Antidiabetic and Antioxidant Properties of Bilberry 
(Vaccinium myrtillus Linn.) Fruit and Their 
Chemical Composition

A. Güder¹*, M. Gür², and M. S. Engin³

ABSTRACT

Bilberry [Vaccinium myrtillus Linn. (Ericaceae)] fruit (VMF) has been traditionally 
used for treatment of bladder stones, biliary disorders, scurvy, coughs, and lung 
tuberculosis. VMF may have some pharmaceutical properties owing to these uses, but in vivo 
and in vitro studies are limited for clarification of medicinal activity and its 
antidiabetic and antioxidant properties are not investigated in detail. Anti-amylase, anti-
glucosidase, and antioxidant activities of methanol (ME), ethanol (EE), acetone (AE), and 
water (WE) extracts of VMF were investigated. In addition, some chemical compositions 
were determined by using spectrophotometric methods. Antidiabetic and antioxidant 
activities of extracts were studied by using different tests such as α-amylase and α-
glucosidase inhibitors, total antioxidant, DPPH scavenging activities according to in vitro 
methods at different concentrations (10-250 µg mL⁻¹). Compared with the standards, ME, 
WE, and EE showed strong total antioxidant activities with IC₅₀ (µg/mL) values of 
24.46±0.34, 25.24±0.78, and 27.48±0.60, respectively. At the same time, ME (IC₅₀ 
61.38±1.40 µg mL⁻¹) and EE (IC₅₀ 65.52±1.19 µg mL⁻¹) demonstrated very effective 
inhibitory activity against α-amylase and moderate inhibitory activity against α-
glucosidase. All extracts also showed high reducing power, metal chelating activity, 
superoxide anion, DPPH radical, and H₂O₂ scavenging activities. Important relationships 
were found between biological activity and chemical composition by statistical analyses. 
The VMF can be used as an antidiabetic and antioxidant source in medicinal and 
pharmaceutical areas due to its chemical composition. Anthocyanin contents may 
influence the anti-amylase inhibition activity more than phenolic and flavonoid contents.

Keywords: Alpha-amylase, Anthocyanin, Glucosidase inhibition, Flavonoid, Phenol.

INTRODUCTION

Diabetes mellitus is a metabolic disorder characterized as two types: i) Type I (insulin 
dependent diabetes mellitus/IDDM) is congenital. ii) Type II (noninsulin-dependent 
diabetes mellitus/NIDDM) is acquired later in life due to inability of glucose transport from 
the bloodstream into cells. The effects of diabetes mellitus can be long-term damage, 
dysfunction, and failure of various organs. The type II diabetes accounts for approximately 
90% of all diabetes worldwide (Nickavar et al., 2008). 

Inhibitors of α-amylases, which are used to modify or control the activity of this enzyme, 
have medical applications such as the influence on blood glucose, serum insulin and 
starch loading tests in animals and man (Puls and Keup, 1973). Screening of α-glucosidase 
inhibitors in plants and other synthetic sources are increased. For example, several plants that 
are commonly used to treat diabetes in the

¹Department of Medical Services and Techniques, Vocational High School of Health Services, Giresun University, Giresun, Turkey. 
*Corresponding author; e-mail: aytac.guder@giresun.edu.tr 
²Department of Forest Industry Engineering, Faculty of Forestry, Kastamonu University, Kastamonu, Turkey. 
³Faculty of Engineering, Department of Food Engineering, Giresun University, Giresun, Turkey.
traditional systems of medicine have been explored by many research groups for investigating their chemical constituents, elemental analysis, and their role in diabetes management as well as pharmacological activities (Shukla et al., 2011).

Antioxidant properties are majorly used for determination of medicinal bioactive components (Mansour et al., 2013). Recently, the antioxidants that are used in food and medicinal industries gained considerable attention since the natural antioxidants are more beneficial to human health than the synthetic ones (Steffen et al., 2003). Epidemiological studies suggest that a reduced risk of cancer is associated with higher consumption of a phytochemical-rich diet that includes fruits and vegetables (Sadeghi et al., 2009). Natural plants have received much attention as sources of biologically active substances that have wide range of pharmacological activities such as antimicrobial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anticancer effects. Also, studies have focused on health functions of phenolic compounds, including flavonoids and anthocyanins (Salmanian et al., 2014).

Bilberry [Vaccinium myrtillus Linn. (Ericaceae)] fruit (VMF) is known as Çalı Çileği and Çoban Üzümü in Turkey and found in mountains and forests. The height of this shrubby perennial plant varies from 1 to 2 feet, its leaves are bright green and branches are alternating and elliptical. Its bell-shaped flowers are reddish or pink in color, bloom between the months of April and June producing blue-black or purple fruit. Even though it is encountered as a precious wild delicacy today, bilberry has been used as food for centuries in Turkey. More recently, bilberry fruit extracts have been used for the treatment of diarrhea, dysentery, and mouth and throat inflammations. Decoctioned bilberry leaves have been used to decrease blood sugar in diabetes (Baytop, 2000).

In this study, anti-amylase, anti-glucosidase, antioxidant activities, and chemical contents of VMF were investigated.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Chemicals**

All chemicals were analytical grade and obtained from either Sigma-Aldrich or Merck.

**Preparation of Fruit Materials and Extraction**

VMF was collected by the corresponding author in June 2011 from a plateau in Giresun, Turkey, and the specie of fruit was authenticated by Prof. Dr. Hamdi Güray Kutbay, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science and Art, Ondokuz Mayis University. After drying in an oven at 40°C, the samples were chopped by a hand blender. The small pieces were then subjected to extraction using Soxhlett apparatus for 24 hours, with absolute methanol, absolute ethanol, acetone, and water, successively. The extracts were filtered over Whatman No.1 paper. The extracts were evaporated to dryness; the filtrates were frozen and lyophilized in a lyophilizator (Christ Alpha 1–2 LD Plus) at -50°C and 10 μm Hg pressure. The residues were placed in a plastic flask, and kept at -30°C until used (Güder et al., 2014).

**Determination of Antidiabetic Activity**

**Assay of α-Amylase Inhibition**

*In vitro* α-amylase inhibition was studied by previously developed method (Bernfeld, 1955) with minor modifications. The extracts and acarbose (100 µL) were reacted with the α-amylase enzyme (EC 3.2.1.1) solution (200 µL) and phosphate buffer solution (PBS) (100 µL, 20 mM, and pH 6.9). The enzyme solution (0.5 unit mL⁻¹) was prepared by mixing 0.001 g of α-amylase in PBS (100 mL, 20 mM, pH 6.9) containing 6.7 mM sodium chloride. After incubation for 20 minutes, starch solution (100 µL, 0.5%) was added. The starch solution was obtained by boiling 0.25 g potato starch in 50 mL of deionized water for 15 minutes while stirring.
The same procedures were performed for control and the enzyme solution (200 µL) was replaced by PBS. The color reagent was a solution containing 3,5-dinitrosalicylic acid (20 mL, 96 mM), sodium potassium tartrate (5.31M) in sodium hydroxide (8.0 mL, 2.0M) and deionized water (12 mL). After incubation for 5 min, color reagent (500 µL) was added to all tubes and kept in water bath 25°C for 30 minutes. The absorbance was recorded at 540 nm using a spectrophotometer and α-amylase inhibition activities were expressed as IC₅₀ (the concentration required to inhibit α-amylase activity by 50%). The IC₅₀ values were determined by linear regression analysis using four different concentrations in triplicate and presented as the mean of the data.

Assay of α-Glucosidase Inhibition

Alpha-Glucosidase inhibition activity was determined according to the chromogenic method described by McCue et al. (2005), with minor modifications. The enzyme solution contained α-glucosidase (EC 3.2.1.20) solution (20 µL) (0.5 unit mL⁻¹) and PBS (120 µL, 0.1 M, pH 6.9). Later, p-nitrophenyl-α-D-glucopyranoside (5.0 mM) in the PBS was used as the substrate solution. Test samples and acarbose (10 µL) were dissolved at various concentrations in DMSO. They were mixed with enzyme solution and incubated for 15 minutes at 37°C. Substrate solution (20 µL) was added to the solution and incubated for 15 minutes. The reaction was terminated by adding sodium carbonate solution (80 µL, 0.2 M) and absorbance was measured at 405 nm. The α-glucosidase inhibition activities were expressed as IC₅₀.

Determination of Antioxidant Properties

Total Antioxidant Activity

Total antioxidant activities were determined via ferric thiocyanate (FTC) method (Mitsuda et al., 1996). Extracts and standard solutions were prepared by diluting the stock solution in PBS (2.5 mL, 0.04 M, pH 7.0) and these were added to linoleic acid emulsion (2.5 mL) in PBS (0.04M, pH 7.0). The linoleic acid emulsion was prepared by homogenizing linoleic acid (15.5 µL), Tween-20 (17.5 mg) as emulsifier, and PBS (5.0 mL, 0.04M, pH 7.0). Linoleic acid emulsion (2.5 mL) and PBS (2.5 mL, 0.04M, pH 7.0) were used for the control reaction. The reaction mixture (5.0 mL) was incubated at 37°C in polyethylene flasks. The peroxides, which were newly formed during linoleic acid peroxidation should oxidize Fe²⁺ to Fe³⁺, subsequently caused a complex formation with thiocyanate that has a maximum absorbance at 500 nm (Unicam UV2–100). The assay steps were repeated every 10 hours until reaching a maximum (80 hours). The inhibition values of lipid peroxidation were calculated as IC₅₀.

Ferric Ions (Fe³⁺) Reducing Antioxidant Power Assay (FRAP)

The reducing powers of samples (extracts) or standards were determined by the colorimetric method (Oyaizu, 1986). Solutions of (2.5 mL, 25-100 µg mL⁻¹) were mixed with PBS (2.5 mL, 0.2M, pH 6.6) and potassium ferricyanide (2.5 mL, 1.0%) and incubated at 50°C for 20 minutes. Aliquots of trichloroacetic acid (2.5 mL, 10%) was added to obtain the final reagent. Then, 2.5 mL of it was mixed with distilled water (2.5 mL) and FeCl₃ (0.5 mL, 0.1%). The Fe³⁺/Fe²⁺ transformation was investigated in the presence of extract or standard and the absorbance values were measured at 700 nm. Reducing power (%)= (Aₛ/Aₑ)×100

Where, Aₑ is the absorbance of the control and Aₛ is the absorbance of samples (extracts) or standards.

Superoxide Anion Radical Scavenging Activity

Measurement of superoxide anion radical (O₂⁻) scavenging activities were based on the previously developed method (Liu et al.,
1997). In these experiments, superoxide anion radicals were produced by NBT (1.0 mL, 50 µM) in PBS (0.1M, pH 7.4), NADH (1.0 mL, 78 µM) in PBS (0.1M, pH 7.4) and sample extracts (1.0 mL) were mixed. The reactions were started by adding PMS solutions (0.1 mL, 10 µM) in PBS (0.1M, pH 7.4) to the mixtures and incubated at 25°C for 5 minutes while measuring the absorbance at 560 nm by a spectrophotometer (Unicam UV2–100). The SC50 values (the concentration required for scavenging superoxide anion radical by 50%) were determined by linear regression analysis using five different concentrations in triplicate and presented as the mean of the data.

Hydrogen Peroxide Scavenging Activity

The hydrogen peroxide scavenging assay was carried out by the spectrophotometric procedure (Ruch et al., 1989). In this assay, a solution of H2O2 (40 mM) was prepared in PBS (0.1M, pH 7.4). Sample solutions were prepared in a concentration range of 5-100 µg mL-1 in PBS (3.4 mL, 0.1M, pH 7.4) and they were added to H2O2 solution (0.6 mL) mentioned above. Absorbance of the reaction mixture was recorded at 230 nm (Unicam UV2–100) and the results were expressed as SC50 by linear regression analysis.

DPPH Free Radical Scavenging Activity

The DPPH radical (DPPH•) scavenging capacities of extracts were studied by following a previous report (Blois, 1958). Serially diluted samples (200 µL) at the different concentrations (5-100 µg mL-1) were added to DPPH• solutions (2.8 mL, 0.2 mM) in ethanol. The mixtures were shaken forcefully and allowed to sit at room temperature for 30 min. Then, absorbance was recorded at 517 nm (Unicam UV2–100) and the results were expressed as SC50 by linear regression analysis.

Ferrous Metal Ions Chelating Activity

By following the method of Dinis et al. (1994), ferrous ion (Fe2+) chelating activity was measured via inhibition of the Fe2+-ferrozine complex which was formed after treating the test material with Fe2+ ions. Firstly, different concentrations of extract and standard solutions (25-100 µg mL-1, 0.4 mL) in ethanol were added to FeCl2 solution (0.1 mL, 2.0 mM). In order to initiate the reaction, ferrozine solution (0.1 mL, 5.0 mM) in ethanol was added. Then, the mixture was shaken vigorously and kept at room temperature for 10 min. The absorbance of the complex was measured by a spectrophotometer (Unicam UV2–100) at 562 nm. The percent inhibition of Fe2+-ferrozine complex formation was calculated by using the formula given below:

Ferrous ions chelating effect (%) = [1-(A s/A c)]×100

Where, A c is the absorbance of the control (contains only FeCl2 and ferrozine) and A s is the absorbance of the samples (extracts) and standards.

Determination of Total Phenolic Compounds

The total phenolic contents were analyzed by the colorimetric method (Dewanto et al., 2002). Stock solutions (1,000 µg mL-1) were prepared from the extracts. Each solution (125 µL) was mixed with distilled water (0.5 mL) and subsequently with FC reagent (125 µL). After 6 minutes, Na2CO3 solution (1.25 mL, 7.0%) was added into the mixture. Then, water was added to bring the total volume to 3.0 mL. The observed color during 90 minutes and the absorbance was measured by a spectrophotometer (Unicam UV2–100) at 760 nm. The total phenolic contents were expressed as microgram of catechin equivalent by using an equation that was obtained from standard catechin graph (0-250 µg mL-1) (r2 = 0.9988).
Determination of Total Flavonoid Contents

The total flavonoid contents were determined by using a modified colorimetric method described previously (Dewanto et al., 2002). Stock solutions (250 µL) were added to test tubes containing distilled water (1.25 mL) and subsequently NaNO$_2$ solutions (75 µL, 5.0%) were added to each of them. After 6 min, AlCl$_3$ solutions (150 µL, 10%) were added to the tubes and the mixtures were allowed to stay for 5 minutes before further addition of NaOH solution (0.5 mL, 1.0M). The absorbance values were read at 510 nm (Unicam UV2–100) immediately after bringing the total volume up to 2.5 mL with distilled water. Total flavonoid contents were expressed as microgram of catechin equivalent that was obtained from standard graph (0-250 µg mL) ($r^2=0.9968$).

Determination of Total Anthocyanin Contents

The total anthocyanin contents were determined according to pH differential method (Fuleki and Francis, 1968). The dried extracts (100 mg) were added to HCl (5.0 mL, 1.0%) centrifuged at 3,000 rpm for 10 minutes (MSE Mistral 2000, UK). Two supernatant tubes (0.2 mL) were prepared with buffer solutions having pH values of 1.0 (potassium chloride-HCl, 0.025M) and 4.5 (sodium acetate-HCl, 0.4M) respectively. Absorbance values were measured by using a spectrophotometer (Unicam UV2–100) at 520 and 700 nm. The following buffer solutions were used as blank tubes in this experiment.

Total anthocyanin contents in the extracts determined as mg L$^{-1}$ of cyanidin-3-glucoside (cyd-3-glu) equivalent using the following equation:

$$\text{Anthocyanin pigment (cyd - 3 - glu equivalent, } mg/L) = \frac{A \times MW_{cyd-3-glu} \times DF \times 10^3}{\varepsilon \times l}$$

Where, $A$: ($A_{520nm} - A_{700nm}$)$_{pH 1.0} - (A_{520nm} - A_{700nm})_{pH 4.5}$, $MW_{cyd-3-glu}$ (Molecular Weight of cyanidin-3-glucoside): 449.2 g mol$^{-1}$, $DF$: Dilution factor, $l$: Path length in cm, $\varepsilon$: 26,900 molar extinction coefficient for cyd-3-glu (L mol$^{-1}$ cm$^{-1}$), and $10^3$: factor for conversion from g to mg.

Statistical Analysis

The data was analyzed using the statistical software program SPSS 15.0 for Windows. All results were given as mean±standard deviation (SD). The potential correlation among the $\alpha$-amylase and $\alpha$-glucosidase enzyme inhibitions, antioxidant capacity, total phenol, flavonoid and anthocyanin contents were analyzed and differences at $P<0.05$ were considered as “significant”, $P<0.01$ “highly significant” and $P>0.05$ “non-significant”.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Alpha-amylase Inhibition Activity

Alpha-amylase is an enzyme which hydrolyzes starch molecules to give diverse products including dextrin and progressively smaller polymers composed of glucose units that cause hyperglycemia and development of type II diabetes mellitus (Shankaraiah and Reddy, 2011). In this study, the $\alpha$-amylase inhibitory activity of extracts were studied in a concentration range from 10 to 250 µg mL$^{-1}$ and compared with standard acarbose with an IC$_{50}$ value of 87.55±1.69 µg mL$^{-1}$. The IC$_{50}$ values of ME, EE, WE, and AE were found to be 61.38±1.40, 65.52±1.19, 96.64±1.73, and 281.53±2.02 µg mL$^{-1}$, respectively (Table 1) (P< 0.05). These
results made it clear that even if AE is not very effective α-amylase inhibitor compared to acarbose, ME, EE, and WE show appreciable α-amylase inhibitory effects. In a previous study, aqueous buffered extract solution of V. myrtillus leaf demonstrated very high α-amylase inhibition (Sales et al., 2012).

**Alpha-glucosidase Inhibition Activity**

An effective way of controlling diabetes mellitus, especially the Type II diabetes, involves preventing excessive rise of the blood glucose level by inhibiting the starch digestive enzymes. Alpha-glucosidase, which is a membrane-bound enzyme located in the epithelium of the small intestines, catalyzes the cleavage of glucose from disaccharides before absorption. Recent studies have reported that the retardation of α-glucosidase enzyme by inhibitors would be one of the most effective ways to control Type II diabetes (Chethan et al., 2008; Kunyanga et al., 2012). In this work, α-glucosidase inhibitory activities of bilberry extracts were compared with standard acarbose with an IC\textsubscript{50} value of 81.05±0.51 µg mL\textsuperscript{-1}. The IC\textsubscript{50} values of ME, EE, WE, and AE were found to be 138.41±1.05, 128.94±1.26, 140.47±1.33, and 313.18±3.94 µg mL\textsuperscript{-1}, respectively (Table 1) (P<0.05). These results show that ME, EE, and WE could be potential α-glucosidase inhibitors for diabetic disorder. Alpha-glucosidase inhibition activity of this plant material has been confirmed by researchers (Matsui et al., 2001).

**Total Antioxidant Activity**

Antioxidant activity of extracts was determined by ferric thiocyanate (FTC) method. This method indirectly measures the amount of peroxide, which is the primary product of lipid oxidation, produced during the initial stages of oxidation. Released peroxides cause oxidation of Fe\textsuperscript{2+} ions to Fe\textsuperscript{3+}, which later form a complex with SCN\textsuperscript{-} that has a maximum absorbance at 500 nm (Inatani et al., 1983). In the presence of antioxidants, Fe\textsuperscript{3+} ion formation becomes more difficult and, therefore, the absorbance of SCN\textsuperscript{-} complex is expected to be lower. The results of activity assays of extracts after 100 h incubation with linoleic acid emulsion are summarized as inhibition % in Figure 1. The IC\textsubscript{50} values of BHA, RUT, and TRO were found to be 33.15±0.77, 30.47±0.85, and 31.89±0.36 µg mL\textsuperscript{-1}, respectively (P<0.05). However, ME showed the most effective inhibition having the IC\textsubscript{50} value of 24.46±0.34 µg mL\textsuperscript{-1} and this difference was statistically highly significant (P<0.01). Similarly, EE, WE, and AE exhibited potential antioxidant activities with IC\textsubscript{50} values of 27.48±0.60, 25.24±0.78, and 35.78±0.23 µg mL\textsuperscript{-1}, respectively (Table 1). The performed antioxidant activity parameters have been

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<th>AIC \textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>GIC \textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>TAA \textsuperscript{a}</th>
<th>FRAP \textsuperscript{b}</th>
<th>FICA \textsuperscript{b}</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ME \textsuperscript{c}</td>
<td>61.38 ± 1.40</td>
<td>138.41 ± 1.05</td>
<td>24.46 ± 0.34</td>
<td>84.19 ± 1.11</td>
<td>90.28 ± 0.72</td>
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<tr>
<td>EE \textsuperscript{d}</td>
<td>65.52 ± 1.19</td>
<td>128.94 ± 1.26</td>
<td>27.48 ± 0.60</td>
<td>89.70 ± 1.01</td>
<td>89.34 ± 0.46</td>
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<tr>
<td>WE \textsuperscript{e}</td>
<td>96.64 ± 1.73</td>
<td>140.47 ± 1.33</td>
<td>25.24 ± 0.78</td>
<td>78.72 ± 0.54</td>
<td>91.82 ± 0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE \textsuperscript{f}</td>
<td>281.53 ± 2.02</td>
<td>313.18 ± 3.94</td>
<td>35.78 ± 0.23</td>
<td>76.37 ± 0.74</td>
<td>87.00 ± 0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acarbose</td>
<td>87.55 ± 1.69</td>
<td>81.05 ± 0.51</td>
<td>–</td>
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<td>–</td>
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<tr>
<td>BHA \textsuperscript{g}</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>33.15 ± 0.77</td>
<td>71.97 ± 0.27</td>
<td>84.45 ± 0.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>RUT \textsuperscript{h}</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>30.47 ± 0.85</td>
<td>92.74 ± 1.29</td>
<td>87.67 ± 0.75</td>
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<tr>
<td>TRO \textsuperscript{i}</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>31.89 ± 0.36</td>
<td>53.76 ± 0.92</td>
<td>69.77 ± 0.92</td>
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</table>

\textsuperscript{a} IC\textsubscript{50} values (µg mL\textsuperscript{-1}); \textsuperscript{b} Activity (%); \textsuperscript{c} Methanol Extract; \textsuperscript{d} Ethanol Extract; \textsuperscript{e} Water Extract; \textsuperscript{f} Acetone Extract; \textsuperscript{g} Butylated HydroxyAnisole; \textsuperscript{h} Rutin; \textsuperscript{i} Trolox (P<0.05).
Fruit Properties of Bilberry

Figure 1. Total antioxidant activities of *Vaccinium myrtillus* fruit extracts and standards in the linoleic acid emulsion system at the same concentration (50 µg mL⁻¹). ME: Methanol Extract; EE: Ethanol Extract; WE: Water Extract; AE: Acetone Extract; BHA: Butylated HydroxyAnisole; RUT: Rutin, and TRO: Trolox. Note: Left axis for control and right axis for samples and standards.

found higher than previous studies (Faria *et al.*, 2005; Burdulis *et al.*, 2009). This difference may be due to the chemical composition. However, further studies are needed on the isolation and characterization of individual phenolic compounds to elucidate their different antioxidant mechanisms and the existence of possible synergism, if any, among the compounds.

**Ferric Reducing Antioxidant Power Capacity**

The reducing capacity of a compound may serve as a significant indicator of its potential antioxidant activity. In this assay, the yellow color of the test solution changes to various shades of green and blue depending on the reducing power of antioxidants. The presence of reductants such as antioxidants causes the reduction of the [Fe(CN)₆]³⁻ complex to the [Fe(CN)₆]⁴⁻. Therefore, Fe²⁺ can be monitored by measuring the formation of Perl’s Prussian Blue (Fe₄[Fe(CN)₆]₃) which has a maximum absorbance at 700 nm (Chung *et al.*, 2002; Güder and Korkmaz, 2012). The higher the absorbance of the reaction mixture, the bigger the reducing power. Figure 2 shows the reducing capability of extracts at the different concentrations compared to BHA, RUT, and TRO. Even though RUT had the highest reductive activity at the same concentration (100 µg mL⁻¹), all extracts demonstrated more efficient reducing power than BHA and TRO (*P* < 0.05). The reducing capacity (%) was in the following order: RUT (92.74 ±1.29) > EE (89.70±1.01) > ME (84.19±1.11) > WE (78.72±0.54) > AE (76.37±0.74) > BHA (71.97±0.27) > TRO (53.76±0.92) (Table 1).

**Superoxide Radical Anion Scavenging Activity**

Superoxide anion radicals (O₂⁻) are precursors to active free radicals that have potential to react with biological
Figure 2. Reducing powers (%) of *Vaccinium myrtillus* fruit extracts and standards. ME: Methanol Extract; EE: Ethanol Extract; WE: Water Extract; AE: Acetone Extract; BHA: Butylated HydroxyAnisole; RUT: Rutin, and TRO: Trolox.

macromolecules, thereby inducing tissue damage (Halliwell and Gutteridge, 1984). Even if superoxide anion radical itself is quite unreactive compared to the other radicals, the biological systems convert it into more reactive species (Winterbourn and Kettle, 2003). In Table 2, the superoxide anion radical scavenging activity of extracts was compared with the known antioxidants BHA, RUT, and TRO. Superoxide anion radical scavenging activities (SC$_{50}$) of ME, EE, and WE are stronger than BHA and RUT (P < 0.05). SC$_{50}$ of those samples was in the following order: WE (16.83±0.29)< EE (19.21±0.45)< AE (19.75±0.44)< ME (20.19±0.11)< BHA (24.05±0.58)< RUT (28.19±0.96).

**Hydrogen Peroxide Scavenging Activity**

It is known that hydrogen peroxide (H$_2$O$_2$) itself is not very reactive, but, sometimes, it can be toxic to cells by giving rise to

Table 2. Superoxide anion radical, hydrogen peroxide and dpff radical scavenging activities (SC$_{50}$) of *Vaccinium myrtillus* fruit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Superoxide Anion (µg mL$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>Hydrogen Peroxide (µg mL$^{-1}$)</th>
<th>DPPH radical (µg mL$^{-1}$)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ME$^{a}$</td>
<td>20.19 ± 0.11</td>
<td>64.73 ± 0.43</td>
<td>14.87 ± 0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE$^{b}$</td>
<td>19.21 ± 0.45</td>
<td>48.47 ± 0.57</td>
<td>15.14 ± 0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE$^{c}$</td>
<td>16.83 ± 0.29</td>
<td>46.46 ± 0.26</td>
<td>13.59 ± 0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE$^{d}$</td>
<td>19.75 ± 0.44</td>
<td>67.21 ± 0.89</td>
<td>25.40 ± 0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHA$^{e}$</td>
<td>24.05 ± 0.58</td>
<td>66.30 ± 0.75</td>
<td>15.96 ± 0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RUT$^{f}$</td>
<td>28.19 ± 0.96</td>
<td>47.35 ± 0.69</td>
<td>13.96 ± 0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRO$^{g}$</td>
<td>18.42 ± 0.27</td>
<td>71.80 ± 0.81</td>
<td>24.15 ± 0.21</td>
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</table>

$^{a}$ Methanol Extract; $^{b}$ Ethanol Extract; $^{c}$ Water Extract; $^{d}$ Acetone Extract; $^{e}$ Butylated HydroxyAnisole; $^{f}$ Rutin, $^{g}$ Trolox (P < 0.05).
hydroxyl radicals (\(\cdot\)OH). \(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2\) can cross membranes and slowly oxidize a number of biomolecules and compounds (Halliwell, 1991). Addition of \(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2\) to cells in culture can lead to formation of transition metal ion-dependent hydroxyl radical, mediating oxidative DNA damage. Therefore, removing hydrogen peroxide as well as superoxide anion radical is very important for protecting pharmaceuticals and food systems (Gülçin, 2010). \(\text{H}_2\text{O}_2\) scavenging ability of extracts is shown in Table 2 in comparison with that of BHA, RUT, and TRO (\(P<0.05\)). The \(\text{SC}_{50}\) values (\(\mu\)g mL\(^{-1}\)) of all extracts and standards decreased in the order of TRO (71.80±0.81)> AE (67.21±0.89)> BHA (66.30±0.75)> ME (64.73±0.43)> EE (48.47±0.57)> RUT (47.35±0.69)> WE (46.46±0.26).

**DPPH Free Radical Scavenging Activity**

DPPH’ is a stable free radical that accepts an electron or hydrogen radical to become a stable diamagnetic molecule (Soares et al., 1997). The concentration of DPPH’ is monitored at a characteristic wavelength in the presence of the sample. In its radical form, DPPH’ has a maximum absorbance at 517 nm, however, this absorbance decreases in the presence of antioxidants or other radical species due to the reaction between antioxidant molecules and/or the radicals with DPPH’. It is also visually noticeable as a color change from purple to yellow (Ancerewicz et al., 1998; Elmastaş et al., 2006). Table 2 shows that the \(\text{SC}_{50}\) values (\(\mu\)g mL\(^{-1}\)) of extracts and standards on the DPPH’ was in the following order: AE (25.40±0.13)> TRO (24.15±0.21)> BHA (15.96±0.44)> ME (15.14±0.30)> EE (14.87±0.52)> RUT (13.96±0.49)> WE (13.59±0.55) (\(P<0.05\)).

**Ferrous Ion Chelating Activity**

Ferrozine can quantitatively form from complexes with \(\text{Fe}^{2+}\) in this method. Since the intensity of the red color of this complex decreases in the presence of other chelating agents, one can assume that the complex formation is disrupted as a result of chelating. Therefore, monitoring the intensity of the color allows us to estimate the metal chelating activity of the coexisting chelators (Güder and Korkmaz, 2012). In this assay, the samples containing \(\text{Fe}^{2+}\)-ferrozine complex are treated with the extracts which have chelating activity and, therefore, capable of capturing ferrous ion from this complex. As seen in Figure 3, the formation of the \(\text{Fe}^{2+}\)-ferrozine complex is not complete in the presence of the extracts, indicating all of the extracts chelate with the \(\text{Fe}^{2+}\). At the concentration of 100 \(\mu\)g mL\(^{-1}\), the metal chelating activity (%) of all extracts and standards decreased (\(P<0.05\)) in the following order: WE (91.82±0.24)> ME (90.28±0.72)> EE (89.34±0.46)> RUT (87.67±0.75)> AE (87.00±0.26)> BHA (84.45±0.99)> TRO (69.77±0.92) (Table 1).

**Total Phenolic Contents**

Phenolic compounds have antioxidant properties due to their ability of scavenging free radicals and active oxygen species such as singlet oxygen (Hall and Cuppett, 1997). According to our findings (shown in Table 3), the catechin equivalents of total phenolic contents of extracts ranged from 116.67±1.37 to 182.33±1.40 \(\mu\)g in 1 mg of dried extracts (\(P<0.05\)). These phenolic compounds may directly contribute to the antioxidative activity (Elmastaş et al., 2006). On the other hand, some others found no such relationship between antioxidant activity and total phenolic content since other compounds can be responsible for the antioxidant activity (Maillard and Berset, 1995; Yang et al., 2002). Our findings also suggest that there is no correlation between antioxidant activity and total phenolic contents. The phenolic and flavonoid contents of VMF are compatible with literature data (Vučić et al., 2013).
Figure 3. Metal chelating activities of extracts and standards on ferrous ions at different concentrations (25-100 µg mL\(^{-1}\)). ME: Methanol Extract; EE: Ethanol Extract; WE: Water Extract; AE: Acetone Extract; BHA: Butylated HydroxyAnisole; RUT: Rutin, and TRO: Trolox.

Table 3. Total phenol, flavonoid and anthocyanins contents of Vaccinium myrtillus fruit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total phenols(^a)</th>
<th>Total flavonoids(^a)</th>
<th>Total anthocyanins(^b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ME(^c)</td>
<td>137.07 ± 1.45</td>
<td>26.51 ± 0.25</td>
<td>16.87 ± 0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EE(^d)</td>
<td>139.27 ± 1.37</td>
<td>29.45 ± 0.13</td>
<td>13.69 ± 0.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WE(^e)</td>
<td>182.33 ± 1.40</td>
<td>37.49 ± 0.59</td>
<td>14.86 ± 0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AE(^f)</td>
<td>116.67 ± 1.37</td>
<td>23.94 ± 0.11</td>
<td>10.52 ± 0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) µg mg\(^{-1}\) catechin equivalent; \(^b\) mg L\(^{-1}\) cyanidin-3-glucoside equivalent; \(^c\) Methanol Extract; \(^d\) Ethanol Extract; \(^e\) Water Extract; \(^f\) Acetone Extract (P< 0.05).

Total Flavonoid Contents

Flavonoids are very important plant constituents because of having active hydroxyl groups and, therefore, antioxidant activity (Kumar et al., 2008). Flavonoids are not only responsible for giving fruits and vegetables various red, blue, or violet colors, but also are related to a group of bioactive compounds called stilbenes (Hui, 2006). In this work, the total flavonoid contents were expressed as µg of catechin equivalents mg\(^{-1}\) of the dried extracts. As shown in the Table 3, the highest flavonoid content of 37.49±0.59 µg of catechin equivalents/mg of dried extracts was observed in the WE and the lowest flavonoid content was observed in the AE i.e. 23.94±0.11 µg of catechin equivalents/mg of dried extracts. The order of total flavonoid content was found to be: WE (37.49±0.59)> EE (29.45±0.13)> ME (26.51±0.25)> AE (23.94±0.11) (P< 0.05).

Total Anthocyanin Contents

Anthocyanins and other flavonoids are regarded as important nutraceuticals mainly due to their antioxidant effects, which play a potential role in preventing various diseases associated with oxidative stress. Moreover,
flavonoids have also been used to modulate the activity of a wide range of enzymes and cell receptors (Andersen and Markham, 2006). Total anthocyanin contents in extracts found to be in a range from 10.52±0.13 to 16.87±0.24 mg L⁻¹ as cyanidin 3-glucoside equivalents (Table 3).

**Correlations between Different Compounds**

The correlation coefficient between antioxidant capacity and total anthocyanin contents was statistically significant (r= 0.960, P< 0.05), whereas the one between antioxidant capacity and total phenol contents was non-significant (r= 0.656, P< 0.05). Likewise, the correlation between antioxidant capacity and total flavonoid contents was non-significant (r= 0.573, P< 0.05). On the other hand, a positive correlation was found between total phenol and flavonoid contents (r= 0.984, P< 0.05).

The correlation between α-amylase inhibition activity and total anthocyanin content was statistically significant (r= 0.991, P< 0.05), while the ones between α-amylase inhibition and total phenol (r= 0.480, P< 0.05), flavonoid (r= 0.427, P< 0.05) were non-significant. Similarly, those between α-glucosidase inhibition activity and total phenol (r= 0.570, P< 0.05), flavonoid (r= 0.538, P< 0.05), anthocyanin (r= 0.838, P< 0.05) contents were non-significant.

**CONCLUSION**

VMF could be used as antidiabetic by inhibiting the amylase and glucosidase enzyme activities due to the presence of anthocyanins contents. VMF extracts have highly significant inhibitory effects on α-amylase and α-glucosidase enzymes, therefore, they can be used as natural therapeutic food for diabetes. All extracts of VMF showed strong antioxidant properties compared to different standards such as BHA, RUT, and TRO. There is a significant and linear relationship between the antioxidant activity and anthocyanin contents. As a result, VMF can be used as an easily accessible source of natural antioxidant and a possible supplement in food, pharmaceutical, and medical industry. Therefore, our future work is focused on isolation and characterization of the active biomolecules from VMF to evaluate their in vivo effects.

**REFERENCES**


خاصیت های ضد دیاپتی و آنتی اکسیدانی موهه قره یا بیل بری (Vaccinium myrtillus Linn.)

ا. گودر، م. گور، م. س. اکین

چکیده

میوه بیل بری (Vaccinium myrtillus Linn. (Ericaceae) به طور سنگین برای درمان سنگ مثانه، به نظر هایی صفرایی است که در این میوه به دلیل این مصرف، این میوه (VMF) ممکن است در خاصیت های دارویی باشد. اما بررسی های برای روشن کردن اثرات پزشکی آن در شرایط طبیعی زندگی و آزمایشگاهی محدود بوده و خاصیت های ضد دیاپتی و آنتی اکسیدانی آن به جزئیات برسی نشده است. در این پژوهش فعالیت های ضد آمیلاز، آنتی گلوکوسیداز و آنتی اکسیدانی عصاره گیاهی شده با استاندارد VME (مستو) ME (استون) و آپ (WE) بررسی شده. نیز، بعضی ترکیبات آن هم با استفاده از روش استکروفورم تیغین شد. اثرات ضد دیاپتی و آنتی اکسیدانی عصاره ها با استفاده از آزمون هوای مانند بار دارندگی آنفا آمیلاز و آنتی گلوکوسیداز و آنتی اکسیدانات کل، و فعالیت خنثی سازی (scavenging) میزان آنتی ایکسیدانی (پیشی فاری) در غلظت های مختلف (250-1000 میکروگرم در میلی لیتر) بررسی شد. در مقایسه با استانداردها، آنتی اکسیدانی کل نشان داد. حاصل مقادیر (µg/mL) آن به ترتیب برابر بود ± 0.34 ± 0.78 / ± 25.24 ± 0.78 / ± 24.46 ± 0.78 / ± 25.24 ± 0.19 و IC50 (µg/mL) 65.52 ± 1.20 ± 1.19 و ME (IC50) 65.52 ± 1.19 ± 0.60 و همکاری آنتی اکسیدانی بسیار مهیا بر علیه آنها آمیلاز و فعالیت باردارنگی متوسط علیه آنها (µg/mL) گلوکوسیداز نشان دادند. همچنین هم عصاره ها در خمیر کاهش زیبایی و فعالیت قلی لشات کردن فلات و آنتی اکسیدان (superoxide anion)، رادیکال (DPPH)، و فعالیت خنثی سازی توسط H2O2 برای دارنگی نیز که تجزیه و تحلیل آماری روابط مهمی میان فعالیت وزیکت و ترکیبات شیمیایی به دست آمد. بر این اساس، میوان از VMF به عنوان داروی ضد دیاپتی و آنتی اکسیدان استفاده کرد. نتیجه آنکه این نظر پژشکی و دارویی Function به لحاظ ترکیب شیمیایی منبع است فعالیت ضد دیاپتی و آنتی اکسیدان. همچنین، محیط آنتی سایبان ممکن است فعالیت باردارنگی آنها آمیلاز را بیشتر از محیط فنول و اکسائید دید تاثیر قرار دهد.