

STUDY OF POLYPHENOLS IN BROWN ALGAE

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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO FULFILL THE REQUIREMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF SCIENCE WITH HONOURS**

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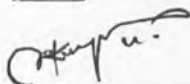
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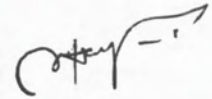
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation contains my original research work. Sources of findings reviewed herein have been duly acknowledged.

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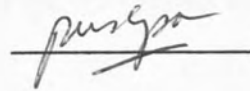
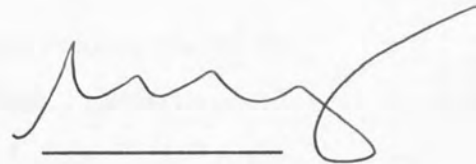
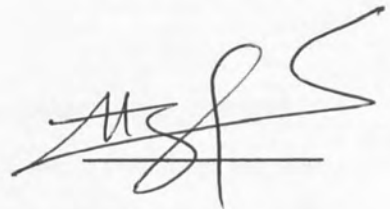
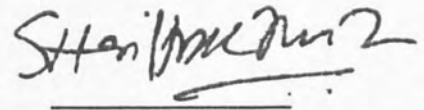
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ABSTRACT

Marine brown algae are known to produce various secondary metabolites such as terpenes, steroids, and polyphenols. It is also known that phloroglucinol-based polyphenols (phlorotannins) are found only in brown algae. Present investigation delves upon the chemical profiling, phenolic quantification and bioactive potential assessment (antibacterial and antioxidant activity) in four species of brown algae (*Sargassum* sp., *Padina* sp., *Turbinaria* sp., and *Dictyota* sp.). Results from chemical profiling revealed all brown algae contain phlorotannins and various non-polar metabolites. *Dictyota* sp. had more compounds compared to the other three species of brown algae. Phenolic content for CHCl₃ extracts of four species of brown algae were recorded at the range of 19-37 µg P per gram of partially dried seaweed; EtOAc extracts was recorded at the range of 27-40 µg P per gram of partially dried seaweed. Phenolic content was highest in *Dictyota* sp. < *Padina* sp. < *Turbinaria* sp. < *Sargassum* sp. Results obtained by DPPH assay was comparable with FRAP assay. Percentage of scavenging from DPPH assay indicated highest antioxidant potential in *Sargassum* sp. < *Padina* sp. < *Turbinaria* sp. < *Dictyota* sp. while FRAP assay indicated *Dictyota* sp. < *Sargassum* sp. < *Turbinaria* sp. < *Padina* sp. Among the four species of brown algae, the range of percentage radical scavenging from DPPH assay was 12-35% and the range of FRAP was 4.8- 9.5 mg AA/g. All four species possessed antibacterial properties when tested with environmental and pathogenic microbes most notably *Sargassum* sp. and *Dictyota* sp.



ABSTRAK

Alga perang marin diketahui menghasilkan pelbagai jenis sebatian metabolit sekunder seperti terpenes, steroids, dan polifenols. Juga diketahui bahawa phlorotannins (poliphenols berdasarkan phloroglucinol) hanya ditemui dalam alga perang. Kajian ini menyelidik profil kimia, perhitungan isi kandungan polifenols, dan penilaian potensi bioactive (antibacteria dan antioxidant) dalam empat spesies alga perang. (*Sargassum* sp., *Padina* sp., *Turbinaria* sp., and *Dictyota* sp.). Keputusan profil kimia menunjukkan algae perang mengandungi phlorotannins and pelbagai jenis metabolit tidak berkutub. *Dictyota* sp. mengandungi jenis sebatian yang lebih tinggi berbanding dengan tiga spesies yang lain. Isi kandungan fenolic dalam ekstrak CHCl_3 mencatatkan julat antara 19-37 mg P per gram alga; ekstrak EtOAc mencatatkan julat antara 27-40 mg P per gram alga. Isi kandungan fenolic adalah paling tinggi dalam *Dictyota* sp. < *Padina* sp. < *Turbinaria* sp. < *Sargassum* sp. Keputusan ujian antioxidant menggunakan ujian DPPH dan ujian FRAP menunjukkan perbezaan. Ujian DPPH menunjukkan potensi antioxidant paling tinggi dalam *Sargassum* sp. < *Padina* sp. < *Turbinaria* sp. < *Dictyota* sp. manakala ujian FRAP menunjukkan *Dictyota* sp. < *Sargassum* sp. < *Turbinaria* sp. < *Padina* sp. Keempat-empat spesies alga perang menunjukkan aktiviti antibacterial terhadap bakteria persekitran dan mikrob patogenik yang diuji terutamanya *Sargassum* sp. dan *Dictyota* sp.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS & SYMBOLS

MeOH	methanol
EtOH	ethanol
EtOAc	ethyl acetate
H ₂ O	water
HCl	hydrochloric acid
H ₂ SO ₄	sulphuric acid
NaCl	sodium chloride
Na ₂ SO ₄	anhydrous sodium sulphate
CHCl ₃	chloroform
CH ₃ COOH	acetic acid
DPPH	2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl
TLC	thin layer chromatography
HPLC	high performance liquid chromatography
UV	ultraviolet
R _f	mobility relative to front
v/v	volume to volume
°C	degree Celsius
nm	nanometre
Da	Dalton
mg	milligram
mL	millilitre



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Seaweeds

Seaweeds, also known as macroalgae show a wide range of growth forms and structures. However, there are several unifying features among seaweeds. Seaweeds lack true leaves, stems, and roots. The body of seaweeds is known as the thallus, whether it is filaments, thin leafy sheets, crusty cushions, or giant kelps. The leafy, flattened portions of the thallus are known as blades. This increases the surface area and is the main photosynthetic regions. Pneumatocysts are gas filled bladders aiding in buoyancy. Some species possess stipes, from which blades originate giving structural support like a stem. The holdfast, which is a structure looks like roots, holds the thallus to the substrates (Lee, 1999).

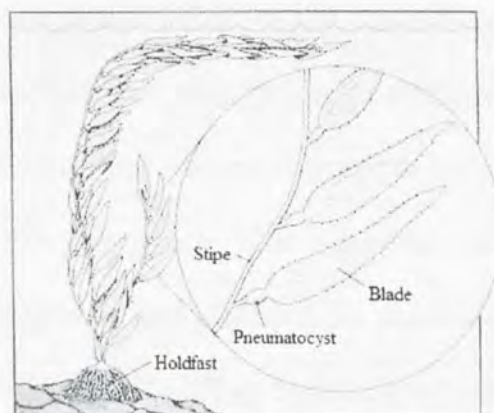


Figure 1.1 General structure of seaweed (Source:Castro and Huber, 2003)

Macroalgae consist of three groups of multicellular algae: Rhodophyta (red algae), Chlorophyta (green algae), and Phaeophyta (brown algae). Rhodophyta consists the most diverse species of marine algae compared to marine green and brown algae. They are characterized by having red pigments called phycobilins. Chlorophyta, commonly known as green algae are found mostly in freshwater and terrestrial environment. However, there are also marine species which dominated coastal waters. They can be easily identified by its green colouration as results of the chlorophyll pigments. Phaeophyta or the brown algae has a characteristic olive green to brownish colour. This is caused by the preponderance of yellow-brown pigments, the fucoxanthin over chlorophyll. Almost all species are marine, consists of some of the largest and most complex seaweeds, like the kelps.

Seaweeds have various economic importances. The obvious use is as food source. People from all over the world had discovered many edible algae. The most popular is “Nori” which is dried seaweed used in sushi wrapping and various Japanese cuisine. The farming or mariculture of seaweed is a big business in China, Japan, Korea and other nations (Lee, 1999). Besides as a food source, a few gelatinous chemicals called phycocolloids are extracted for manufacturing various products. Algin, which is a type of phycocolloids are use extensively in manufacturing dairy products. It is used as stabilizer and emulsifier in ice cream, cheese and cake toppings. It is also used in manufacturing pharmaceutical products. Carrageenan generally extracted from *Eucheuma* species can also serve the purpose of algin. Another phycocolloids, which is agar, is typically used for pharmaceutical and microbiology purposes. It is used to make culture medium for microbial culturing.



Besides the abundance of phycocolloids produced by various marine algae, most of them also produce various secondary metabolites. These metabolites do not participate directly in the growth, development and reproduction of the organisms. These compounds are usually involved in mediating a diverse array of inter- and intraspecific interactions including predation, competition, mutualism, and reproductive processes, as well as interactions between organisms and their physical environment (Stachowicz, 2001).

Many red algae such as *Laurencia*, *Plocamium* and *Asperigopsis* are prolific producers of halogenated terpenes. Green algae species also produce various kinds of terpenes. Brown algae are unique by producing polyphenolic compounds known as phlorotannins (Amsler *et al.*, 1999) besides terpenes. All these terpenes and phenolics compounds possess various bioactive properties which had attracted the interest of many researchers. Various studies (Van Alstyne *et al.*, 2001) and research had been done to look into the potentials in these compounds for pharmaceutical, antifouling, chemical remediation and various other purposes.

1.2 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study were:

1. To obtain extracts and perform chemical profiling.
2. To quantify polyphenolic content in seaweed tissues.
3. To evaluate the antibacterial and antioxidant properties of the samples.



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Polyphenols

Polyphenols are compounds that are usually referred to as naturally occurring compounds containing multiple phenolic functionalities (Handique & Baruah, 2002). These compounds are commonly found in higher plants. An overview of polyphenolic compounds by Handique & Baruah (2002), suggested that polyphenols have significant chemical functions. For example, it can react with one-electron oxidants, which prevents formation of free radicals in a biological system. Polyphenols are also capable of interacting with available multiple polar functional groups for selective and unselective binding with biologically important molecules such as proteins. Because of its multiple phenol functionalities, they interact with proteins, and this results in precipitation of protein-polyphenol complexes. This process is the basis in the tanning process of leather.

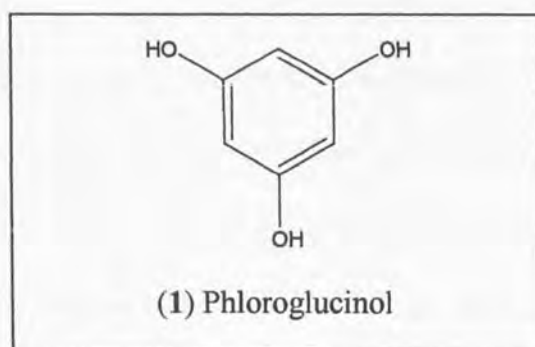
The classification of natural polyphenols is based on the types of building blocks that appear as repeated units. They are namely proanthocyanidin derivatives, galloyl and hexa hydroxydiphenyl ester derivatives, hydroxycinnamic acid derivatives, and phloroglucinol derivatives.



In this study, focus is placed on the phloroglucinol derivatives because polyphenols of marine brown algae are from this origin. Phloroglucinol derivatives are also known as phlorotannins.

2.2 Phlorotannins

Phlorotannins are secondary metabolites, polyphenolic compounds that are found only in marine brown algae (Paul *et al.*, 2001). Secondary metabolites are chemicals with no obvious function in the primary metabolic demands of the cell (Stachowicz, 2001). These polyphenolic compounds may function like terrestrial tannins by binding proteins and other macromolecules. However, structurally they are different compounds as compared to terrestrial tannins. They are complex polymers derived from a simple aromatic precursor, phloroglucinol (1,3,5-trihydroxybenzene) (1). They are formed from the condensation of both C-C and C-O coupling (Handique & Baruah, 2002). These metabolites are often termed phlorotannins to distinguish them from the terrestrial tannins (Paul *et al.*, 2001).



Like many secondary metabolites, phlorotannins have multiple roles, serving as cell wall strengtheners, feeding deterrents, digestibility reducers, antimicrobial agents, act as metal chelators, as well as absorbing UV radiation (Targett *et al.*, 1992).



2.2.1 Biosynthesis

Phenolic compound can be formed from primary metabolites of the cell by either the shikimate pathway or the polyketide pathway. In the shikimate pathway, carbohydrate is used as the starter, as for the polyketide pathway, it starts from acetyl and malonyl coenzyme A instead. When it comes to the production of phloroglucinol, which is the basic structure for various other phlorotannins compounds (Harborne, 1994), it is produced by the polyketide pathway (Figure 2.2). This pathway produces phenols with hydroxyl groups in the 1,3,5-positions.

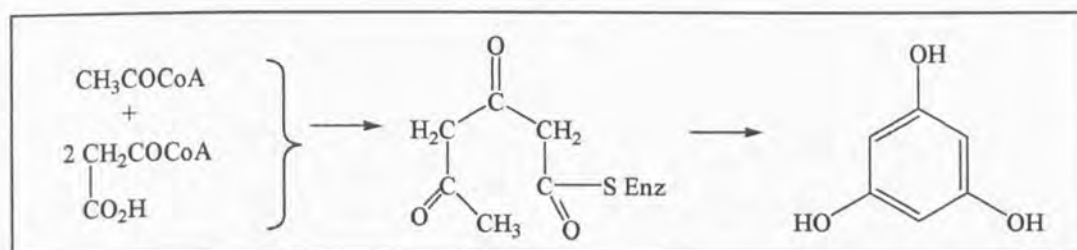


Figure 2.1 Biosynthesis of phloroglucinol by the polyketide pathway.

2.2.2 Characteristic and Occurrence of Phlorotannins

Phlorotannins span a wide range of molecular sizes, from 126Da to 650k Da. In some cases, phlorotannins may constitute up to 20% of a brown alga's dry mass. It can be divided into six specific groups (Fig. 2.3): fucols (2), phlorethols (3), fucophlorethols (4), fuhalols (5), isofuhalols (6) and eckols (7) (Targett *et al.*, 1992). Specific groups of phlorotannins are often characteristic of specific algal genera, for example, fucols in *Fucus* and eckols in *Ecklonia*. The characterization is based on the differences in the nature of the structural linkages binding the phlorotannin polymers and in the number of hydroxyl groups present.

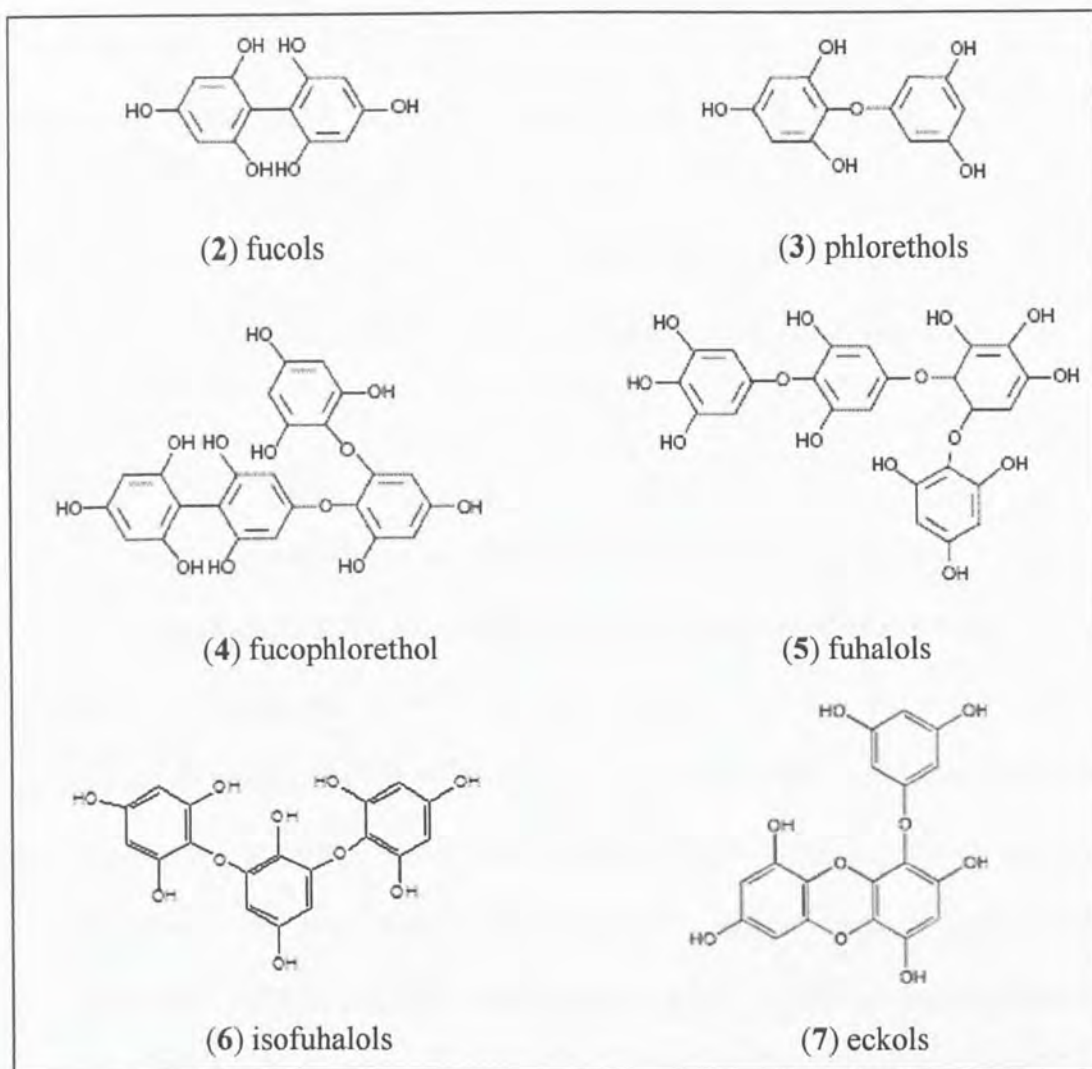


Figure 2.2 Six groups of phlorotannins.

A review by Targett & Arnold (2001) pointed out the major structural characteristics of all six types of phlorotannins. In fucols, phloroglucinol units are linked through aryl-aryl bonds. Fucols most often occur in Fucales and Ectocarpales. Phlorethols is characterized by its diaryl ether bonds linked between phloroglucinol units. It occurs in Fucales as well as Laminariales. Fucophlorethols as its names suggests occur primarily in Fucales and sporadically in Laminariales. They are dehydrooligomers of phloroglucinol which contain both direct carbon-carbon and diaryl ether bonds. Another primary type of phlorotannins occur in Fucales is fuhals.

It is ether-linked phloroglucinol units with an extra hydroxyl group on one unit, where the ether bonds are oriented *para* and *ortho*. Besides fuhalols, isofuhalols also form similar bonds and linkages, but vary a little where the ether bonds are *para*- and *meta*-orientated. Its occurrence is limited to the Laminariales. Lastly, eckols is characterised by its dehydrooligomerization of three phloroglucinol units and found only in Laminariales.

Based on this review, it can be concluded that Fucales consist the most diverse variety of phloroglucinol. This statement is further strengthened after another study by Glombitza & Hauperich (1997), 33 phlorotannins isolated from brown algae *Cystophora torulosa* from the order Fucales. These polyphenols includes compounds that belong to the group of fucols, branched fucophlorethols, difucol-containing fucophlorethols, and two entirely new subclasses, namely hydroxylated branched fucophlorethols and *bis*-fucophlorethols lacking a 1,2,3-triphenoxy-5-acetoxybenzene moiety. In *Sargassum spinuligerum*, other than fucophlorethols, a variety of fuhalols had been isolated (Glombitza *et al.*, 1997).

A study was conducted by Shibata *et al.* (2002a, b) on brown alga *Eisenia bicyclis* in the Japanese waters where phlorotannins were isolated by column and thin-layer chromatography. The isolated compounds (Fig. 2.4) were phloroglucinol (1), eckol (7), dieckol (8), 8, 8'-bieckol (9), and phlorofucofuroeckol A (10).



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