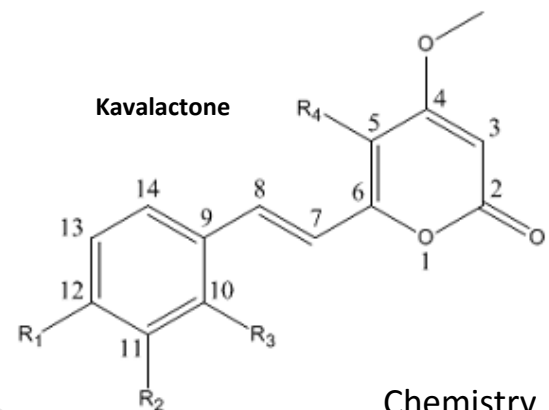
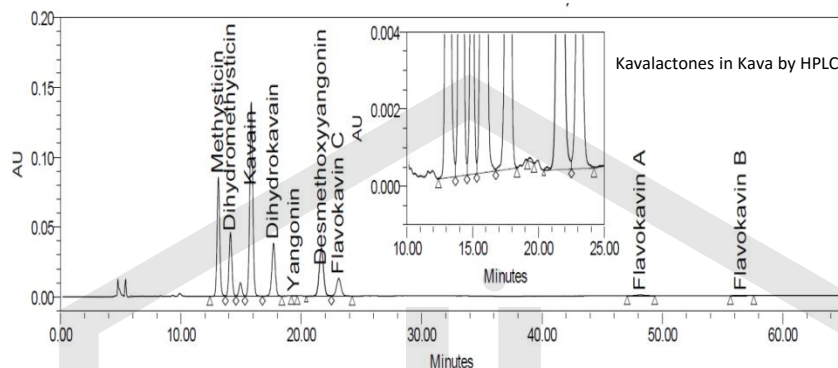




**Plant of the Month**  
 By Jonathan Crellin, Alkemist Labs  
 \\NAS\Station 15\Plant of the Month\



**Chemistry**

There are 6 main active compounds in Kava which are members of the kavalactone family. Kavain is the main kavalactone, and is responsible for its anticonvulsive and calming effects. Yangonin has been found to have binding affinity to the cannabinoid receptor CB<sub>1</sub> which gives Kava its intoxicating and psychoactive effects. Flavokavains and methysticins found in Kava have been identified as hepatotoxins which damage the liver.

# Kava Kava

## *Piper methysticum*



**Sales**

Manufacturing: Not in top 40  
 Consumer: Not in top 20

**Pharmacology**

Kava has a calming effect producing brain wave changes similar to those that occur with calming medicines, and can be used instead of prescription antianxiety drugs such as benzodiazepines and tricyclic antidepressants. When taken for anxiety, stress, or sleep, it does not interfere with mental sharpness and promotes deep sleep without affecting restful REM sleep. Although kava is not addictive, its effect may decrease with use, and has a risk of liver damage with long term use.

**Botany/Preparation**

Kava is a member of the pepper family. It is a tall shrub that grows in the islands of the Pacific Ocean. The shrub produces large, green, heart-shaped leaves that grow thickly on the branches. The root is the part of the plant used medicinally. It is dried and ground to prepare beverages, extracts, capsules, tablets, and topical solutions. The leaves of the plant contain higher levels of the toxic compounds.



## References

1. <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/kava>
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3. <http://www.spc.int/cis/documents/Kava%20article%20DrMalani.pdf>
4. <http://umm.edu/health/medical/altmed/herb/kava-kava>