

A critical review on biochar-based engineered hierarchical porous carbon for capacitive charge storage

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A critical review on biochar-based engineered hierarchical porous carbon for capacitive charge storage

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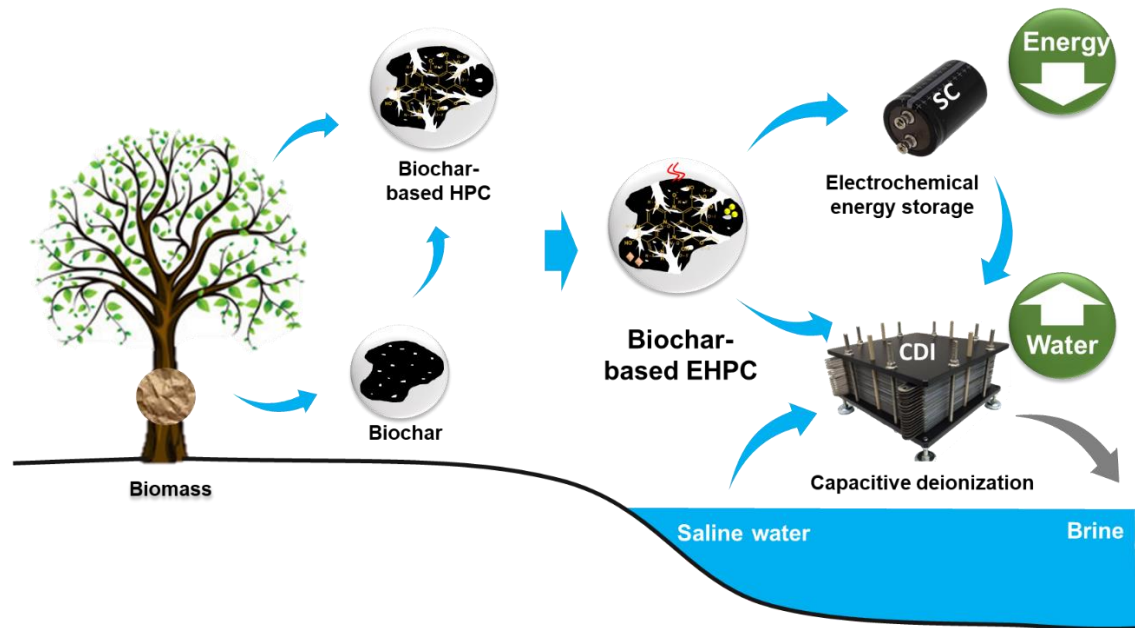
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Graphical abstract



1 **Abstract**

2 Hierarchical porous carbon (HPC) has attracted increasing research interest for energy
3 and environmental applications. HPC is conventionally fabricated by activated carbon,
4 which potentially causes hidden environmental burdens. To overcome this issue,
5 biochar, a promising renewable precursor, offers an attractive raw material substitute
6 and has already been explored for the preparation of low-cost HPC. Recent studies have
7 demonstrated that HPC exhibited great applications in capacitive energy storage,
8 owing to its easily tuned physicochemical and electrochemical properties. Besides,
9 biochar-based HPC with a three-dimensional (3D) interconnected controllable pore
10 structure, high specific surface area (SSA), and pore volume (PV) can provide smaller
11 resistance and shorter diffusion pathways for the transport of ions. Importantly, most
12 recent research efforts have been made on the synthesis of biochar-based engineered
13 hierarchical porous carbons (EHPCs) from biomass/biochar or developed from the HPC.
14 A templating technique, heteroatom, and metal oxides doping have been applied to
15 develop the biochar-based EHPC to improve 3D pore structure or/and expose abundant
16 active sites and subsequently enhance the capacitive charge storage performance. In
17 this review, recent advances in the applications of biochar-based HPC or EHPC for
18 capacitive charge storage, e.g., capacitive deionization (CDI) and a supercapacitor (SC)
19 are summarized and discussed. This review concludes with several perspectives to
20 provide possible future research directions for the preparation and applications of
21 biochar-based EHPC for capacitive charge storage.

22 **Keywords:** Biomass, Biochar, Engineered hierarchical porous carbon, Capacitive
23 charge, Electrochemical energy storage.

24

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47 **1. Introduction**

48 Biomass is currently attracting significant attention as an alternative precursor
49 to fossil-based feedstock in the production of carbon materials; because biomass is a
50 naturally renewable, abundant, low-cost, easily accessible, and environmentally
51 friendly resource [1-3]. Consequently, the development of sustainable carbon materials
52 from biomass is a promising solution, not only because it has the potential to replace
53 conventional carbons but also its ability to contribute to solid waste management in
54 large quantities from the manufacturing and agriculture sectors. In recent years, various
55 forms of biomass such as lignin, carbohydrates, cellulose, chitin, and proteins have been
56 widely utilized to prepare carbon materials [4].

57 Biochar is typically generated via thermal decomposition of biomass at a
58 moderate temperature (350-700 °C) without oxygen or with a limited oxygen supply
59 [5]. It is regarded as an emerging substitute for conventional carbons to reduce its
60 associated environmental impacts. However, biochar in its raw form may have a limited
61 adsorption performance, due to its poor porous nature and low activity [6, 7].
62 Hierarchical porous carbon (HPC), an improved form of porous carbon, holds the
63 merits of high specific surface area (SSA), large pore volume (PV), and well-tailored
64 pore dimensions. Recently, biochar is extensively used in the preparation of HPC due
65 to its renewable and environmentally friendly nature compared with other carbonaceous
66 precursors [1, 8-10].

67 The unique three-dimensional (3D) interconnected porous structure of biochar-
68 based HPC in terms of macropores (>50 nm), mesopores (2–50 nm), and micropores
69 (<2 nm) (Fig. 1) play a significant role in its improved efficiency for various
70 applications, including capacitive charge storage, environmental remediation, and
71 electrochemical deionization [11, 12]. This review is focused on the design, preparation

72 and applications of engineered biochar-derived HPC for capacitive charge storage.
73 More specifically, the hierarchical porous structure of biochar-based HPC can offer a
74 large interface with electrolytes for charge storage reactions. For instance, mesopores
75 and macropores contribute to the rapid transport of ions and molecules, respectively,
76 through channels to micropores, which facilitate rapid mass transfer kinetics and low
77 mass transfer resistance [13, 14]. The matter diffusion distance inside pores can be
78 minimized by the buffering reservoir in the mesopores, which supports a large
79 accessible surface area and low resistance transport pathway for ion/molecule
80 adsorption. Micropores, on the other hand, provide plentiful active sites that are
81 beneficial for enhancing ions/molecules separation and electron capacity [15, 16].

82 Biochar-based engineered HPC (EHPC) can be synthesized from
83 biomass/biochar or developed from biochar-based HPC through some technical
84 strategies to enhance the capacitive charge storage. The development of pores in
85 biochar-based EHPC can be performed by a templating method [17]. In addition,
86 heteroatom doping (e.g., N, O, S, and P) on the surface of biochar-based EHPC is
87 another approach to improve electrochemical properties [18, 19]. The involvement of
88 surface functional groups on biochar-based EHPC can provide abundant reactions or
89 interaction sites for surface or interface-related processes such as the formation of
90 lithium-oxygen (Li-O) interaction in batteries, and pseudo-Faradaic reactions in
91 supercapacitors (SCs). Oxygen functional groups (i.e, quinone type (O-I), phenol/ether
92 groups (O-II), and chemisorbed oxygen (COOH carboxylic groups)/water (O-III)) are
93 mostly available on the surface of biochar-based EHPC, while N functionalities,
94 including pyrrolic (N-5), pyridinic (N-6), quaternary N (N-Q), and pyridine-N-oxide
95 (N-X) observed on N-doped biochar-based HPC and EHPC [20-23] (Fig. 1). Moreover,
96 the development of biomass-based HPC using impregnation of metal oxides, such as

97 MnO₂, CoFe₂O₄ was reported with the enhanced electrochemical performance [24, 25].
98 These techniques play important roles in achieving high performance in biochar-based
99 EHPC applications.

100 The increasing interest of the scientific community in biochar-based HPCs
101 between 2009 and 2019 (according to ISI Web of Science™ verified in March 2020),
102 as shown in Fig. 2. Recent studies have demonstrated the applications of biochar-based
103 HPC for electrosorption and electrochemical energy storage, e.g., lithium-sulfur (Li-S)
104 batteries [26], Li-ion batteries [27], dye-sensitized solar cells [14] and supercapacitors
105 (SCs) [28, 29] has shown a great future potential [30]. Besides, biochar-based HPC is
106 efficiently utilized for the removal of heavy metals [31-34] and organic compounds
107 [35-37], as well as for CO₂ adsorption [38].

108 Biomass is an inexpensive, easily available promising renewable source for the
109 synthesis of functional carbon materials. Hence the utilization of biomass/biochar-
110 derived EHPCs can promote the future research and applications of HPCs. Besides, the
111 incorporation of heteroatoms can enhance future research outcomes for energy storage
112 applications, including batteries, fuel cells, and supercapacitors; because the
113 incorporation of heteroatom enhances the performance of the energy storage
114 applications [39]. Some biomass contains nitrogen (shrimp shell and soybean residue)
115 that can help to directly convert biomass into N-doped hierarchical porous carbon
116 without using additional nitrogen precursor. The increase in renewable energy
117 contribution is necessary for our future energy security and increasing energy
118 efficiencies and demand. Consequently, focusing on biomass/biochar-derived EHPCs
119 synthesis and its utilization for various applications is crucial. Considering the
120 sustainability and environmental benefits of biochar-based EHPCs and the scope for
121 various applications, there is a lack of comprehensive review on the fabrication and

122 applications of biochar-based EHPCs. This work reviews various preparation methods
123 (e.g., hard-template, self-template, or non-template) for biochar-based HPC with each
124 step (e.g., carbonization, leaching, and activation). Moreover, modification and
125 advancement of the biochar-based EHPC to enhance its physicochemical and
126 electrochemical properties are introduced. Finally, future research perspectives and
127 conclusions are presented in detail.

128

129 **2. Preparation of biochar-based HPC and EHPC**

130 Carbonization is a thermal treatment process, which is performed under a
131 limited or anti-oxygen atmosphere to convert organic matters such as biomass into a
132 stable porous carbon, the biochar. The carbonization of biomass would undergo
133 polymer reduction and fragmentation stages [40, 41], which involved the release of O₂,
134 CO, CO₂, H₂, and H₂O as well as condensable volatiles in the course of obtaining
135 biochar [42]. Subsequently, large macropores (2 to 10 μm) may be formed by residual
136 gaps from the removal of organic constituents. Carbonization methods such as pyrolysis,
137 gasification, HTC, and torrefaction can be employed in the preparation of biochar from
138 different biomass sources (e.g., agriculture, bioenergy crop, forest residue, and sewage
139 sludge) [43]. In addition, the carbonization methods can be controlled by varying
140 temperature, heating rate, and heating time to achieve biochar with desired
141 physicochemical properties and higher yields.

142 The synthesis of biochar-based HPC and biochar-based EHPC uses many
143 common methods; however, in the case of biochar-based EHPC, the synthesis
144 conditions are well optimized to tune the physicochemical properties of the EHPC for
145 desired capacitive charge storage applications. Biochar-based EHPC is typically
146 fabricated by either templating or non-templating methods. In the non-templating

147 method, it is difficult to control the formation and growth of hierarchical pore
148 architecture in terms of the shape and size distribution of the particles, while alkali
149 activation was proven to reconstruct or improve its hierarchical pore network [44]. For
150 the templating method, the 3D pore structure is developed and controlled using porous
151 inorganic solid-state hard-templates as a frame structure and amphiphilic block
152 copolymers soft-templates as structure-directing agents [45]. The hard-templates
153 showed higher control of the product. The major challenge for the synthesis of EHPC
154 by hard-templating is the synthesis of porous inorganic materials as hard-templates such
155 as silica spheres, mesoporous silica, or polymer spheres, which can be tedious, time-
156 consuming, and can be expensive. Besides, the hard-template removal process may
157 introduce additional use of highly corrosive chemicals (HF or NaOH), which is
158 environmentally unfriendly. Hence, the optimization of the materials for the preparation
159 of the EHPC should be investigated to avoid the use of corrosive chemicals. In contrast,
160 the removal of soft templates is a facile process. However, the morphology of the
161 desired product is difficult to control. Most of the already explored soft-templates are
162 based on rather expensive and non-renewable surfactants and block-copolymers [44].

163

164 **2.1. Developing 3D interconnected pore system inside biochar-based HPC**

165 Recent studies on the preparation of biochar-based HPC and EHPC are
166 presented in Table 1. Biochar-based HPC is commonly prepared by the template-free
167 method, including carbonization and/or activation, e.g., one-step pyrolysis [34], two-
168 step pyrolysis [46], pyrolysis and hydrothermal carbonization (HTC) [31], pyrolysis
169 and activation [47], HTC, activation [48], one-step chemical activation [49], and one-
170 step physical activation [50]. Generally, the preparation process of biochar-based HPC
171 may include the following steps (Fig. 3): (1) carbonization of biomass to prepare

172 biochar; (2) pretreatment to remove the templates used in templating methods; and (3)
173 activation to develop the hierarchical porous structure. The carbonization of biomass
174 would undergo polymer reduction and fragmentation stages [40, 41], which involved
175 the release of O₂, CO, CO₂, H₂, and H₂O and condensable volatiles in the course of
176 obtaining biochar [42]. Subsequently, large macropores (2 to 10 μm) may be formed
177 by residual gaps from the removal of organic constituents.

178

179 *2.1.1. Pretreatment of biochar*

180 The presence of major and minor elements in biomass might impede porosity
181 development. Therefore, pretreatment is typically applied before the activation step to
182 remove metals and other impurities. After the pretreatment process, many mesopores
183 and micropores can be generated. Acid washing (e.g., HCl, HF, H₂SO₄, and HNO₃) or
184 base leaching is a common means for biochar pretreatments. Especially, the acid or
185 base leaching step is typically applied to eliminate the natural inorganic template in
186 biomass (Table 1). This step increases the contact between the carbon matrix and
187 activation agent, as well as further enhance the efficiency of the activation process and
188 porous structure development.

189 *2.1.2. Activation of biochar*

190 Activation of biochar can be performed by physical, chemical, or
191 physicochemical processes with different activation agents and reaction parameters
192 (e.g., activation temperature (350-1000 °C) and activation time (0.5-10 h)), as shown in
193 Fig. 4. Depending on the activation method, i.e., physical, chemical and
194 physicochemical methods, the plausible pore formation and distribution are varied.

195 *Physical activation*

196 Physical activation, a thermal process that biochar partially gasified by an

197 oxidant atmosphere (usually CO₂, steam, oxygen, or their mixtures), the disorganized
198 material is removed and subsequently increase in porosity [51]. Physical activation is
199 an environmentally friendly method because it uses inexpensive activating agents and
200 no secondary waste generation, and there are no requirements for specialized equipment
201 or material. Nonetheless, it requires a long activation time (0.5 to 10 h), leading to large
202 energy consumption (as shown in Table 1). Additionally, physical activation provides
203 HPC with moderate SSA (*ca.* 1000 m² g⁻¹) and PV (Table 1). Micropores are normally
204 dominant in biochar-based HPC and may range from 60-80 % of total PV [50, 52, 53].

205 The combination of one-step or two-step carbonization and physical activation
206 using a gasification agent is a relatively common and simple approach to synthesize
207 biochar-based EHPC from biomass. For instance, the approach may only involve the
208 utilization of O₂ as the activation agent. Many researchers also agreed that CO₂ is a
209 superior physical activation agent due to it is less reactivity at high temperatures,
210 resulting in favorable controllability of porous structure [1, 17, 50]. Physical activation
211 normally applies at a temperature range between 700 and 1000 °C in steam or CO₂, and
212 lower temperatures in the air [54]. Carbon atoms with higher activity are removed
213 during physical activation via reactions shown in Eq. (1) and Eq. (2), which leads to the
214 development of porosity, the hierarchical porous structure, and an increase in SSA.
215 Besides, the nature of the pore and yield of physically activated biochar is strongly
216 dependent on the heating conditions. For example, the microwave heating with CO₂
217 activation exhibited higher biochar yield compared to conventional heating, however,
218 the insignificant effect for biochar yield was noted for steam-activation [55].
219 Conversely, the PV and SSA were doubled for steam-activated biochar, when combined
220 with microwave heating instead of conventional heating [56].

221

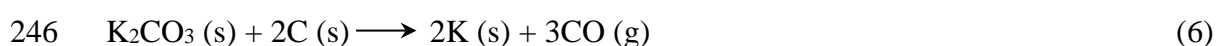
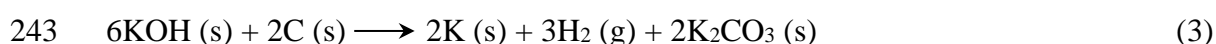


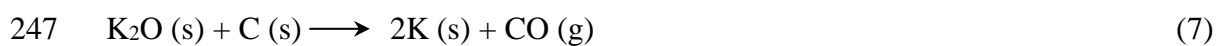
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225 *Chemical activation*

226 Chemical activation of biochar is commonly done by impregnating with
227 chemical activation agents, such as alkali hydroxide (e.g., KOH and NaOH), carbonates
228 (K_2CO_3 , and Na_2CO_3), zinc chloride ($ZnCl_2$) and some acids (e.g., H_3PO_4 and H_2SO_4),
229 followed by heating in an inert atmosphere (e.g., N_2 and Ar) at high temperature [57,
230 58]. As organized in Table 1, chemical activation requires a shorter activation time (0.5
231 to 2 h) and lower temperature, leading to smaller energy consumption than physical
232 activation. In addition, KOH is the most common and effective activation agent in the
233 preparation of biochar-based HPC, which can produce biochar-based EHPCs with
234 ultrahigh SSA of over $3000 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ [59]. During KOH activation, pores are formed by
235 a collective effect of various factors. Firstly, biochar etching will happen via reactions
236 shown in Eqs. (3), (6), and (7), which subsequently escape CO and H_2 gaseous products
237 from biochar resulting in the formation of macropores. Secondly, the CO_2 and H_2O
238 formed in situ during the carbonization can show additional physical activation. Then
239 the development of the hierarchical porous structure with abundant micropores and
240 mesopores of biochar-based HPC using KOH chemical activation is attributed to the
241 chemical reactions, as shown in Eqs. (3)-(8).

242





249

250 Compared to physical activation, chemical activation showed significantly
251 larger SSA, higher pore volume and mesoporosity because the pore-forming
252 mechanism is carried out through many chemical reactions. For instance, Wei et al.
253 synthesized HPC from yeast by chemical activation using KOH at 850 °C for 1 h. It
254 was found that the EHPC contained ultra-high SSA ($3808 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$) and pore volume
255 ($2.20 \text{ m}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$) [60]. One has to note that the activation agents can cause serious corrosion
256 to the reactor, which requires rigorous washing to eliminate the excessive residue of
257 activating reagents that adversely affect the environment [61].

258 *Physicochemical activation*

259 Physicochemical activation is a combined process of physical and chemical
260 activation. It can be performed by chemical impregnation onto biochar or biomass by
261 activating agents similar to the chemical activation process, followed by thermal
262 treatment under an oxidizing atmosphere (e.g., CO_2 , steam, or O_2) at a high temperature.
263 Physicochemical activation should be applied when the HPC requires additional pore
264 formation and the development of unique textural properties (e.g., high ratio of
265 mesoporosity). However, physicochemical activation is a more complex process and
266 requires higher investment (e.g., reagents and auxiliary equipment) than a single
267 activation method.

268 The comparison of SSA and mesoporosity of biochar-based HPCs derived from
269 various biomass precursors is shown in Fig. 5. It should be noted that mesopores are
270 particularly advantageous for applications of capacitive charge storage. On the other
271 hand, narrow micropores are less effective for capacitive charge storage [62, 63]. The

272 classification of these biochar-based HPC presents 4 groups based on the SSA and
273 mesoporosity. Group I is assigned to HPCs with SSA below $2000 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ and less than
274 40% mesoporosity. For example, biochar-derived HPC from corn husk, natural
275 basswood, and auricularia fall in this group. Group II includes HPCs derived from wood
276 powder, *Leucaena leucocephala* wood, soybean milk, and fishbone in which the SSA
277 is lower than $2000 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ and mesoporosity is higher than 40%. Finally, Group III (e.g.,
278 HPCs derived from chestnut, yeast, soybean root, and bovine bone) and IV (e.g., HPCs
279 derived from *enteromorpha prolifera*, silkworm cocoon, and shrimp shell) involve
280 HPCs that exhibited an ultra-high SSA. However, the mesoporosity of biochar-based
281 HPCs in Group III and IV is lower than 40% and greater than 40%, respectively.
282 Notably, rice husk biochar-based HPC was prepared through physicochemical
283 activation using KOH combined with CO_2 resulted in high SSA ($2330 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$) and
284 mesoporosity (81%) [17], compared to other rice husk biochar-based HPC synthesized
285 by chemical activation only [13, 14, 26].

286

287 **2.2. Design of biochar-based EHPC**

288 Generally, applying a design step to improve the quality as well as the
289 application performance of EHPC. It can be applied in conjunction with the activation
290 step or as a post-treatment step. The enhancement of the porosity of biochar-based
291 EHPC is beneficial for facilitating ion transport, increasing the number of active sites,
292 and providing larger space for ion storage. The porosity of biochar-based HPC can be
293 effectively enhanced by applying the hard-templating method [17, 64]. The hard
294 template can attach to biochar, which is then removed with acid or base treatment to
295 stimulate mesopores formation (Fig. 3). The formation of mesopores facilitates the
296 contact between the precursor and activating agent, resulting in increased porosity

297 during activation. For example, an HPC was prepared from porphyra using nickel
298 nanoparticles as the template for mesopore formation [65]. Chen et al. successfully
299 synthesized an EHPC from soybean milk by utilizing simultaneous CaCO₃ nanospheres
300 hard template and KOH activation strategy [66]. It should be noted that some biomass
301 contains natural templates such as SiO₂ in rice husk; CaCO₃ in soft pitch, and metal-
302 organic framework complexes in *Enteromorpha prolifera*, which could act as self-
303 templates to produce EHPCs during the activation process [27, 67, 68]. The preparation
304 of biochar-based EHPC using these natural templates is known as the self-templating
305 method. The preparation procedure can be performed by major steps, such as pyrolysis,
306 leaching and physical or/and chemical activation [17, 64, 68]; pyrolysis, leaching and
307 further pyrolysis [27].

308 Furthermore, biochar-based EHPC can be prepared via loading metal oxides,
309 heteroatom doping and improving functional groups on biochar-based HPC to further
310 enhance their chemical and electrochemical properties, as shown in Fig. 4. For instance,
311 the coating of Zn(II) on petroleum pitch-derived HPC was synthesized through the
312 impregnation method for dye adsorption [69]. The results exhibited superior adsorption
313 capacities for the Zn/petroleum pitch-derived EHPC compared to the original HPC.
314 That is because Zn coating improved O-containing functional groups, wettability, and
315 active sites, especially the chemisorption via the ZnO/dye interaction. The coating
316 MnO₂ on rice husk biochar-based EHPC was also performed, aiming to enhance the
317 electrochemical properties for SC [13].

318 Heteroatom doping including N, O, P, and S can enhance the electronic
319 conductivity and electrochemical reactivity, thus improving the capacitive behavior of
320 energy storage devices [70]. The elements doping provided stronger chemical
321 adsorption to polysulfide and enhanced electrochemical performance, such as rate

322 ability, capacity and cycling stability [71, 72], for Li-S batteries. For instance, Jiang et
323 al. synthesized the N, S dual doped lotus plumule-based EHPC interlayer by the one-
324 step method. Note that both N and S contain lone pairs of electrons and the
325 electronegativity of N and S are higher than C. Therefore, the carbon surface had a
326 negative charge after dual-doping N and S. The negative interlayer repulsed the
327 negative Li polysulfides in the electrolyte to the proximity of the S cathode due to
328 electrostatic repulsion. This phenomenon effectively restrained the shuttle of Li
329 polysulfides and improved the capability of the Li-S batteries [73]. Zhu et al. mixed S-
330 doped soybean hull biochar-based EHPC with S in a weight ratio of 2:3 [18].

331 Notably, some green strategies have also been reported to prepare biochar-based
332 HPC or EHPC. For instance, Liu et al. used sugar cane bagasse to develop N doped
333 EHPC by a green one-step CaCl_2 activation with urea [74]. The orange peel act as the
334 green activation reagent and carbon precursor to synthesize N-doped wood powder-
335 based EHPC with ultrahigh yield by only one carbonization step [75]. Some acid
336 constituents and metal elementals in orange peel contributed to the formation of the 3D
337 porous structure. The N-doping was obtained using N-containing components in orange
338 peel. Fishbone was carbonized to produce N-doped EHPC without chemical activation
339 [76]. Fishbone provided a natural $\text{Ca}_{10}(\text{PO}_4)_6(\text{OH})_2$ template and produced abundant
340 heteroatom with N and O content of 5.80 at.% and 7.99 at.%, respectively.

341

342 **3. Biochar-based HPC/EHPC for supercapacitors**

343 Global energy demand is continuously increasing due to the increase in
344 population and economic growth, which increases greenhouse gas emissions [77, 78].
345 The development of renewable energy sources is necessary to decrease energy-related
346 carbon emissions. Recent efforts were made to the development of alternative fuel

347 vehicles (i.e., electric, solar, and hybrid electric vehicles) to lower CO₂ emissions. One
348 of the biggest challenges of these alternative fuel vehicles is to productize a highly
349 efficient electrochemical-based energy storage device. The essential features of these
350 energy storage devices are known as specific capacitance, energy density, power
351 density. The energy density can be determined by the specific capacitance, which is
352 strongly affected by the SSA of the electrode material. The power density is influenced
353 by the electrode resistance, which depends on the diffusion of ions in the electrode
354 porosity [79]. SCs are also called electrical double-layer capacitors (EDLCs), or
355 ultracapacitors received increasing scientific interest due to their high potential
356 applications in the production of energy storage devices [80]. The major challenge of
357 SCs development is to provide a high electrochemical energy storage performance, i.e.,
358 specific energy density, high power density, recharging capacity [81].

359 For enhancing electrochemical energy storage performance, one of the
360 techniques is to improve the electrode porosity. Therefore, the 3D interconnected pore
361 structure of the HPC provides low resistance paths for ions as well as high specific
362 surface area, which have been reported as advanced energy storage materials [38, 82,
363 83]. On the other hand, another promising approach is to use the Faradaic reactions of
364 surface functional groups on EHPC-based electrodes that can store more energy than
365 the EDL capacitance on conventional capacitor electrodes and provide high power
366 capability [84]. The applications of biochar-based HPCs and EHPCs for SCs are shown
367 in Table 2. Generally, HPCs demonstrated superior capacitive behaviors, i.e., high
368 specific capacitance, energy density, power density, and excellent cycling stability. The
369 Ragone plot of SCs using different biochar-based HPCs and EHPCs is depicted in Fig.
370 6. The energy density and power density of SCs assembled from biochar-based HPCs
371 and EHPCs (for example, materials-derived from soybean root [85], peanut shell [86],

372 kraft lignin [23], and ant powder [87]) were greater than or comparable to those of SCs
373 assembled from other materials such as ZIF-derived graphene-based 2D Zn/Co oxide
374 hybrid [88], NiO derived NiO@Ni-MOF composite [89], heteroatoms-doped HPC
375 derived from chitin [90], ultrafine Ni-P@Ni nanotubes [91], HPC nanosheets derived
376 from polymer/graphene oxide hydrogels [92].

377

378 **3.1. Role of hierarchical porous structure**

379 The hierarchy of carbon materials on porosity, morphological and structural
380 characters are crucial for all kinds of applications to achieve high performance [93].
381 The synthesis and applications of natural hierarchically porous materials (e.g., biochar-
382 based HPC) received significant attention due to the rapidly evolving topic. The
383 performance of SCs using biochar-based HPC is closely associated with the
384 interconnected hierarchical porous structure, leading to the increase of effective surface
385 area, rapid ionic transport, and efficient charge storage. The major attraction of biochar-
386 based HPC electrodes is that they can achieve very high SSAs. High SSA can provide
387 more active sites, which generally leads to high energy density [94]. Note that the liquid
388 electrolyte is accessible to supermicropores (1–2 nm) and mainly mesopores (2–50 nm)
389 and macropores serve for this purpose, however, it is not applicable for the narrow
390 micropores [95]. The interconnected network of larger pores in biochar-based HPC
391 would provide more favorable and rapid pathways for ions to penetrate. In other words,
392 interconnected pores (i.e., supermicropores, mesopore and macropores) are capable of
393 delivering high power density due to it can be discharged/charged at higher current
394 density [94].

395 Gou et al. fabricated soybean root biochar-based HPCs-3, 4, and 4.5 through
396 chemical activation with KOH in different ratios of KOH/char = 3, 4, and 4.5,

397 respectively [85]. The SSA of HPC-4 was determined to be $2143 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$, higher than
398 that of HPC-3 ($1708 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$) and HPC-4.5 ($1937 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$). The mesopore volume of HPC-
399 4 was $0.13 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$, which is also much higher than those of HPC-3 ($0.01 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$) and
400 HPC-4.5 ($0.07 \text{ cm}^3 \text{ g}^{-1}$). The hierarchical structure with the co-occurrence of
401 micropores and mesopores in HPCs is beneficial for SCs because the mesopores can
402 rapidly transfer abundant electrolytes to the micropores, thus the charge can effectively
403 accumulate in the micropores, improving the utilization of the micropores. As a result,
404 HPC-4 showed a maximum energy density of as-assembled symmetric SC of 100.5 Wh
405 kg^{-1} at a power density of 4353 W kg^{-1} in neat EMIM BF₄. Moreover, the energy
406 density maintained a high value of 40.7 Wh kg^{-1} at a very high-power density (63000
407 W kg^{-1}).

408 Lately, Peng et al. developed a mixed crab shell and rice husk biochar-based
409 EHPC electrode by a novel strategy through a self-templating method to assemble an
410 SC, as revealed in Fig. 7a [96]. To highlight the benefit of the hierarchical porous
411 structure of the EHPC, a conventional method (non-templating and KOH activation
412 method) was used to prepare single rice husk and crab shell biomass-derived active
413 carbons that are denoted as RH-AC and CS-AC, respectively. The resultant EHPC
414 exhibited a high SSA of $3557 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$, which was much higher than that of RH-AC (3032
415 $\text{m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$) and CS-AC ($2109 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$). The result showed pore contents (macropore,
416 mesopore, and micropore) in EHPC (1.5, 48.5 and 50.0 %), RH-AC (0.0, 14.5, and 85.5
417 %) and CS-AC (1.7, 40 and 58.3 %, respectively). In a two-electrode system with 1 M
418 Na₂SO₄ electrolyte solution, the EHPC-assembled SC showed a high energy density of
419 30.5 W h kg^{-1} at a power density of 225 W kg^{-1} , significantly higher than RH-AC (27.8
420 W h kg^{-1}) and CS-AC (21.6 W h kg^{-1}). The higher electrochemical performance of
421 EHPC was due to its well-developed hierarchical porosity and large SSA.

422

423 3.2. Role of functional groups

424 Additionally, the O-containing functional groups on the biochar-based EHPC
425 surface may be used to enhance the electrochemical performance of SCs [97]. Oxygen
426 functionalities (e.g., phenolic -OH, hydroxyl -OH, quinone -C=O, carboxyl -COOH,
427 and ethers -C-O-C-) can enhance the wettability of the carbon surface and provide
428 additional charge-storage sites. Moreover, Faradaic pseudocapacitance of biochar-
429 based EHPC may be induced by electrochemical reactions at the surface of the electrode
430 in aqueous electrolytes as follows [98]:

431



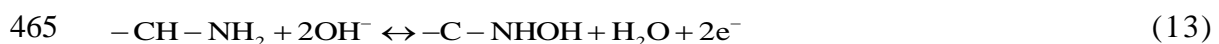
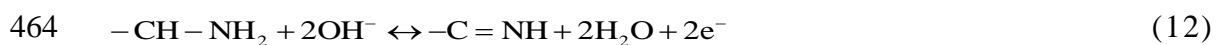
435

436 The capacitive performance produced by quinone and hydroxyl groups was
437 more effective than that contributed by carboxyl groups in acidic aqueous electrolytes
438 [97]. Liu et al. reported that the O-containing groups (O content of 9.74 at%) of rice
439 husk-based EHPC lead to pseudo-Faradaic reactions and facilitated access of
440 electrolyte species for the construction of the double layer. This could be beneficial for
441 the high-performance SCs with high rate capability and power density [67]. Later,
442 Huang et al. reported the O heteroatom doping in the carbon framework to enhance the
443 wettability of an *Indicalamus* leaves-based EHPC in the aqueous electrolytes. It also
444 delivered a pseudocapacitive contribution to the promoted total capacitance [99]. Zhao
445 et al. reported the production of an O-rich EHPC with abundant functional groups from
446 the carbonization of Artemia cyst shells by HNO₃ treatment and KOH activation. This

447 study investigated the development of the porosity and surface functional groups and
 448 the effect on the electrochemical properties [100]. Most interestingly, the HNO₃
 449 treatment can introduce higher O content to the carbon framework. Even with the EHPC
 450 after HNO₃ treatment mostly result in micropores. The suitable wettability benefited
 451 from the O rich content and the fast ion transport attributed to the interconnected
 452 hierarchical porous structure. Subsequently, it promoted the desolated ions to enter the
 453 EHPC micropores more easily. However, O contents slightly decreased after KOH
 454 activation. Guo et al. prepared soybean roots-based HPC with the different mass ratios
 455 of KOH [85]. Their results showed that the increase of the KOH:biochar ratio from 3,
 456 4, and 4.5 correspond to the decrease of the O contents in EHPCs by 11.5, 8.4, and 8.3
 457 at%, respectively.

458 In addition, N-doped biochar-based EHPC can improve the pseudocapacitance
 459 for SCs, by introducing N in carbon frameworks using N-enriched biomass [76], or
 460 employing N-containing precursor [74, 101] or post-treating with ammonia gas. Below
 461 reversible redox reactions were proposed for the pseudocapacitance of the N species in
 462 the basic electrolyte [102].

463



466

467 By one-step production, an N-O-S co-doped ant powder-based EHPCs are
 468 fabricated for high-performance SCs [87]. Liu et al. investigated the electrochemical
 469 energy storage capability of N-O-S co-doped EHPC derived from Kraft lignin [23].
 470 Wan et al. developed an N-O-S co-doped rape pollen-based EHPC [102]. The results
 471 indicated that the incorporation of the higher content of heteroatoms (N, O, and S)

472 effectively improved the hydrophilia of the EHPC and provided additional
473 pseudocapacitance via a redox reaction. More specifically, the higher graphitic N
474 content might produce a higher degree of graphitization, while pyrrolic N could
475 participate in reversible Faradaic reactions and contribute additional pseudocapacitance
476 based on the electron-donor property. The S species in the biochar-based EHPC can act
477 as an electron donor to enhance the surface wettability to facilitate the infiltration of
478 electrolytes, and improve the electrochemical conductivity. Moreover, these S
479 functionalities can contribute to a larger amount of electrochemically active sites, which
480 is important for the reversible pseudocapacitive reactions of sulfones to sulfoxides and
481 sulfoxides to hydroxylated sulfoxides, resulting in enhanced electrochemical energy
482 storage performance.

483

484 **3.3. Role of electroactive particles**

485 The enhancement of specific capacitance by quick Faradaic reactions can be
486 realized by modifying with electroactive particles of transition metals oxides, such as
487 RuO₂, TiO₂, Cr₂O₃, MnO₂, and Co₂O₃ [98]. Yuan et al. successfully modified MnO₂ on
488 rice husk biochar-based EHPC to enhance the electrochemical properties for SCs [13].
489 Regardless, the MnO₂-modified EHPC electrode exhibited a higher current response
490 than a pristine HPC and superior charge-storage capacity. At the scan rate of 5 mV s⁻¹,
491 the specific capacitance of the MnO₂-modified EHPC electrode reached 197.6 F g⁻¹ in
492 0.5 M Na₂SO₄ solution, which is approximately 1.5 times higher than that of non-
493 modified HPC under similar conditions. This enhancement is due to the introduction of
494 pseudocapacitive reactions. However, the pristine HPC exhibits excellent capacitance
495 retention with up to 98.5% after 5000 charge-discharge cycles, while that of MnO₂/HPC
496 composite showed only 80.2%. The decay in the capacitance retention may be due to:

497 (1) disruption of hierarchically porous structure, (2) electrochemical dissolution of
498 MnO₂ into electrolyte, or (3) desquamation of MnO₂ from HPC framework.

499 Recently, Yuan et al. reported the fabrication of a chicken bone-based EHPC
500 scaffold-MnO₂ (EHPC@MnO₂) nanohybrids for asymmetric SC (Fig. 7b) [24].
501 EHPC@MnO₂ nanohybrids presented a high specific capacitance of 476.4 F g⁻¹ at 1 A
502 g⁻¹. The asymmetric SC exhibited an excellent capacitance and rate performance,
503 delivering a specific energy density of up to 60.8 Wh kg⁻¹ at a power density of 1400
504 W kg⁻¹ in 1 M Na₂SO₄ electrolyte. A crab-based EHPC/CoFe₂O₄ composite was
505 fabricated to enhance capacitive performances [25]. The composite material delivered
506 701.8 F g⁻¹ at 1 A g⁻¹, which is significantly higher than a pristine HPC of 320.4 F g⁻¹.
507 Moreover, it displayed an excellent cycling performance over 10000 cycles with 90.9%
508 of capacitance retention. A high energy density of 18.2 Wh kg⁻¹ was delivered at a
509 power density of 4992 W kg⁻¹ in 1 A g⁻¹ in 6 M KOH electrolyte.

510

511 **4. Biochar-based HPC/EHPC for capacitive deionization**

512 Capacitive deionization (CDI) is a process that deionizes water using an
513 electrical potential difference between a pair of electrodes generally made of porous
514 carbons. It is a promising electrochemical technology for water and wastewater
515 treatments (e.g., desalination, electrosorption of heavy metals and contaminated charge
516 species) [103-106]. Significantly, CDI has many advantages in operation, including low
517 energy consumption for low-salinity desalination (< 4000 ppm), high water recovery,
518 direct energy recovery, no chemical additives, low fouling potential, and environmental
519 friendliness [107, 108]. The working mechanism of CDI is based on the introduced
520 electrical double layer (EDL) models, in which unwanted ions are eliminated from the
521 water via electrosorption on the electrodes [103, 109]. First, a pair of porous electrodes

522 was applied to an external voltage for the electrosorption of ions. The high
523 concentration of ions was adsorbed at the electrode/solution interface via an EDL
524 formation. Second, once the electrodes are saturated with ions, the voltage is removed
525 to regenerate the electrodes (the desorption period), and the electrical energy can be
526 directly recovered during the discharging step.

527 The HPC-based electrodes with 3D porous architecture are expected to facilitate
528 ion transportation by reducing the resistance in the pore channel [110]. Moreover, eco-
529 friendly HPC derived from biomass/biochar demonstrates abundant surface functional
530 groups. These characteristics of biochar-based HPC/ EHPC are beneficial for efficient
531 electrosorption [111, 112]. The applications of biochar-based HPC for electrochemical
532 deionization is shown in Table 3. As can be seen, a variety of biomass precursors can
533 be used to prepare biochar-based HPC for desalination. Besides, biochar-based HPC
534 presented a high potential in electrosorption of various pollutants such as heavy metals
535 (Cr and Cu), NH_4^+ , and Mg^{2+} . Fig. 8 compares the salt adsorption capacities of biochar-
536 based HPC and EHPC electrodes to those of commercial precursor-based electrodes.
537 Specifically, biochar-based HPC or EHPC electrodes exhibit significantly higher salt
538 adsorption capacities than commercial activated carbon electrodes. They also present
539 higher or comparable capacities than commercial precursor-derived HPC and graphene
540 electrodes.

541

542 **4.1. CDI performance of HPC/EHPC electrode materials**

543 The electrosorption performance of CDI is primarily governed by the EDL
544 formation at the solution/electrode interface of charged nanopores [109]. It may be
545 affected by the porosity characteristics of the electrode (e.g., SSA, PV, and
546 mesoporosity). Significantly higher electrosorption capacity and rate of biochar-based

547 HPC electrode were reported compared to commercial activated carbon without
548 hierarchical porous structure. Liu et al. reported the electrosorption rate of CDI for the
549 HPC electrode derived from natural basswood was approximately six times higher than
550 the carbon black electrode [50]. In the hierarchical porous structure of biochar-based
551 HPC, mesopores are favorable for improving the electrosorption capacity by providing
552 superior transport pathways for the solvated ions and more active sites for ions [113].
553 Meanwhile, Sun et al. mentioned that mesopores inside kelp-based HPC improved not
554 only the ionic conductivity but also the wettability of the material, which is crucial in
555 electrochemical desalination [114].

556 Cuong et al. compared the electrosorption capacity and rate of the rice husk-
557 derived biochar-based EHPCs (Fig. 9a-c), which were prepared by a natural SiO₂
558 template [115]. Most notably, the EHPC electrode with higher SSA and mesoporosity
559 provides high electrosorption performance. The electrochemical performance of the
560 EHPC electrode was significantly superior to that of the electrode derived from a
561 commercial activated carbon. Besides, EHPC showed high regeneration ability in 10
562 regeneration cycles for water softening and removal of Mg²⁺, NH₄⁺, and Cu²⁺. A
563 lignocellulosic loofa sponge biochar-based HPC was prepared by Feng et al. for
564 improving the electrochemical desalination performance of membrane capacitive
565 deionization (MCDI) [116]. Its hierarchical porous structure provided a remarkable
566 specific capacitance of 93.0 F g⁻¹ at 5 mV s⁻¹ in 1 M NaCl solution and acquired a
567 superior electrosorption capacity of 22.5 mg g⁻¹.

568 The electrosorption performance was enhanced by introducing
569 pseudocapacitive reactions. Along with a Faradaic charge transfer occurring on the
570 surface or near-surface of the electrode materials. Functional groups on the electrode
571 surface (e.g., oxygen and nitrogen) can enhance the Faradaic capacitance [117, 118].

572 Besides, pseudocapacitive materials (e.g., MnO_2) which have a high theoretical
573 capacitance enhance the electrochemical properties of the material [119]. It should be
574 noted that the N doping on the EHPC surface enhances the electrochemical properties
575 [120, 121]. N functional groups could provide uneven surface charge distributions and
576 generate surface polar active sites. The unsaturated sites of N on the EHPC surface can
577 improve the wettability. Especially pseudocapacitance for Na^+ storage. The pyridinic
578 N and pyrrolic N can increase the electrical conductivity and electroactivity. Meanwhile,
579 the graphitic-N and pyridine-N-oxide are positively charged and promoted electron
580 transfer within the carbon matrix [122].

581

582 The surface O functional groups (e.g., C=O and OH) on HPC are strongly
583 related to the CDI performance because the O functional groups at the carbon surface
584 can enhance the Faradaic capacitance [117]. Electrode materials with moderate O
585 functional groups can contribute to a superior electrosorption capacity, rate, and charge
586 efficiency due to slight chemical oxidation. Liu et al. reported the improvement of CDI
587 performance using a natural basswood biochar-based HPC electrode. The presence of
588 O functional groups on the surface improves the hydrophilicity and wettability [50].
589 The hydrophilicity/wettability of the electrode surfaces was also beneficial for the
590 performance of CDI [123, 124]. However, the O functional groups of electrode
591 materials had a negligible influence on the long-term stability of CDI [125]. The
592 presence of higher O functional groups may affect the electrosorption capacity and
593 charge efficiency [126].

594 Adorna et al. developed coconut shell biochar-based HPC and MnO_2
595 nanocomposite for CDI applications [119]. The MnO_2 /HPC electrode can act as the
596 Faradaic/EDL hybrid capacitor to enhance the CDI performance. It showed an excellent

597 electrosorption capacity of 68.4 mg g^{-1} at an initial NaCl concentration of 1000 mg L^{-1}
598 and 1.2 V . Besides, the performance of HPC-based CDI improved through the increase
599 of the electrical conductivity of the electrode. Typically, graphene is a high conductivity
600 material, which can efficiently promote the electrochemical behavior of carbon
601 electrodes [127, 128]. Feng and his group developed an auricularia biochar-based
602 EHPC electrode coupled with graphene nanosheets. The result showed remarkable
603 improvement in the NaCl electrosorption capacity from 3.90 to 7.74 mg g^{-1} [113].

604

605 **4.2. Influence of operation conditions on CDI performance**

606 Operation conditions such as the applied voltage and electrolyte concentration
607 play a crucial role in the EDL formation as well as the CDI performance. The applied
608 voltage is an important parameter affecting CDI performance. Zhao et al. observed that
609 the salt adsorption capacity of CDI for used watermelon peel-based HPC increased
610 from 5.84 to 13.56 mg g^{-1} when the voltage increased from 0.8 to 1.4 V [111].
611 Indicating that the electrostatic forces become stronger, resulting in the formation of
612 the thicker EDL and favoring electro-adsorption of CDI. Additionally, an increased
613 CDI performance was observed from an eggplant-based HPC electrode at a higher
614 initial concentration of NaCl [112]. The electrosorption capacity of this electrode was
615 14.2 and 33.1 mg L^{-1} with the initial concentration of NaCl of 40 and 1000 mg L^{-1} ,
616 respectively. It can be explained by the fact that the compression in the EDL thickness
617 and higher concentration gradation for ion transport. On the other hand, the faster
618 electrosorption rate might be due to the increased conductivity and rapid transport of
619 ions of the electrolyte [111]. Moreover, the eggplant-based HPC also showed a high
620 potential for electrosorption of heavy metals from an aqueous solution (99.1% for Pb^{2+}

621 and 97.9% for Cd^{2+}). Also, the CDI system maintained high removal efficiencies for
622 Pb^{2+} and Cd^{2+} after three regeneration cycles.

623

624 **5. Future perspectives**

625 Although the implementation of low-cost biochar-based HPC exhibited
626 promising results in various applications, such as electrochemical deionization, and
627 electrochemical energy storage, it was seen that some critical challenges need to be
628 addressed. Research efforts continued to optimize the material fabrication, aiming to
629 improve porosity properties, simplify processing steps, reduce component costs,
630 enhance application performance, and especially encourage the environmental
631 friendliness of the materials. Based on this review, future research perspectives relating
632 to the advancement of biochar-based HPC and its applications are proposed as the
633 following:

634

635 **5.1. Selection of specific biomass for innovative electrochemical applications**

636 The utilization of biomass for the synthesis of HPC or EHPC can provide an
637 efficient, economical, and sustainable solution. The selection of biomass is strongly
638 related to the high performance of target HPC or EHPC. Various biomass precursors
639 such as shrimp shell, silkworm cocoon, *Indicalamus* leaf, *Enteromorpha prolifera*, rice
640 husk, soybean root, and peanut shell should be studied in detail for the synthesis of HPC
641 or EHPC. This is because their natural properties can play a crucial role in the pore
642 development of biochar-based HPC with very high SSA (over $2000 \text{ m}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$). Using
643 additive templates in the preparation of biochar-based EHPC is beneficial for pore
644 development. However, the use of commercial templates has limitations related to
645 production costs. Some biomass contains templates such as SiO_2 in rice husk, and

646 organic complexes template in *Indicalamus* leaf should be particularly utilized for HPC
647 fabrication. The design of micropore- or mesopore-dominant biochar-based HPC can
648 be performed through the selection of biomass precursors. Soybean root, corn husk,
649 bagasse-based HPC exhibited as micropore-dominant materials, while oyster shell,
650 *Enteromorpha prolifera*, silk, peanut shell, and rice husk-based HPC are mesopore-
651 dominant materials. In addition to focusing on developing 3D structures in biochar-
652 based HPC to improve electrochemical performance, the development of functional
653 groups on the surface should also have more investigations. Biomass containing N such
654 as algae, peanut shell, and fishbone should be used as potential precursors to prepare
655 N-doped EHPC. On the other hand, N and S-containing precursors such as kraft lignin,
656 barley, and shaddock endothelium can be used to develop N-S co-doped biochar-based
657 EHPC.

658

659 **5.2. Sustainable process to produce biochar-based HPC**

660 Currently, practicing chemical activation methods based on chemical agents
661 such as KOH, H₃PO₄, and ZnCl₂ is most popular and proven effective for the
662 development of porosity with ultrahigh SSA of over 3000 m² g⁻¹. However, these
663 chemical agents can cause unfriendly environmental effects. It can be expected that
664 there is an opportunity to replace them with more efficient and less expensive
665 alternatives. For the solution to improve the pore development in the chemical
666 activation process, it should be considered in conjunction with CO₂ as an
667 environmentally friendly agent, especially for producing mesopore-dominant biochar-
668 based HPC.

669 Controlling the porous structure of biochar-based HPC (mainly mesoporosity
670 and pore size distribution) during the pore development processes (template removal or

671 activation) is desirable to attain a fast transport and high storage capacity of ions or
672 molecules. Related to the selection of biomass/biochar, the preparation of biochar-
673 based HPC or EHPC by a green templating method requires more attention. The use of
674 natural template presents in biomass precursor (e.g., SiO₂ in rice husk) or natural
675 material as an additive template (e.g., CaCO₃ in the oyster shell) should be preferred.
676 Besides, a green activation strategy can also be used to develop the biochar-based HPC
677 or EHPC. In the green activation, it is suggested that adding natural (e.g., orange peel),
678 or green (e.g., CaCl₂) activation agent can help to make the green process. In addition,
679 a non-activation process is also a sustainable approach to develop HPC or EHPC.
680 However, this approach depends on the discovery and selection of special biomass such
681 as herringbone, *Indicalamus* leaves with their unique chemical composition and
682 structure. Furthermore, the utilization of the green activation strategy can enhance the
683 yield. In general, the synthesis of biochar-based HPC should be performed on a large-
684 scale with controlling parameters to optimize yield.

685

686 **5.3. Challenges and prospects for advanced HPC/EHPC**

687 Challenges remain in the use of biochar-based HPC or EHPC in electrochemical
688 deionization, including achievements of efficient desalination efficiency, superior
689 electrosorption capacity, and high-water recovery. It is obligatory to further improve
690 the ion-accessible SSA, ion mobility within the pore network, electrochemical stability
691 over the pH, voltage range, and electronic conductivity. It is necessary to have a
692 comprehensive assessment of the effect of heteroatom doping (e.g., N, O, S, and P) on
693 electrochemical deionization performance. The design of biochar-based EHPC using
694 metal oxides, e.g., MnO₂, TiO₂, and Co₃O₄ may enhance wettability, electrocatalysis,
695 specific capacitance, and improved charge separation. More interestingly, these metal

696 oxides can provide abundant reaction or interaction sites for surface or interface-related
697 processes such as redox reaction and adsorption. Future perspective is expected to
698 successfully scale up CDI methods using biochar-based HPC or EHPC electrode,
699 particularly for practical applications such as desalination of seawater, electrosorption
700 of industrial wastewater and high-contaminated groundwater by optimization of
701 electrode materials, and operation parameters.

702 For the application of biochar-based HPC in electrochemical energy storage, the
703 requirement is to maximize energy density to meet future energy needs. Besides, the
704 enhancement of specific capacitance for biochar-based HPC by quick Faradaic
705 reactions can be realized by modification of electroactive particles of transition metal
706 oxides such as RuO₂, TiO₂, Cr₂O₃, MnO₂, and Co₂O₃. However, the design of these
707 metal oxides on biochar-based HPC causes pore blocking, leading to a decrease in the
708 SSA and PV. Therefore, it is necessary to optimize the number of modified substances,
709 avoiding the influence on the hierarchical structure of HPC as well as achieving the
710 best electrochemical performance. Ideally, a biochar-based EHPC-assembled SC is
711 used to deliver energy for an HPC-based CDI system in the water treatment application,
712 which is a promising perspective.

713 Furthermore, emerging applications of biochar-based HPC should be extended
714 to the pilot-scale to assess technical, economic, and environmental feasibility under
715 practical conditions. The challenges in upscaling mainly involve the acceptance of
716 companies and production facilities, that are using biochar as a precursor to producing
717 HPC. In addition, national policies (such as tax incentives) can be an effective approach
718 in encouraging the use of biomass to produce HPCs.

719

720 **6. Conclusion**

721 The abundance of lignocellulosic biomass, lower cost, easy accessibility,
722 recyclable properties, higher carbon content, and environmentally friendly nature
723 ensure that the biomass is ideal candidates for resources of porous carbon materials.
724 Similarly, naturally obtained hierarchical porous structure and hetero-atom facilitate
725 electrolyte penetration and generation of additional active sites, respectively, for higher
726 performance. The knowledge gaps that exist in the synthesis and application of biochar-
727 based HPC and EHPCs are discussed. The bio-char-derived EHPC with adjustable
728 physicochemical properties, superb electrical conductivity, satisfactory SSA, and
729 higher electrochemical stability has been attracting significant attention to be a
730 promising candidate for supercapacitors and other energy storage applications. Hence
731 the biochar-based HPC and EHPC are essential to bridge the gap between conventional
732 electrochemical capacitors and rechargeable batteries to meet the increasing energy
733 demand.

734 An improved comprehension of sustainable, environmentally friendly, and cost-
735 effective biochar-based HPC and EHPC is presented in this review. The biochar-based
736 HPC consists of the 3D interconnected pore structure of micro-, meso-, and macropores,
737 which is beneficial for the transport of ions and providing abundant active sites for an
738 increase in the ion-accessible SSA. The biochar-based EHPC is synthesized or
739 developed with a controllable 3D pore structure, heteroatom-doping, and metal oxides-
740 impregnated surface. The preparation methods of biochar-based HPC or EHPC have
741 been extensively investigated using the hard-template, self-template, or non-template
742 methods. The development of biochar-based EHPC is described to further enhance the
743 physicochemical or electrochemical properties for capacitive charge storage. The
744 insight into mechanisms of hierarchical porous architecture, surface functional groups
745 and additive electroactive particles are investigated on the electrochemical performance

746 of SCs. To understand the effect of properties of HPC on CDI, the effect of biomass
747 precursors, the role of the hierarchical porous structure, and the role of functional
748 groups of HPC on the CDI are discussed. The development of green sustainable
749 methods for the fabrication of biochar-based HPC and the challenges in capacitive
750 charge storage are highlighted. Most significantly, it indicated that biochar-based HPC
751 or EHPC is a promising material for emerging applications such as environmental
752 remediation, electrochemical deionization, and energy storage. Consequently, the
753 biomass utilization for the synthesis of HPCs should be highly encouraged in the future
754 so that biomass-derived HPCs will bring more exciting results without hampering the
755 environment.

756

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774

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Table 1. The preparation methods and porosity characteristics of biochar-based HPC/ EHPC.

No.	Biomass	Carbonization process				Pre-treatment	Activation process				SSA (m ² g ⁻¹)	PV (m ³ g ⁻¹)	R _{meso} (%)	Ref.
		Reactor type	T _c (°C)	HR _c (°C min ⁻¹)	t _c (h)		Activation method (Activation agent)	T _a (°C)	HR _a (°C min ⁻¹)	t _a (h)				
1	Shrimp shell (N-doped EHPC)	Pyrolysis	400	5	2	HCl washed impurities	Chemical activation (KOH)	850	5	1	3171	1.93	49.4	[36]
2	Spruce-pine- fir	Pyrolysis	800	5	2	–	Physical activation (Air)	350	–	7	725	0.29	–	[35]
3	Natural basswood	Pyrolysis	1000	–	6	–	Physical activation (CO ₂)	750	–	10	839	0.58	23.6	[50]
4	Auricularia (EHPC)	HTC	180	–	12	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	850	5	2	1401	0.90	20.6	[113]
5	Watermelon peel	Pyrolysis	800	5	3	HF washed impurities	Chemical activation (KHCO ₃)	800	5	3	2360	1.31	–	[111]
6	Loofa sponge	Pyrolysis	600	–	1	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	800	–	1	1819	0.95	18.9	[116]
7	<i>Leucaena leucocephala</i> wood	Pyrolysis	400	5	1	–	Physicochemical activation (KOH/CO ₂)	800	5	2	1901	1.09	45.2	[129]
8	Kelp	Pyrolysis	700	5	1	HCl washed impurities	Chemical activation (KOH)	800	5	2	2614	1.40	–	[114]

No.	Biomass	Carbonization process				Pre-treatment	Activation process				SSA (m ² g ⁻¹)	PV (m ³ g ⁻¹)	R _{meso} (%)	Ref.
		Reactor type	T _c (°C)	HR _c (°C min ⁻¹)	t _c (h)		Activation method (Activation agent)	T _a (°C)	HR _a (°C min ⁻¹)	t _a (h)				
9	Rice husk (EPHC)	Pyrolysis	900	–	1	HF leached SiO ₂ template	Physical activation (N ₂ /steam)	850	–	0.5	861	0.35	–	[64]
10	Rice husk (EPHC)	HTC	230	–	48	NH ₄ HF ₂ leached SiO ₂ template	Higher pyrolysis	900	5	–	525	0.49	76.4	[26]
11	Rice husk (EPHC)	Pyrolysis	700	2	2	HCl leached SiO ₂ template	Chemical activation (EtOH)	800	1	2	78.5	0.21	–	[30]
12	The bark of plane trees (S-doped- EHPC)	Pyrolysis	750	–	5	HCl washed impurities	–	–	–	–	528	0.72	–	[130]
13	Oyster shell + soft pitch (EHPC)	Pyrolysis	900	5	5	HCl leached CaO template	–	–	–	–	1258	0.58	69.6	[27]
14	Soybean hulls (S-doped- EHPC)	Pyrolysis	800	3	2	HCl washed impurities	Chemical activation (KOH)	700	3	2	1232	0.54	–	[18]
15	Porphyra (N- doped EHPC)	Pyrolysis	300 (+800)	–	1 (+2)	HNO ₃ leached Ni particle template	Physical activation (Steam)	800	–	1	811	–	–	[65]
16	Rice husk (MnO ₂ - modified EHPC)	Pyrolysis	500	–	1	NaOH leached SiO ₂ template	Chemical activation (KOH)	700	–	2	1751	1.11	55.9	[13]

No.	Biomass	Carbonization process				Pre-treatment	Activation process				SSA (m ² g ⁻¹)	PV (m ³ g ⁻¹)	R _{meso} (%)	Ref.
		Reactor type	T _c (°C)	HR _c (°C min ⁻¹)	t _c (h)		Activation method (Activation agent)	T _a (°C)	HR _a (°C min ⁻¹)	t _a (h)				
17	Rice husk (EHPC)	Pyrolysis	500	–	1	NaOH leached SiO ₂ template	Chemical activation (KOH)	700	–	1	2804	1.80	–	[67]
18	<i>Indicalamus</i> leaf (EHPC)	Pyrolysis	900	5	4	HF leached metal-organic complexes template	–	–	–	–	1801	1.45	–	[99]
19	<i>Enteromorpha prolifera</i>	Pyrolysis	500	15	1.5	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	750	15	1	3332	2.46	60.4	[68]
20	Artemia cyst shell (O-doped EHPC)	Pyrolysis	300 (+700)	1	3 (+4)	HNO ₃ washed impurities	Chemical activation (KOH)	700	10	1	1758	0.76	28.9	[100]
21	Corn husk	–	–	–	–	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	800	5	1	928	0.53	26.4	[131]
22	Soybean root	Pyrolysis	500	5	2	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	800	5	2	2143	0.94	13.8	[85]
23	Silk (N-doped EHPC)	–	–	–	–	–	Chemical activation (ZnCl ₂)	900	2	1	2494	2.28	79.8	[132]
24	Peanut shell	HTC	180	–	48	H ₂ SO ₄ washed impurities	Chemical activation (KOH)	800	–	1	2396	1.31	35.5	[86]
25	Sugar cane bagasse (N-doped EHPC)	–	–	–	–	–	Chemical activation (CaCl ₂ as green activation agent)	800	5	2	946	1.39	17.7	[74]

No.	Biomass	Carbonization process				Pre-treatment	Activation process				SSA (m ² g ⁻¹)	PV (m ³ g ⁻¹)	R _{meso} (%)	Ref.
		Reactor type	T _c (°C)	HR _c (°C min ⁻¹)	t _c (h)		Activation method (Activation agent)	T _a (°C)	HR _a (°C min ⁻¹)	t _a (h)				
26	Silkworm cocoon (N-doped EHPC)	Pyrolysis	450	5	0.5	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	900	1	2	3386	2.20	45.5	[28]
27	Soybean milk (N-doped EHPC)	–	–	–	–	HCl leached CaCO ₃ template	Chemical activation (KOH)	700	3	2	1208	0.7	42.9	[66]
28	Kraft lignin (O-N-S co-doped EHPPC)	Pyrolysis	400	2	1	–	Higher pyrolysis	800	4	1	1307	0.67	–	[23]
29	Barley (N-S co-doped EHPC)	–	–	–	–	–	Chemical activation (copper citrate)	800	5	2	2140	1.16	56.0	[19]
30	Peanut shell (N-doped EHPC)	HTC	200	–	4	–	Physicochemical activation (KOH/CO ₂)	800	10	1.5	1029	1.38	72.5	[101]
31	Rice husk (EHPC)	Pyrolysis	600	–	1	NaOH leached SiO ₂ template	Chemical activation (NaOH)	750	–	1	1789	1.15	37.4	[133]
32	Wood powders (N-doped EHPC)	–	–	–	–	–	Orange peel as green activation agent	800	5	2	282	0.31	71.0	[75]
33	Fishbone (N-doped EHPC)	Pyrolysis	850	5	2	HCl leached Ca ₁₀ (PO ₄) ₆ (OH) ₂ template	–	–	–	–	1337	0.85	62.4	[76]

No.	Biomass	Carbonization process				Pre-treatment	Activation process			SSA (m ² g ⁻¹)	PV (m ³ g ⁻¹)	R _{meso} (%)	Ref.	
		Reactor type	T _c (°C)	HR _c (°C min ⁻¹)	t _c (h)		Activation method (Activation agent)	T _a (°C)	HR _a (°C min ⁻¹)					t _a (h)
34	Litchi shell (MnO- modified EHPC)	–	–	–	–	–	Chemical activation (KOH)	800	–	2	1123	–	–	[134]
35	Mixed crab shell and rice husk (EHPC)	HTC	200	–	3	NaOH leached CaCO ₃ and SiO ₂ template	Chemical activation (KOH)	700	5	3	3557	2.02	48.5	[96]

Carbonization temperature: T_c ; carbonization heating rate: HR_c ; carbonization time: t_c ; activation temperature: T_a ; activation heating rate: HR_a ; activation time: t_a ; specific surface area: SSA ; total pore volume: PV ; mesoporosity: $R_{meso}=V_{meso}/PV$, mesopore volume: V_{meso}

Table 2. Application of biochar-based HPC/EHPC for SCs.

No.	Biomass	Test system/ Electrolyte	Current density (A g ⁻¹)	Specific capacitance (F g ⁻¹)	Energy density (Wh kg ⁻¹)	Power density (W kg ⁻¹)	Capacity retention rate	Ref.
1	Rice husk (MnO ₂ -modified EHPC)	3E/0.5 M Na ₂ SO ₄	5	210	–	–	80.2% after 5000 cycles at 5 A g ⁻¹	[13]
2	<i>Indicalamus</i> leaf	2E/1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	0.5	326	17.3 23.7	4355 224.5	98% after 8000 cycles at 5 A g ⁻¹	[99]
3	Soybean root	2E/EMIMBF ₄	0.5	276	40.7 100.5	63000 4353	98% after 10000 cycles at 5 A g ⁻¹	[85]
4	Silk (N-doped EHPC)	2E/EMIMBF ₄	0.1	242	52.5 102	8750 875	92% after 10000 cycles at 2 A g ⁻¹	[132]
5	Peanut shell	2E/1 M NaClO ₄	0.1	161	50 285	16500 201	88% after 100000 cycles at 51.2 A g ⁻¹	[86]
6	Silkworm cocoon (N- doped EHPC)	2E/1M MIMBF ₄	0.5	263.5	27.95 34.4	23910 3120	82.8% after 3000 cycles at 10 A g ⁻¹	[28]
7	Soybean milk (N-doped EHPC)	3E/6 M KOH/ PVA gel	0.5	149.3	8.2 10.2	19600 351	89.3% after 5000 cycles at 0.5 A g ⁻¹	[66]
8	Shaddock endotheliums (O-N-S co-doped EHPC)	3E/1 M EMIMBF ₄ /AN	0.2	550	29.25 46.88	4500 300	93.7% after 10000 cycles at 5 A g ⁻¹	[135]
9	Crab (CoFe ₂ O ₄ -modified EHPC)	3E/6M KOH	1	701.8	18.2 22.3	4992 497	90.9% after 10000 cycles at 1 A g ⁻¹	[25]

No.	Biomass	Test system/ Electrolyte	Current density (A g ⁻¹)	Specific capacitance (F g ⁻¹)	Energy density (Wh kg ⁻¹)	Power density (W kg ⁻¹)	Capacity retention rate	Ref.
10	Peach gum (O-N co-doped EHPC)	3E/1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	0.2	406	15.97 25.56	20000 500	91.76% after 7000 cycles	[136]
11	Mixed crab shell and rice husk (EHPC)	2E/1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	0.5	474	20.3 30.5	9000 225	95.6% a after 20000 cycles	[29]
12	Kraft lignin (O-N-S co-doped EHPPC)	3E/6 M KOH	0.2	244.5	32.2 66.8	40000 1750	91.6% over 10000 cycles	[23]
13	Rape pollen (N-S co-doped EHPPC)	2E/1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	1	361.6	10.7 32.2	4100 89	94.5% after 20000 cycles at 5 A g ⁻¹	[102]
14	Ant powder (O-N-S co-doped EHPC)	2E/1 M EMIMBF ₄	0.1	352	67 107	18000 900	5% loss over 10000 cycle	[87]
15	Chicken bone (MnO ₂ -modified EHPC)	2E/1 M Na ₂ SO ₄	2.0	217.3	11.5 60.8	20700 1400	95% after 10000 cycles	[24]
16	Barley (N-S co-doped EHPC)	3E/1 M Na ₂ SO ₄ (3E/6 M KOH)	0.5 (0.5)	56.8 (401.6)	30.9 16.9	500 8245	97.9% after 20000 cycles at 5 A g ⁻¹	[19]
17	Peanut shell (N-doped EHPC)	3E/6 M KOH	0.5	310.6	25.31 40.92	17195 990	90.14% after 5000 cycles at 2 A g ⁻¹	[101]
18	Rice husk (EHPC)	3E/6 M KOH	0.5	263	7.6 ~6.5	~4000 243	99.6% after 20 000 cycles at 1 A g ⁻¹	[133]
19	Litchi shell (MnO-modified EHPC)	3E/6 M KOH	0.5	795.5	57.7 12.1	400 37775	93.5% after 5000 cycles at 2 A g ⁻¹	[134]

Table 3. Application of biochar-based HPC/EHPC for CDI.

No.	Biomass	Scan rate (mV s ⁻¹)	Specific capacitance (F g ⁻¹)	Voltage	Pollutant	Initial concentration (mg L ⁻¹)	Flow rate (mL min ⁻¹)	Electrosorption capacity (mg g ⁻¹)	Ref.
1	Natural basswood	10	87	1.2	NaCl	100	20	5.7	[50]
2	Loofa sponge	5	93	1	NaCl	854.4	5	22.5	[116]
3	Auricularia	10	73	1.2	NaCl	55.7	–	7.7	[113]
4	Rice husk	0	60	1.5	NaCl	100	20	17.7	[64]
5	Watermelon peel	1	224	1.2	NaCl	500	40	17.4	[111]
6	Kelp	5	190	1.2	NaCl	500	20	27.2	[114]
7	Eggplant	–	–	–	NaCl	–	–	31.9	[112]
8	Date seeds	10	400	1.2	NaCl	250	10	22.2	[137]
9	Lotus leaf	–	–	1.6	NaCl	2000	15	65.0	[138]

No.	Biomass	Scan rate (mV s ⁻¹)	Specific capacitance (F g ⁻¹)	Voltage	Pollutant	Initial concentration (mg L ⁻¹)	Flow rate (mL min ⁻¹)	Electrosorption capacity (mg g ⁻¹)	Ref.
10	Leather wastes (N-O-S codoped EHPC)	2	132	1.2	NaCl	500	10	20.9	[139]
11	Egg whites (N-doped EHPC)	5	137	1.2	NaCl	500	10	26.7	[120]
12	Mycelial pellet (N-S codoped EHPC)	10	47	1.2	NaCl	500	10	18.7	[140]
13	Tamarind shell (N-dope EHPC)	10	175	1.2	NaCl	600	10	18.8	[121]
14	Rice husk (EHPC)	5	121	1.2	NH ₄ ⁺	10.7	7.5	1.53	[115]
15	Rice husk husk (EHPC)	5	121	1.2	Mg ²⁺	47.6	7.5	1.54	[115]
16	Rice husk husk (EHPC)	5	121	1.2	Cu ²⁺	13.4	7.5	0.52	[115]
17	Corn cob	1	452	1	Cr(VI)	30	–	82.4	[141]

Biochar-based hierarchical porous carbon (HPC)

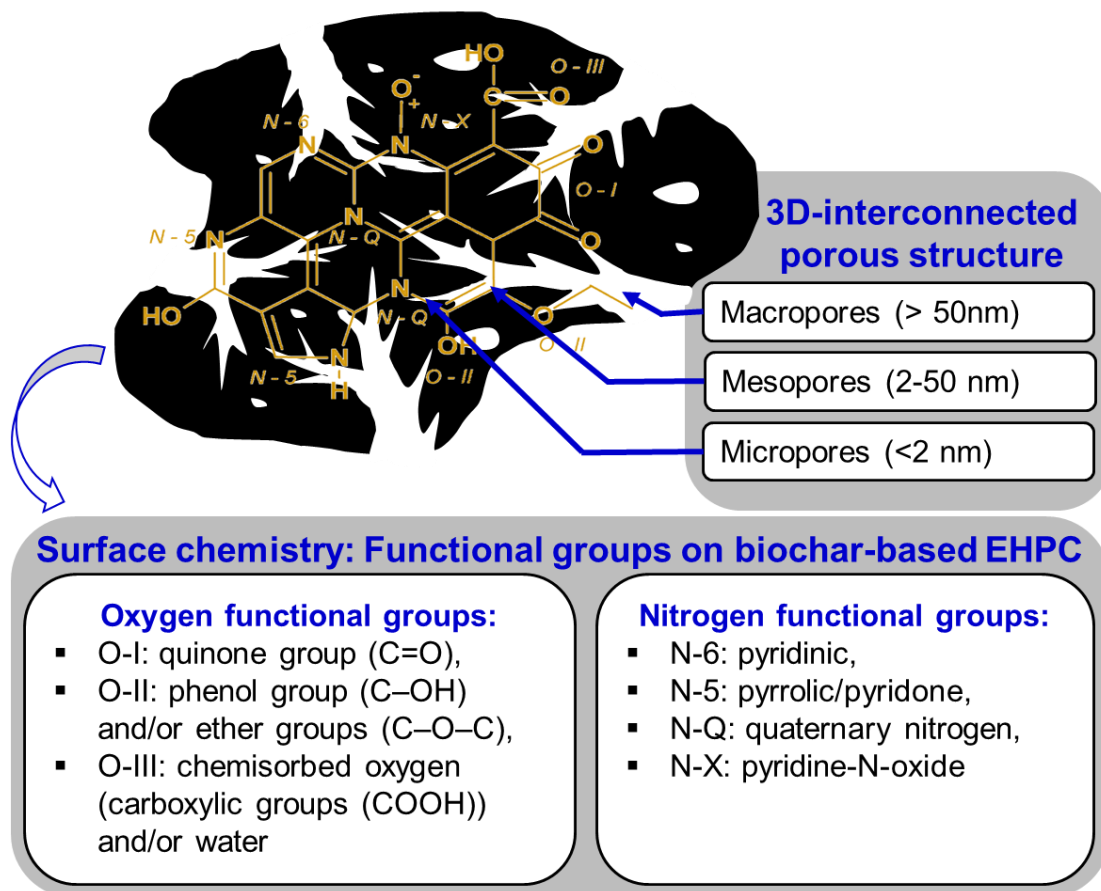


Fig. 1. Schematic model of the porosity structure and surface chemistry of biochar-based HPC/EHPC. Information regarding the functional groups was adopted from Jurcakova et al. [20]. Nitrogen functional groups present in the N-doped biochar-based HPC or EHPC.

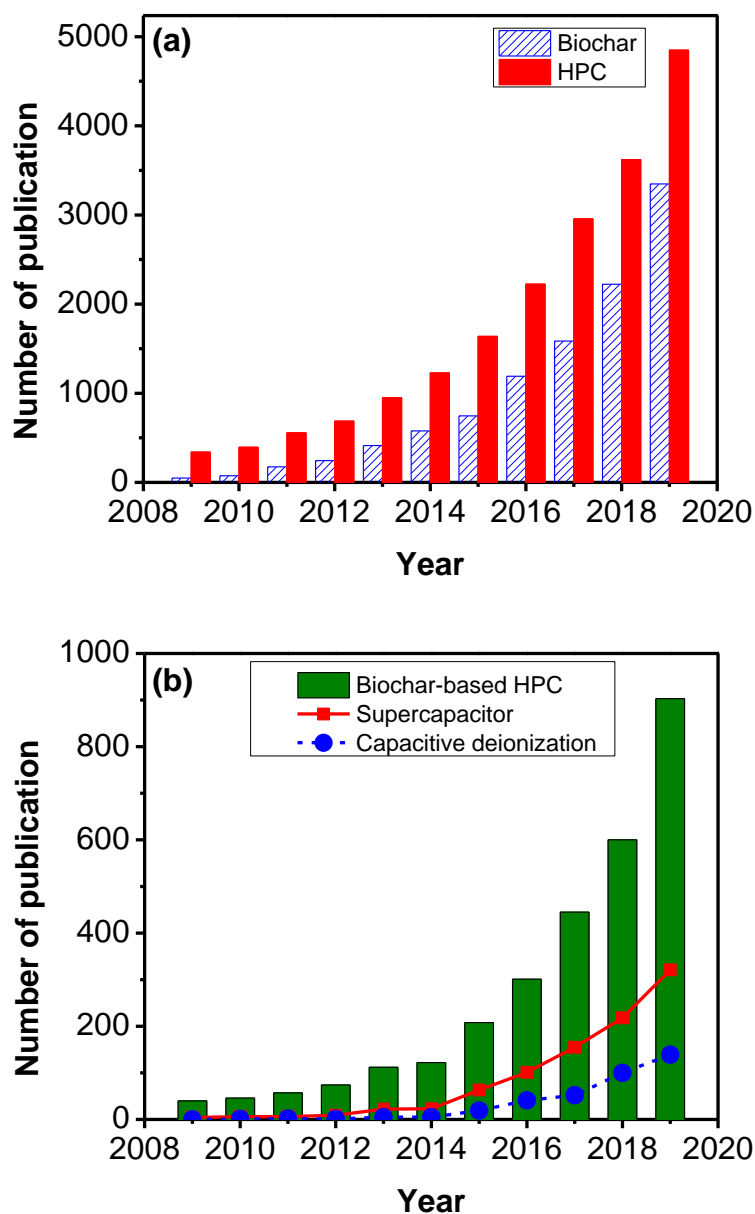


Fig. 2. The number of publications related to (a) HPC and biochar-based HPC/EHPC, and (b) utilization of biochar-based HPC/EHPC for electrosorption and energy storage during the years from 2009 to 2019 (according to ISI Web of Science™).

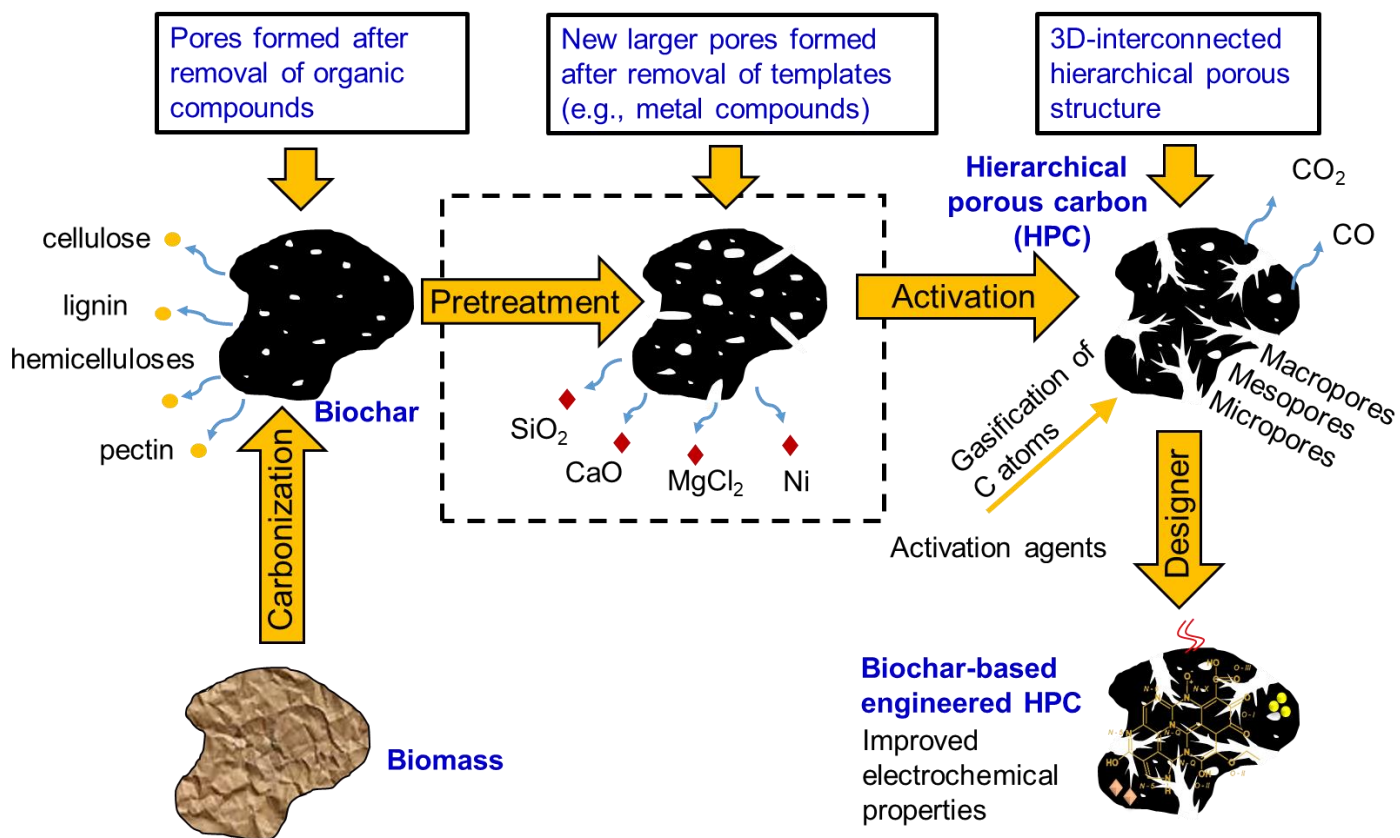


Fig. 3. Illustration of the mechanism for pore development of biochar-based HPC and EHPC, the dotted line is presented for an optional step.

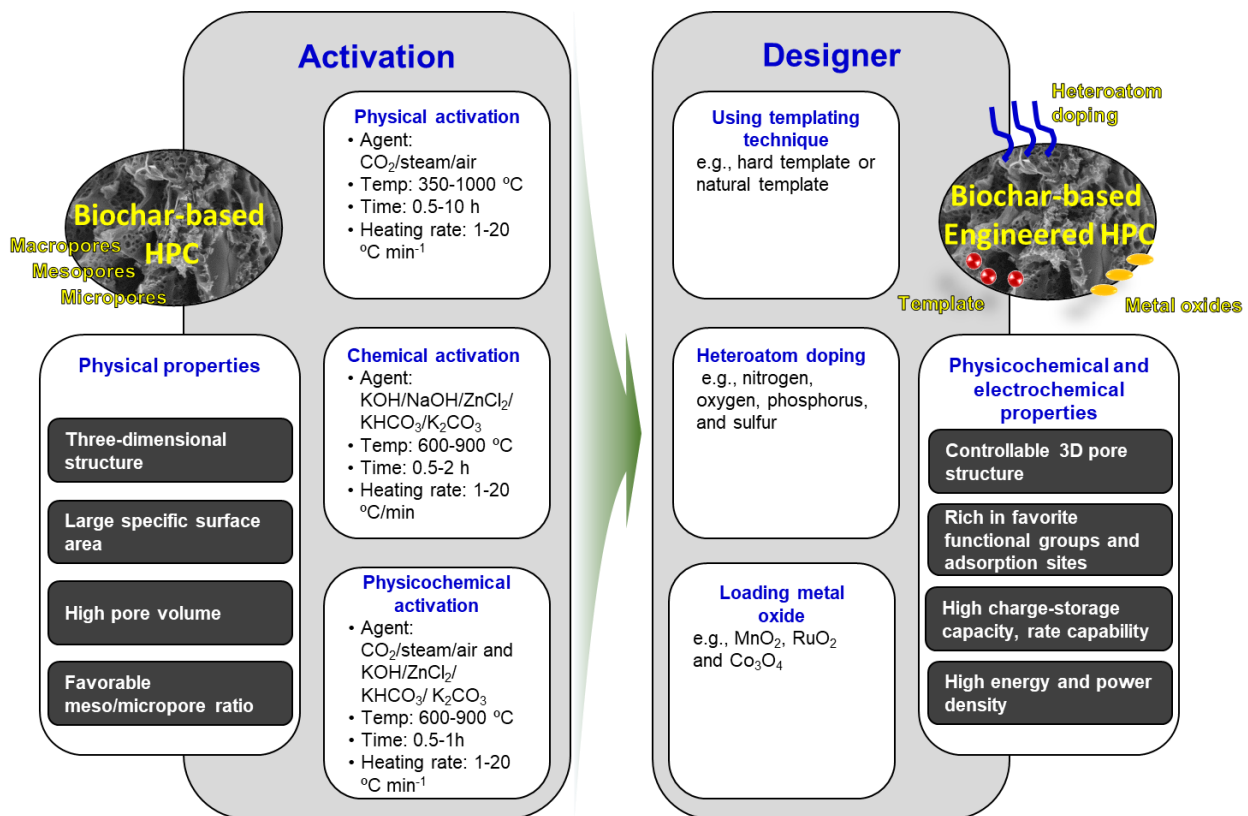


Fig. 4. Activation methods to produce biochar-based HPC and the design of biochar-based EHPC.

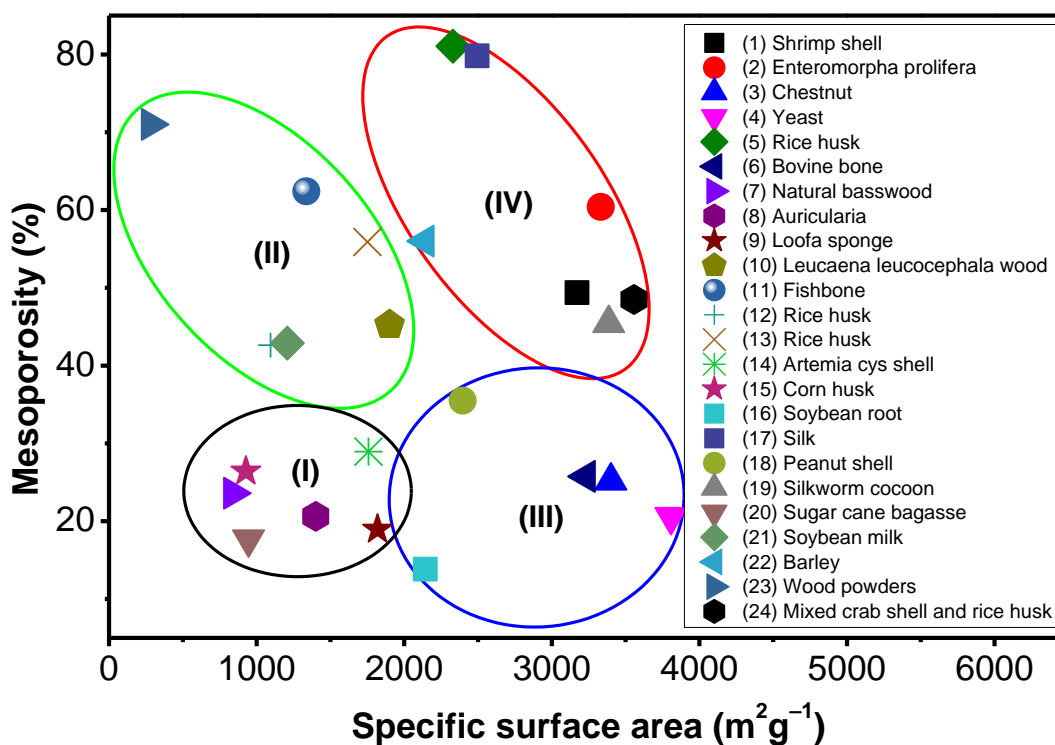


Fig. 5. The SSA and mesoporosity of biochar-based HPC/EHPC-derived from different biomass: (1) Shrimp shell [36], (2) *Enteromorpha prolifera* [68], (3) chestnut [142], (4) yeast [60], (5) rice husk [17], (6) bovine bone [37], (7) natural basswood [50], (8) auricularia [113], (9) loofa sponge [116], (10) *Leucaena leucocephala* wood [129], (11) fishbone [76], (12) rice husk [14], (13) rice husk [13], (14) *Artemia* cyst shells [100], (15) corn husk [131], (16) soybean root [85], (17) silk [132], (18) peanut shell [86], (19) silkworm cocoon [28], (20) sugar cane bagasse [74], (21) soybean milk [66], (22) barley [19], (23) wood powders [75] and (24) mixed crab shell and rice husk [96]. Group I (black elip): SSA < 2000 m² g⁻¹ and mesoporosity < 40%; Group II (green elip): SSA < 2000 m² g⁻¹ and mesoporosity > 40%; Group III (blue elip): SSA > 2000 m² g⁻¹ and mesoporosity < 40%; Group IV (red elip): SSA > 2000 m² g⁻¹ and mesoporosity > 40%.

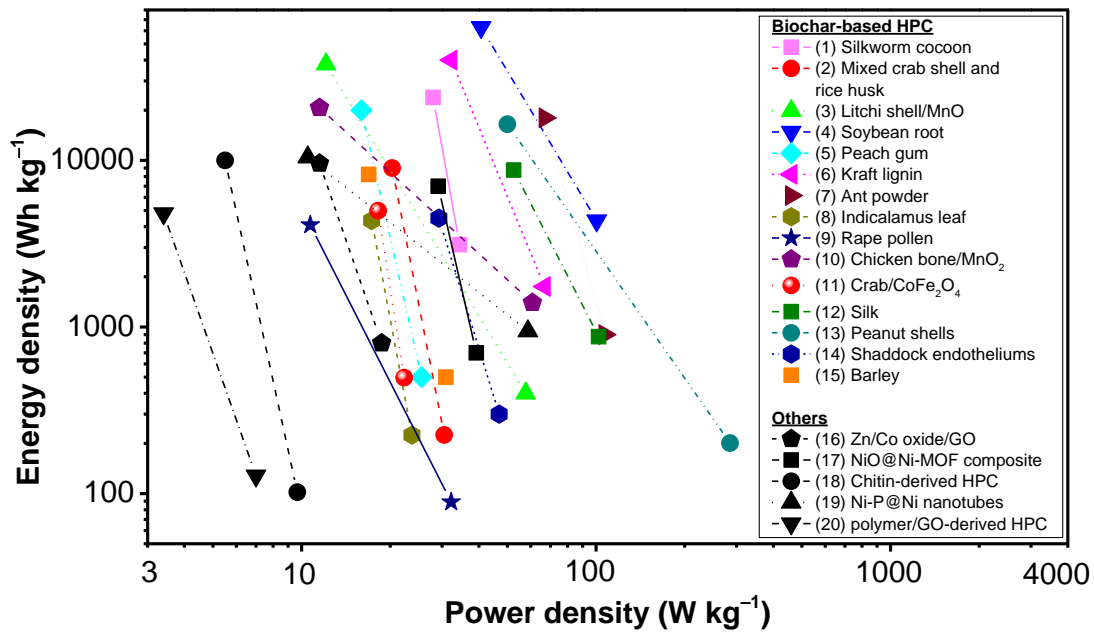


Fig. 6. Comparisons of the electrochemical performance of SCs assembled from HPCs/EHPCs derived from different biomass/biochars: (1) silkworm cocoon [28], (2) mixed crab shell and rice husk [29], (3) litchi shell [66], (4) soybean root [85], (5) peach gum [136], (6) kraft lignin [23], (7) ant powder [87], (8) *Indicalamus* leaf [99], (9) rape pollen [102], (10) chicken bone [24], (11) crab [25], (12) sink [132], (13) peanut shell [86], (14) shaddock endotheliums [136], (15) barley [19] and other commercial precursor-derived materials: (16) ZIF-derived graphene-based 2D Zn/Co oxide hybrid [88], (17) NiO derived NiO@Ni-MOF composite [89], (18) heteroatoms-doped HPC derived from chitin [90], (19) ultrafine Ni-P@Ni nanotubes [91], (20) HPC nanosheets derived from polymer/graphene oxide (GO) hydrogels [92]. Two points regarding each material present the highest and lowest energy density at the lowest and highest power density, respectively.

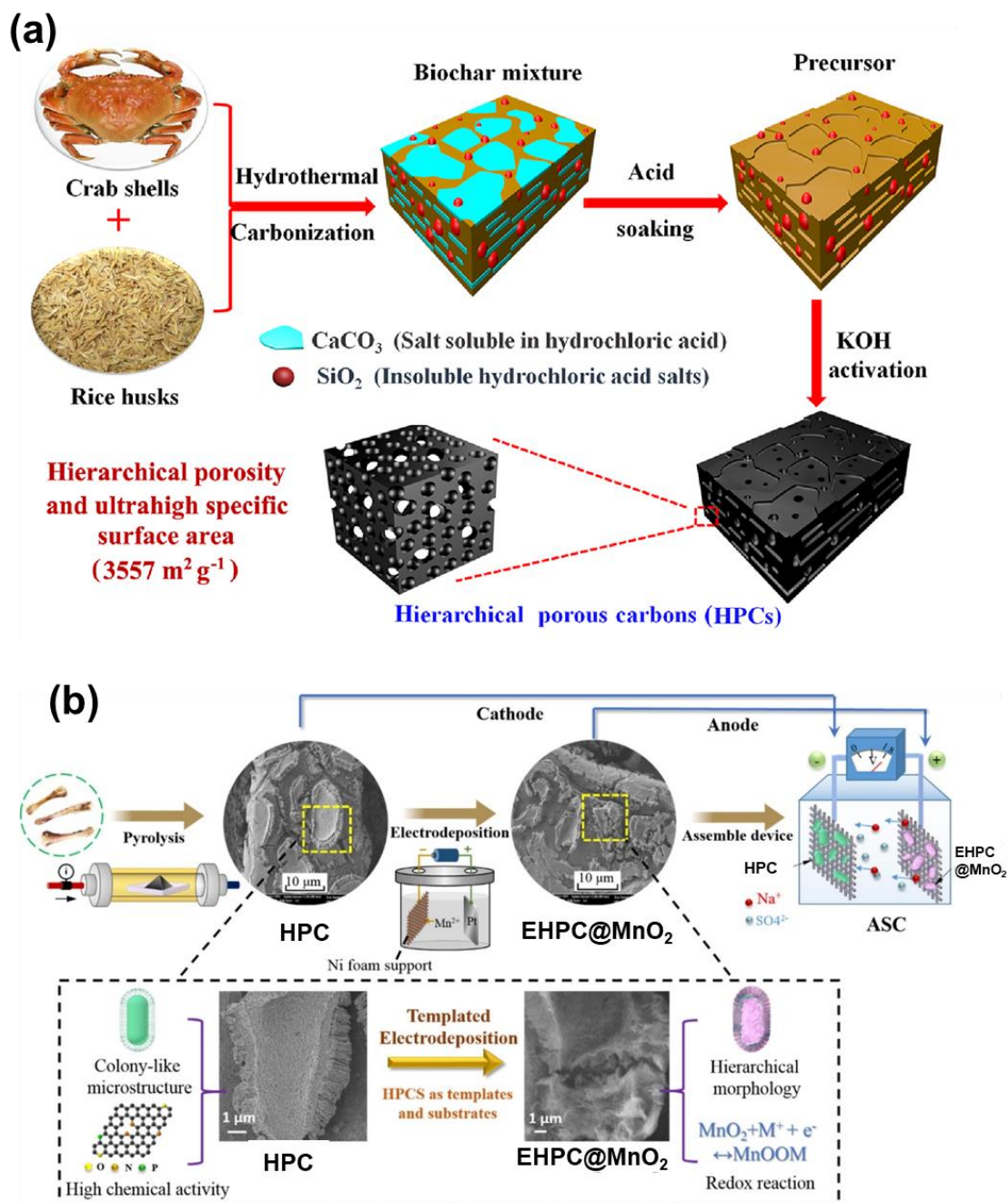


Fig. 7. (a) Schematic illustration of the preparation steps for mixed crab shell and rice husk biochar-based EHPC, (b) Chicken bones-based HPC and EHPC@MnO₂ composite electrodes preparation procedure for SCs. Reproduced with permission from Ref. [96] and [24].

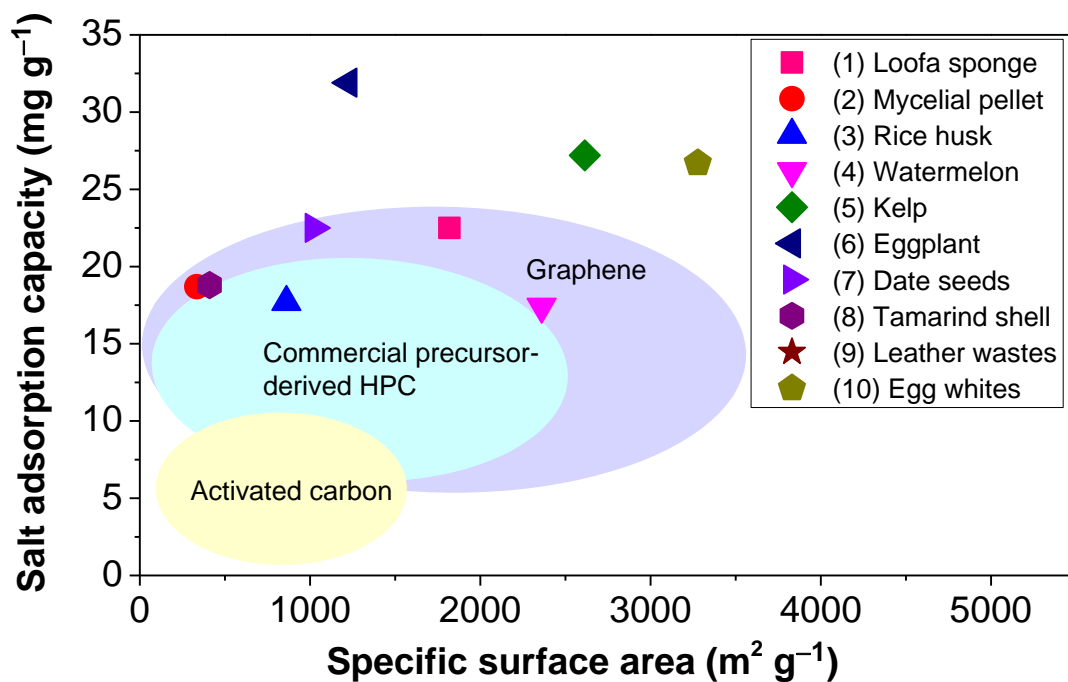


Fig. 8. Comparison of salt adsorption capacities of HPCs/EHPCs derived from different biomass (1) loofa sponge [116], (2) mycelial pellet [140], (3) rice husk [64], (4) watermelon peel [111], (5) kelp [114], (6) eggplant [112], (7) date seeds [137], (8) Tamarind shell [121], (9) leather wastes [139], (10) egg whites [120] with other materials, i.e., activated carbon [115, 143-145], commercial precursor-based HPC [146-151], and graphene [152-157].

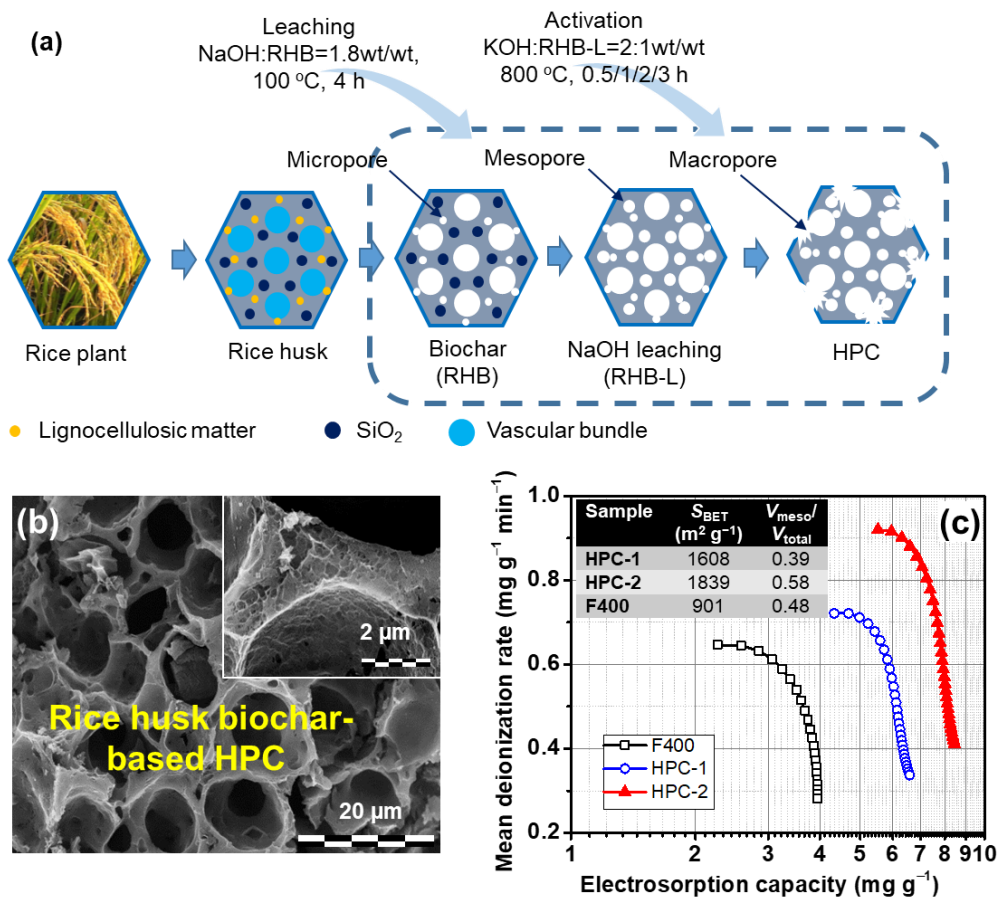


Fig. 9. Applications of rice husk biochar-based EHPC for electro sorption application (a) fabrication process of HPC, (b) SEM images and (c) CDI Ragone plots and eggplant biochar-based HPC Ref. [115].