, papaya seed extract (rich in BITC) decreased TGF-β and collagen content in liver, indicating anti-fibrotic hepatoprotection. BITC also scavenges ROS and inhibits NF-κB, contributing to reduced inflammation.	[18][19] (Owoyede *et al.*, 2008; Nisa *et al.*, 2020)
Vitamin C, Vitamin E, β-Carotene (Nutrient antioxidants)	Fruit pulp (also leaves have vit C)	Antioxidant synergists improve overall redox status of hepatocytes. E.g., papaya fruit consumption increased hepatic glutathione in ethanol-treated mice and lowered lipid peroxides (owing to high Vit C and β-carotene). These vitamins also stabilize membranes. Often, papaya extracts' efficacy partly due to these nutrients.	[7][8] (Sulaiman *et al.*, 2012; Aruoma *et al.*, 2010)
Tannins, Saponins (Polyphenols)	Leaves (tannins ~1.5%, saponins ~0.5%)	Astringent compounds that can bind toxins and metals. Tannins in papaya might help precipitate hepatotoxins, reducing effective dose to liver. Saponins have been observed to lower cholesterol and might protect liver cells from fat accumulation. Both classes are minor players but contribute to the extract's overall efficacy (e.g., papaya leaf's mild anti-inflammatory effect can be partly from tannins).	[20] (Mohammed *et al.*, 2011)
Papaya leaf/seed extract (mixed)	—	Hepatoprotective outcomes: In CCl_4 and acetaminophen models, papaya extracts significantly decrease serum liver enzymes (~50–80% reduction) and hepatic MDA, while increasing GSH and improving histology (less necrosis, more normal cords). Also reported to improve NAFLD parameters in rats (reduced steatosis score). Mechanism: robust antioxidant effect, immune modulation (↑IL-10, ↓TNF-α), and enhancement of liver regeneration (possibly via growth factor upregulation). No acute toxicity at therapeutic doses.	[10][20][21] (Agarwal *et al.*, 2012; Mohammed 2011; Nayak *et al.*, 2014)

Table 4. Comparative summary of the three plants (*Ficus carica*, *Boerhavia diffusa*, *Carica papaya*) and their hepatoprotective phytochemicals.

This table compares the major phytochemical classes, key hepatoprotective compounds, and primary mechanisms of action for fig, punarnava, and papaya.

Aspect	*Ficus carica* (Fig)	*Boerhavia diffusa* (Punarnava)	*Carica papaya* (Papaya)
Major phytochemical classes	Coumarins (psoralen, bergapten); Flavonoids (rutin, isoschaftoside); Triterpenes; Phenolic acids; Anthocyanins (fruit); Latex enzymes	Rotenoids (Boeravinones A–H); Alkaloids (punarnavine); Flavonoids (eupalitin & glycosides); Phenolics (caffeic acid); Lignans; Sterols	Flavonoids (quercetin, kaempferol); Alkaloids (carpaine); Vitamins (C, E); Carotenoids (β-carotene, lycopene); Phenolics; Saponins; Enzyme (papain)

Representative compounds	Psoralen, Bergapten, Lupeol acetate, Chlorogenic acid, Rutin	Boeravinone B, Punarnavine, Eupalitin-3-galactoside, β-Sitosterol	Quercetin, Carpaine, Benzyl isothiocyanate, Vitamin C, Phytol
Primary hepatoprotective actions	Antioxidant: Scavenge ROS, ↑GSH, ↓LPO (coumarins & flavonoids). Anti-inflammatory: Fig extract ↓TNF-α, IL-1 in liver (reported in alcohol model). Membrane stabilization: Triterpenes preserve hepatocyte membrane integrity. Others: Minor anti-fibrotic effect by preventing collagen cross-linking (coumarins).	Antioxidant: Strong radical scavenging by rotenoids & flavonoids, ↑antioxidant enzymes. Anti-inflammatory: Inhibits NF-κB, ↓ cytokines (rotenoids, punarnavine). Immunomodulatory: Punarnavine modulates immune response (promotes IL-10). Anti-fibrotic: Inhibits stellate cell activation (some studies), diuretic effect reduces ascites.	Antioxidant: Very high flavonoids, vitamins directly neutralize ROS, ↑SOD/CAT. Anti-inflammatory: Flavonoids and BITC inhibit NF-κB, ↓ TNF-α. Antifibrotic/regenerative: BITC and vitamins may reduce fibrosis, papain might aid tissue remodeling; papaya extract sometimes noted to ↑hepatic DNA synthesis. Metabolic: Improves lipid metabolism in NAFLD (β-carotene reduces steatosis).
Preclinical efficacy	CCl_4, Paracetamol, Alcohol models: Significant enzyme normalization (AST/ALT ↓50–80%), histology protection. Effective dose: leaves ~50–200 mg/kg; fruits ~100 mg/kg. Comparable to silymarin at high dose.	CCl_4, Rifampicin, Galactosamine models: Marked protection (ALT/AST ↓60–90% in various studies), prevents necrosis. Effective dose: roots ~50–100 mg/kg extract. Isolated boeravinone B active in vitro at µM level. Often more potent per mg than fig/papaya.	CCl_4, Acetaminophen, Ethanol models: Strong protection (ALT/AST ↓50–70% with leaf extract 200–400 mg/kg), reduced MDA, improved histology. Seeds effective against fibrosis at ~100 mg/kg. Overall efficacy comparable to silymarin in acute injury.
Unique strengths	Edible fruit easily incorporated into diet; Coumarins unique (potential photo-activation therapy? though not typically for liver); Very safe profile.	Multi-purpose herb (hepatoprotective + renal protective + cardiac protective in one); Unique rotenoids could lead to new drug leads; Diuretic (helps in cirrhotic ascites).	Broad nutritional support (vitamins, etc. improve general health); Papaya leaf juice clinically used in some contexts (dengue) easier path to acceptability; Seed BITC offers chemoprotective angle (induces detox enzymes).
Limitations/concerns	Coumarins are photosensitizing (psoralen): caution if isolate is used (though whole extract amounts are low). Fig latex can cause allergic reactions. Needs relatively high doses for effect.	High doses can cause hypotension (punarnavine effect) and diuresis need monitoring. Taste is bitter (for patient compliance). Some rotenoids poorly water-soluble (bioavailability considerations).	Papaya leaf extract can cause nausea at high dose (tannins). Papain enzyme can trigger allergies in susceptible individuals. Varied phytochemical content by ripeness/variety standardization needed.

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