

**COMPARATIVE PHYTOCHEMICAL STUDY OF ROOTS VERSUS  
SMALL BRANCHES OF *VITEX NEGUNDO* L. USING HIGH  
PERFORMANCE THIN LAYER CHROMATOGRAPHIC ULTRA-  
VIOLET DETECTION METHOD**

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Article Received on  
30 Nov 2014,

Revised on 24 Dec 2014,  
Accepted on 19 Jan 2015

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**ABSTRACT**

*Vitex Negundo* L., family Verbenaceae is an important medicinal plant and immensely used in the Indian System of Medicine to cure human diseases. Roots of *V. negundo* have been reported for various medicinal properties such as relieving intermittent fever, thirst, body pain, to cure rheumatism, dyspepsia, piles and as an anthelmintic. *V. negundo* is commonly known as Nirgundi in India. Chemo-profiling screening of two parts of *V. negundo* plants revealed variations in phytochemicals within roots and small branches. The unique patterns of the chromatographic fingerprint were validated by analyzing roots and small branches of *V. negundo*. Our results revealed that the chromatographic fingerprint combined with similarity measurement could efficiently identify and distinguish *V. negundo* roots and small branches. The phytochemical fingerprint profiling of small branches

and roots of *V. negundo* were found similar as an official part of *V. negundo* plant i.e. root, therefore small branches may be used in place of roots and vice-versa after comparison and confirmation of same pharmacological activities. The method can also be used for identification of different *V. Negundo* species and adulterants.

**KEYWORDS:** *V. negundo* L., HPTLC–UV detection, phytochemical fingerprint profiling analysis.

**Abbreviations:** HPTLC–UV, high performance thin layer chromatography-ultra violet detection;  $R_f$ , retention factor; **min.**, minutes; **Sm. Br.**, small branches; **Rt.** Root.

## INTRODUCTION

*Vitex Negundo* L. (Fig. 1) belongs to family Verbenaceae commonly known as Nirgundi.<sup>[1]</sup> The family includes 80 genera and about 800 species. In Sanskrit word Nirgundi can be used for plant or any substance which protects the body from the diseases and it is an herb, which is mentioned in Ayurveda with a number of uses. It is a large, woody, aromatic, deciduous shrub, growing to 3 m at a medium rate with seven rings per 2.5cm of radius giving a mean annul girth-increment of 2.3 cm having typical five foliate leaf pattern.<sup>[2-4]</sup> The bark is thin and grey in colour.<sup>[5]</sup> It shows its flowering time from September to October. The scented flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by insects.<sup>[1]</sup> The shrub can be reproduced readily from cuttings and it produces the root-suckers which are useful for planting against soil-erosion.<sup>[5]</sup> *V. negundo* has the common name "Chaste tree" since Athenian women used the leaves in their beds to keep themselves chaste during the feasts of Ceres. The name "Chinese Chaste tree" is derived from one of its therapeutic activity which depresses the sexual desire. *V. negundo* seeds itself into landscaped beds and can become somewhat weedy.<sup>[4, 6]</sup> It commonly bears digitate, tri- or penta-foliate leaves on quadrangular branches, which give rise to bluish-purple coloured flowers in branched tomentose cymes.<sup>[7]</sup> It is widely distributed in the tropic and warm region, covers throughout the greater part of India at warmer zones and ascending to an altitude of 1500 m in outer, Western Himalayas.<sup>[1,3,7]</sup> In India it is found in Assam, Bihar, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Hubei, Hunan, Jammu and Kashmir, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Karnataka, and Kerala. The plant shows its better growth in light (sandy) and medium (loamy) soils requires well-drained soil and can also able to grow in nutritionally poor soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils. It cannot grow in the shade because it requires dry or moist soil.<sup>[1]</sup> It thrives in humid places or along water courses in wastelands and mixed open forests.<sup>[7]</sup> *V. negundo* showed the presence of compounds such as carbohydrates, proteins, calcium oxalate, volatile oils, starch, saponin, phenols, saponins, xathoproteins, triterpenoids, tannins and flavonoids.<sup>[8]</sup> In the literature major compounds identified through GC-MS were 1H-indene, cyclododecanol, patchoulane, 1,2-dihexylcyclopropene-3-carboxylic acid, 2-heptenoic acid, (+) aromadendrene, trans-caryophyllene, 7-oxabicyclo [4.1.0] heptane, cyclohexane, farnesol, pentadecane and 1-octanol.<sup>[9, 10]</sup> The other constituents previously isolated from the plant include eight lignans ( negundin A, negundin B, 6-hydroxy4-(4-

hydroxy-3methoxy)-3-hydroxyl methyl-7 methoxy -3,4 dihydro-2-napathaldehyde, vitrofolal, (+) – iynoesinol, (+)–iynoesinol-3 $\alpha$ -0- $\beta$ -D-glucoside, (+)(-)(-) pinorecinol, (+) – diasringaresinol, irridoid glycoside, (2-p-hydroxy benzyl mussaenosidic acid), flavonones (5,3',dihydroxyl-7,8,4'trimethoxyflavonone and (5,3'dihydroxy-6,7,4'trimethoxy flavonone), flavone (vitexicarpin),  $\beta$ -sitosterols essential oils ( $\alpha$ -pinene, linalool, terpinyl acetate, beta caryophyllene), non diterpene (vitedoin B), pentacyclic triterpenoids, (beutinilic acid, ursolic acid), flavonoid glycoside, luteolin, agnuside, negundoside, isoorientin.<sup>[3,10]</sup> The root, leaves, twigs and seeds contain a large number of compounds with varying structure, diterpenoid, camphene, casicin, glucononitol,  $\alpha$ -pinene, citral,  $\beta$ -caryophyllene, orientin, isorientin, corymbosin, flavonoid glycosides, triterpenoids, long chain unsaturated fatty acids, irridoid glycosides and lignin.<sup>[3]</sup> The root of *V. negundo* contains vitexoside, flavonoid glycoside, agnuside and R-dalbergiphenol<sup>[11]</sup> lignans (agnucastoside A, B, C and aucubin, agnuside, mussaenosidic).<sup>[4]</sup> Bark contains vanillic acid, p-hydroxybenzoic acid, luteolin and two leucoanthocyanidins i.e 6, 8 di-*O*-methylleucocyanidin-7 and orhamnogluconide. The leaves contain an alkaloid nishidine, flavonoids like flavones, luteolin-7-glucoside, casticin, irridoid glycoside, an essential oil and other constituents like artemetin, benzoic acid,  $\beta$ -sitosterol, C-glycoside, carotene, friedelin, vitamin-C.<sup>[11]</sup> 5-hydroxy-3, 6, 7 trimethoxy (3,4dimtoxypheny) 4H chrome-4-on, 5, 7-dihydroxy-2-(3, 4 dihydroxyphenyl)- 4H chromen-4-one, Agnuside.<sup>[4]</sup> 5-hydroxy 3,6,7,3', 4'-pentamethoxyflavone.<sup>[12]</sup> 12,6'-p-hydroxybenzoyl mussaenosidic acid; 2'-p-hydroxybenzoyl mussaenosidic acid, 5, 3'-dihydroxy-7,8,4' trimethoxyflavanone; 5, 3'-dihydroxy-6, 7, 4'-trimethoxyflavanone, angusid; casticin; nishindine; gluco-nonitol; p-hydroxybenzoic acid; sitosterol.<sup>[13]</sup>  $\alpha$ -elemene,  $\delta$ - elemene,  $\beta$ -elemene,  $\beta$ -eudesmol, camphor, camphene, careen, 1,8-cineol, 1-oceten-3-ol,  $\gamma$ -terpinine,  $\alpha$ -phellendrene,  $\beta$ -phellendrene,  $\alpha$ -guaiene, abieta-7,13-diene, neral, geranial, bornyl acetate, nerolidol,  $\beta$ -bisabolol, cedrol and vitexicarpin.<sup>[11]</sup> Essential oil of fresh leaves, flowers and dried fruits contains  $\delta$ -guaiene; guaia-3,7-dienecaryophyllene epoxide; ethyl-hexadecenoate;  $\alpha$ -selinene; germacren-4-ol; caryophyllene epoxide; (E)-nerolidol;  $\beta$ -selinene;  $\alpha$ -cedrene; germacrene D; hexadecanoic acid; p-cymene and valencene.<sup>[14]</sup> The leaves and twig of *V. negundo*, having a stilbene derivative, characterised as 4,4'- dimethoxy-trans-stilbene, along with five flavones, 5,6,7,8,3'4'5- heptamethoxy, 5-hydroxy 6,7,8,3'4'- pentamethoxy (5-odesmethylnobiletin), 5 hydroxy-6,7,8,3',4',5-hexamethoxy (gardenin A), 5 hydroxy-6,7,8,4'-tetramethoxy (gardenin B) and 5 hydroxy-7,3',4',5'-tetramethoxyflavone (corymbosin). Terpinen-4-ol,  $\alpha$ -terpineol, sabinene, globulol, spathulenol,  $\beta$ -farnesene, farnesol, bis (1,1dimethyl) methylphenol,  $\alpha$ -pinene,  $\beta$ -pinene, linalool, terpinyl acetate, caryophyllene epoxide, caryophyllenol along with

viridiflorol. The leaves and twig also show the presence of volatile oil which contains ten volatile components like  $\alpha$ -copaene,  $\beta$ -caryophyllene, camphene,  $\alpha$ -thujene,  $\alpha$ -pinene, sebinene, linalool, stearic acid and behenic acid.<sup>[11]</sup> The heartwood of *V. negundo* contains  $\beta$ -amyryn, epifriedelinol and oleanolic acid.<sup>[15]</sup> Seeds contain hydrocarbons,  $\beta$ -sitosterol, benzoic acid, phthalic acid, anti inflammatory diterpene, flavonoids, artemisin, triterprnoids, *n*-tritriacontane, *n*-hentriacontanol, *n*-hentricontane, *n*-pentatricontane, *n*-nonacosane,  $\beta$ -sitosterol, *p*-hydroxybenzoic acid and 5 oxyisophthalic acid; 3, 4-dihydroxybenzoic acid and vitedoamine A.<sup>[4,11]</sup> All parts of the plant from root to fruit possess a massive amount of phytochemical secondary metabolites which impart an unique variety of medicinal uses to the plant.<sup>[16]</sup> The plant is considered as acrid, astringent, anthelmintic, cephalic, bitter, heating, stomachic and useful in treatment of inflammations, eye diseases, spleen enlargement, asthma, bronchitis, biliousness and painful teething of children etc. It has germicidal properties. It is easily digestible and can cure morbid vata and kapha, also used in arthritis, cephalgia, otalgia, inflammatory, glandular and rheumatic swellings, intestinal worms, fever, ulcers, skin diseases, nervous disorders and leprosy.<sup>[5]</sup> It is commonly used in folk medicine as antiarthritis, anti-convulsant, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antifertility, antimalarial, antibacterial, antifilarial, and pesticidal. It also shows insecticidal activity, bronchial smooth muscle relaxant activity, hepato protective, laxative activity and analgesic activity.<sup>[16]</sup> Different parts of *V. negundo* have been used in traditional Indian medicine as nervine sedative and are of high value as constituents of Ayurvedic preparations such as Vishagarbha thaila, which is widely used to treat rheumatism in India. Roots are useful in rheumatism, dyspepsia, piles and as anthelmintic. The leaves possess more medicinal value and show its versatile uses in various diseases as they contain flavonoids, sterols and terpenoids.<sup>[2,3,17]</sup> The fresh aromatic leaves are useful for rheumatism and to relieve pain. It is widely used in Chinese herbal medicine. It is second most important plant used for the treatment of chronic bronchitis and cold. The leaves of plant are astringent, febrifuge, sedative, tonic and vermifuge. The leaves in the form of a paste are used for inflammatory swellings of the joints formed due to rheumatism, hydrocele and spleen enlargement. They are also used in nervous disorders and leprosy. Oil prepared from leaves is useful for growth of hair and increases the function of brain.<sup>[17,18]</sup> Decoction of the leaves of *V. negundo* is used as a bath in the puerperal state of women in India. The leaf extract has been reported to exhibit a wide range of pharmacological activities. The methanolic extract of had been found to exhibit very potent anti feedent, anti-inflammatory, analgesic and anti convulsant activities. They are used as a drug of choice for pain, inflammation and related diseases.<sup>[3]</sup> Chloroform extract of

defatted seed showed anti-inflammatory activity. It also possesses potent mosquito repelling activity against *Aedes aegypti*, anti-tumor and analgesic activity.<sup>[17]</sup> *V. negundo* is used in several commercial formulations and in the Ayurvedic System of Medicine.<sup>[3]</sup> The leaves are used for treatment of eye-disease, toothache, inflammation, leucoderma, enlargement of the spleen, skin-ulcers, in catarrhal fever, rheumatoid arthritis, gonorrhoea, and bronchitis. They are also used as tonics, vermifuge, lactagogue, emmenagogue, antibacterial, antipyretic and antihistaminic agents. Its extract has also shown anticancer activity against Ehrlich ascites tumour cells.<sup>[19, 20]</sup> Roots, Bark, Leaves and fruits are highly medicinal. Roots are one of the ingredients of the drug *Dasmula arista*; used in colitis, dysentery, diarrhoea, flatulence, fever, vomiting and colic.<sup>[11]</sup> Roots and Barks are used for relieving intermittent fever, thirst and body pain. Ripe Fruits is highly nutritious, cooling, used in treating indigestion and to improve vision.<sup>[11]</sup> Seeds used as vermicide.<sup>[2]</sup>



Figure 1: *Vitex Negundo* L. Plant.



Figure 2: Small Branches



Figure 3: Root

#### Taxonomic / Scientific Classification<sup>[11]</sup>

Kingdom	Plantae - Plants
Sub Kingdom	Tracheobionta - Vascular plants
Super Division	Spermatophyta - Seed plant
Division	Magnoliophyta - Flowering Plant
Class	Magnoliopsida - Dicotyledons
Sub Class	Asteridea
Order	Lamilales
Family	Verbenaceae
Genus	<i>Vitex</i> L.
Species	<i>negundo</i> L.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

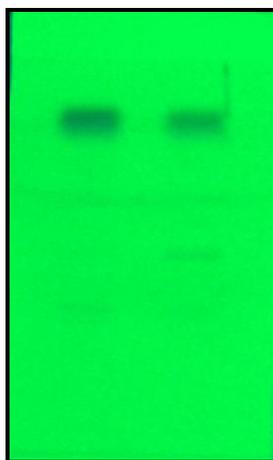
**Plant Materials and Chemicals:** Root (Fig.2) and Small branches of stem (Fig.3) of *V. negundo* were collected in December 2013 and authenticated by Dr. R. K. Tiwari, Research Officer, Pharmacognosy, National Veterinary Research Institute & Hospital, Lucknow. All chemicals (AR grade) and TLC plates were purchased from E. Merck Pvt. Ltd. (Mumbai, India).

**Sample preparation:** The plant parts were dried under a gentle stream of air in the laboratory till no loss in weight (temperature  $30 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$  and relative humidity  $50 \pm 5\%$ ) and powdered in an electric grinder. Conventional extraction of root and small branches of stem of *V. negundo* were performed at room temperature ( $28^\circ \pm 3^\circ\text{C}$ ) with a variety of solvents ranging from non-polar to polar ones, i.e. *n*-hexane, ethyl acetate and ethanol. Dried and powdered parts of *V. negundo* (10 g each) were extracted three times ( $3 \times 50$  mL) for 18 h of each extraction with each of the above-mentioned solvents separately. Each extract was filtered by using Whatman filter paper no. 1 and the solvents were removed under vacuum at  $50^\circ\text{C}$ , separately and concentrated up to 10 mL to get the sample solution of  $100 \text{ mg mL}^{-1}$ . 5  $\mu\text{L}$  of each sample was applied separately to TLC plate for the development of fingerprints.

**HPTLC-UV detection Method:** High Performance Thin Layer Chromatography was performed on  $10 \text{ cm} \times 10 \text{ cm}$  TLC plates pre-coated with  $0.25 \mu\text{m}$  thin layers of silica gel 60 F<sub>254</sub> (E. Merck). Both samples (Root and small branches) were applied on the plates as bands 10 mm wide by use of a Linomat-IV applicator (CAMAG, Switzerland) fitted with a 100  $\mu\text{L}$  syringe (Hamilton, Switzerland). The application positions X and Y were both 10 mm, to avoid edge effects. Linear ascending development to a distance of 80 mm with *Toluene: Ethyl acetate: Acetic acid 9:1:0.5 (v/v/v)* and as mobile phase for both *n*-hexane extract was performed in a twin-trough glass chamber ( $20 \text{ cm} \times 10 \text{ cm}$ ) previously saturated with vapours of mobile phase for 20 min. The plates were dried in air and visualized under  $\lambda 254 \text{ nm}$  and  $\lambda 366 \text{ nm}$  for ultra violet detection and taken the fingerprints as evident in Figures 4 – 5. Further, the same TLC plate was derivatized with anisaldehyde-sulphuric acid reagent and visualized in white light obtained fingerprints were as evident in Figures 6 using CAMAG Reprostar and WinCATs software (V 1.4.2; CAMAG). HPTLC of ethyl acetate extract and alcoholic extract of both drugs were performed with same procedure in the mobile phase of *Toluene: Ethyl acetate: Acetic acid 7: 3:0.5 (v/v/v)* for both the extracts and then visualized in

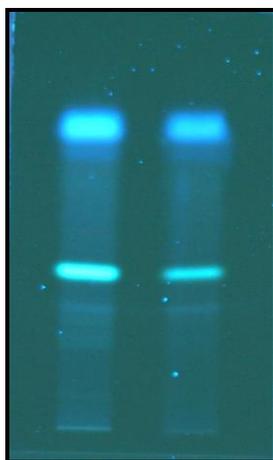
$\lambda$  254 nm,  $\lambda$  366 nm and white light using CAMAG Reprostar and WinCATs software as shown in Figure 7-12.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



1 2  
254 nm

Figure 4



1 2  
366 nm

Figure 5

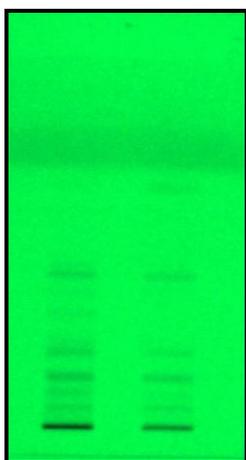


1 2

After derivatization with  
anisaldehyde sulphuric acid reagent

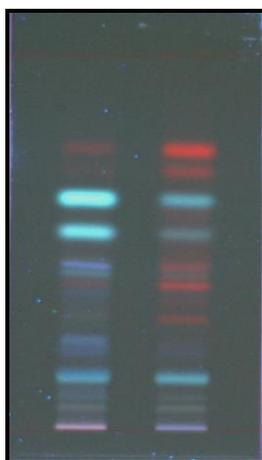
Figure 6

Figure 4-6: TLC fingerprint of *n*-hexane extract of *V. negundo* (1= Rt.; 2= Sm. Br.)



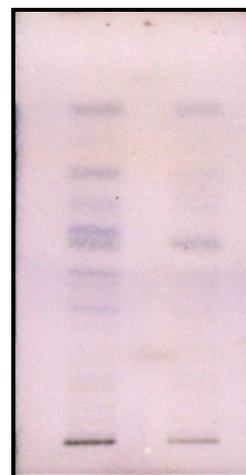
1 2  
254 nm

Figure 7



1 2  
366 nm

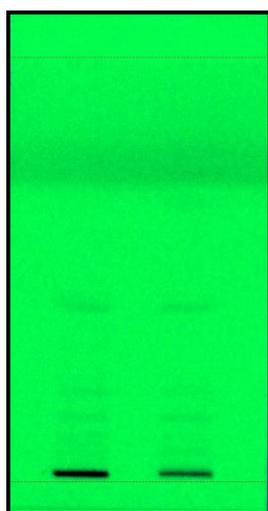
Figure 8



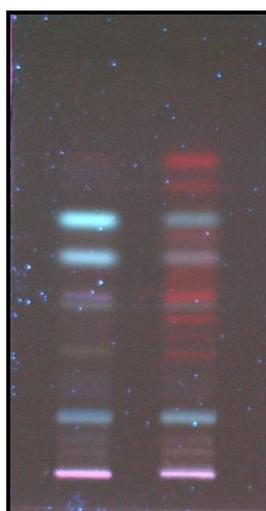
1 2

After derivatization with  
Anisaldehyde sulphuric acid reagent  
Figures 9

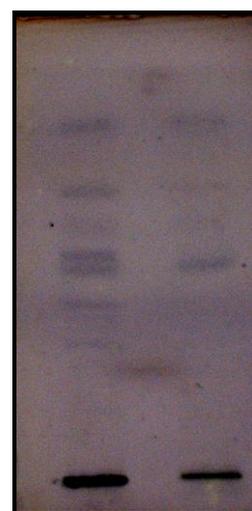
Figure 7-9: TLC fingerprint of ethyl acetate extract of *V. negundo* (1= Rt.; 2= Sm. Br.)



1 2  
254 nm



1 2  
366 nm



1 2  
After derivatization with  
Anisaldehyde sulphuric acid reagent

Figure 10

Figure 11

Figures 12

Figure 10-12: TLC fingerprint of ethanol extract of *V. negundo* (1= Rt.; 2= Sm. Br.)Table 1:  $R_f$  value of phytochemicals present in *n*-hexane, ethyl acetate and ethanol extract of *V. negundo* (Rt. and Sm. Br.) at different wave-lengths.

Wave-length	<i>n</i> - Hexane extract		Ethyl acetate extract		Ethanol extract	
	Root	Small branches	Root	Small branches	Root	Small branches
254	0.83	0.47, 0.83	0.07, 0.11, 0.15, 0.22, 0.32, 0.37, 0.42	0.07, 0.11, 0.15, 0.22, 0.42, 0.64	0.06, 0.14, 0.20, 0.41	0.06, 0.14, 0.20, 0.41
366	0.23, 0.34, 0.41, 0.80	0.34, 0.41, 0.80	0.10, 0.15, 0.20, 0.41, 0.44, 0.52, 0.62, 0.74	0.10, 0.15, 0.30, 0.37, 0.43, 0.52, 0.62, 0.69, 0.74	0.11, 0.15, 0.29, 0.41, 0.43, 0.53, 0.63	0.11, 0.15, 0.29, 0.33, 0.39, 0.41, 0.44, 0.53, 0.63, 0.69, 0.71, 0.76
Visible light after derivatization	0.33, 0.40, 0.53, 0.82, 0.88	0.33, 0.82, 0.88	0.15, 0.35, 0.44, 0.52, 0.56, 0.70, 0.86	0.15, 0.44, 0.52, 0.70, 0.86	0.36, 0.44, 0.52, 0.56, 0.71, 0.89	0.52, 0.71, 0.89

No such study was found in literature for comparative phytochemical study of root versus small branches of *V. negundo* Linn by using High Performance Thin Layer Chromatographic-Ultra Violet detection Method. Comparative study of TLC fingerprints of root and small

branches of *V. negundo* revealed that many similarities in phytochemical fingerprints were found and evident in Table-1 and Fig. 4-12.

Phytochemical fingerprints of *n*-hexane extract of root and small branches showed one and two bands respectively, out of which, one band at  $R_f$  0.83 (black) was similar under UV detection at 254 nm. Under 366 nm UV detection, root and small branches showed four and three bands respectively, out of which three bands at  $R_f$  0.34 (light blue), 0.41 (light blue) and 0.80 (blue) were found similar. After TLC plate derivatized with Anisaldehyde sulphuric acid reagent and visualized under white light, root and small branches both were showed five and three bands respectively, out of which three bands at  $R_f$  0.33 (blue), 0.82 (blue), 0.88 (blue) were found similar as represented in Table 1 and Fig. 4-6.

TLC plate of ethyl acetate extract of root and small branches showed under 254 nm, seven and six bands respectively, out of which four bands were found similar at  $R_f$  0.11, 0.15, 0.22 and 0.42 (all are black) while under 366 nm detection, eight and nine bands were visible respectively in extract of root and small branches, out of which, six bands at  $R_f$  0.06 (yellow), 0.10 (yellow), 0.15 (blue), 0.52 (light blue), 0.62 (light blue) and 0.74 (red) were found similar. After derivatization under white light detection, seven and five bands were visible in extract of root and small branches respectively, out of which five bands at  $R_f$  0.15 (yellow), 0.44 (blue), 0.52 (brown), 0.70 (brown), 0.86 (brown) were observed similar as evident in Table 1 and Fig. 7-9.

TLC plate of ethanolic extract of root and small branches visualized under 254 nm, both extracts showed four similar bands at  $R_f$  0.05, 0.14, 0.20 and 0.40 (All are greenish black) and under detection at 366 nm seven and twelve bands were observed, out of which, six bands at  $R_f$  0.11 (brown), 0.15 (light blue), 0.29 (brown), 0.41 (pink), 0.53 (light blue) and 0.63 (light blue) were found similar. After derivatization the TLC plate was visualised under white light, six and three bands were observed in of root and small branches respectively, out of which three bands at  $R_f$  0.52, 0.71, 0.89 (all are blue) were found similar as evident in Table 1 and Fig. 10-12.

## CONCLUSION

Phytochemical fingerprint profiling of various parts of *V. negundo* indicated that different types of phytoconstituents present in each part but many similarities in fingerprinting were found in root and small branches. The phytochemical fingerprint profiling of small branches

of *V. negundo* were similar with root as an official part of *V. negundo* plant, therefore small branches may be used in place of root and vice-versa after comparison and confirmation of same pharmacological activities. The  $R_f$  helped in evaluation of phytochemical diversity in different parts of *V. negundo*. The phytochemical diversity was found more in root followed by small branches at one geographical region. TLC phytochemical fingerprint profiling of *n*-hexane, ethyl acetate, ethanolic extracts of root and small branches of *V. negundo* have been given an idea about the presence of various phytochemicals similarities in their reported parts. The TLC spots provided valuable clue regarding presence or absence of various phytochemicals or metabolites of the plants.

### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Authors are thankful to Director General, Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, New Delhi to provide the financial support under IMR scheme for this research work. Authors are grateful to Dr. R. K. Tiwari, NVRI&H, and Lucknow for providing the genuine plant materials and K. Basu, Arbro Pharma for scanning the TLC, respectively.

*Authors have no conflict of interest*

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