

**PHYSICO-CHEMICAL PROPERTIES AND HEALTH
EFFECTS OF *MOMORDICA CHARANTIA* L.**

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Momordica charantia L. (*M. charantia* L.) commonly known as 'bitter gourd', 'bitter melon', 'ku gua' or 'karela' is a flowering vine in the family Cucurbitaceae. It is a tropical plant widely cultivated in Asia, India, East Africa, and South America. Recently in Turkey, the plant is cultivated in the various fields in the Marmara region. The fruit of *Momordica charantia* L. has a distinguishing bitter taste and vivid orange color. The size of its fruits is only about one-fifth of the plant. The fruit is rich in minerals including potassium, calcium, zinc, magnesium, phosphorus and iron. The fruit contains high amounts of vitamin C, vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamins B1, B2, B3 and vitamin B9. *Momordica charantia* L. is a multi purpose herb that is commonly used as a food and drug. It is also an useful medicinal plant for human health. Modern pharmacological studies have demonstrated that *Momordica charantia* L possesses some medicinal properties such as antidiabetic, anticancer, anti inflammation, antiviral, and cholesterol lowering effects. It is used for the rapid healing of wounds and for the treatment of peptic ulcers in Turkish folk medicine.

Keywords: *Momordica charantia* L., bitter melon, medicinal plant, Physico-chemical properties

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