



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

***PURIFICATION OF MIRACULIN FROM MIRACLE FRUIT [SYNSEPALUM  
DULCIFICUM (SCHUMACH. & THONN.) DANIELL]***

***HE ZUXING***

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[*SYNSEPALUM DULCIFICUM* (SCHUMACH. & THONN.) DANIELL]**

**By  
HE ZUXING**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra  
Malaysia, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science**

**April 2015**

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of University Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

**PURIFICATION OF MIRACULIN FROM MIRACLE FRUIT  
[*SYNSEPALUM DULCIFICUM* (SCHUMACH. & THONN.) DANIELL]**

BY

**HE ZUXING**

**April 2015**

**Chairman : Arbakariya B. Ariff, Ph.D**  
**Faculty : Institute of Bioscience**

*Synsepalum dulcificum*, is a kind of berries, when eaten causes sour foods subsequently consumed to taste sweet. An efficient and low cost purification method to extract this protein needs to be developed. The pure miraculin is needed for characterization and identification of its function prior to commercialization. The potential use of the various parts of miracle fruit as well as the useful components could be extracted also needs to be explored to provide data of the importance of this fruit in economic point of view.

The physico-chemical properties of miracle fruit including percentage weight and nutritional elements (ash, crude protein, fat, total dietary fiber, carbohydrate, vitamin A and vitamin C) of miracle fruit were determined to give a full understanding of miracle fruit. Content of total anthocyanin in skin was determined using the pH-differential method. Content of phenolic in seed, skin and pulp was determined by using Folin-Ciocalteu colorimetric method. Antioxidant activity in seed, skin and pulp was analysed by DPPH free radical scavenging method. Study found that vitamin C content (40.1 mg/100 g FW) and total phenolic content (625.57 mg GAE/100 g FW) in miracle fruit flesh are very high and they together contribute to the high antioxidant activity of miracle fruit. At the same time, the sugar content is relatively low (5.6 g/100 g FW) in miracle fruit, making it become a healthy food, especially for the patients of diabetes and obesity, when considering its potential pharmaceutical benefits.

Seed oil of miracle fruit was extracted from fine powder seed of miracle fruit using Soxhlet Extractor with petroleum ether. Triacylglycerol profile was determined by HPLC, fatty acid composition was determined by GC analysis after methyl

esterification, thermal behavior was determined by Differential Scanning Calorimetry. Triacylglycerol profile and free fatty acid composition showed that the fatty acid in seed oil of miracle fruit was similar to the one of palm oil.

Miraculin is a sweet-inducing active protein that comes from miracle fruit and shows many benefits to human. However, optimization of efficient purification method of miraculin from miracle fruit has not been reported in the literature. Immobilized metal ion affinity chromatography (IMAC) with nickel-NTA was employed for miraculin purification from the extract of the pulp with optimization. The effect of extraction buffer on the amount of the extracted total protein was evaluated. This study demonstrated IMAC could be applied as one step process for purification of miraculin. The preferred conditions for high performance of IMAC with nickel-NTA were obtained with the use of crude extract at pH 7, Tri-HCl buffer at pH 7, and 300 mM imidazole with pH 8 used as elution buffer upon. The effect of optimizing crude extract was more important than optimizing the binding buffer. In elution stage, the effect of imidazole was more important than acetic acid. The IMAC charging with nickel was successfully used to purify miraculin from *S. dulcificum* with the yield and purity of 80.3% and 97.5%, respectively.

To reduce the purification cost, the possibility of using reverse micelle extraction (RME) for miraculin purification was also explored. Results from this study have demonstrated that reverse micelle formed by AOT/isooctane system can be applied as simple, convenient and low-cost process for the purification of miraculin from miracle fruit. Different effects for forward extraction and backward stripping were examined. Crude at pH 8 as the aqueous phase and 100 mM AOT/isooctane as the solvent phase during forward extraction; 0.5 M NaCl solution at pH 11, without isopropanol, as the aqueous phase during backward stripping were the optimal conditions to purify miraculin by the RME system. The maximum purification factor, purity and total purified miraculin obtained by RME were 1.63, 94.78% and 41.52 µg/mL, respectively.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Sarjana Sains

**PENULENAN "MIRACULIN" DARIPADA BUAH AJAIB [*SYNSEPALUM DULCIFICUM* (SCHUMACH. & THONN.) DANIELL]**

Oleh

**HE ZUXING**

**April 2015**

**Chairman : Arbakariya B. Ariff, Ph.D**  
**Faculty : Institute of Bioscience**

*Synsepalum dulcificum*, merupakan sejenis buah beri yang diketahui apabila dimakan akan menyebabkan makanan yang masam bertukar menjadi rasa manis. Kesan ini adalah disebabkan oleh glikoprotein, miraculin. Pada masa kini, pengkomersialan miraculin sedang dijalankan. Satu kaedah penulenan yang cepat, mudah, cekap dan kos rendah untuk mengekstrak protein miraculin amat diperlukan. Selain itu, penggunaan keseluruhan buah perlu diterokai untuk mencari potensi kegunaan buah ajaib. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menulenan miraculin secara terus daripada buah ajaib, mencirikan minyak daripada biji buah ajaib dan menentukan bioaktiviti seperti aktiviti antioksidan daripada bahagian-bahagian lain buah ajaib.

Bagi memberikan kefahaman yang lebih jelas berkenaan buah ajaib yang tidak boleh ditemui dalam kajian bertulis, beberapa sifat-sifat fizik-kimia termasuk peratus berat dan unsur-unsur nutrisi (abu, protein kasar, lemak, jumlah serat dietari, karbohidrat, vitamin A dan vitamin C) buah ajaib telah ditentukan. Jumlah kandungan antosianin dalam kulit ditentukan dengan menggunakan kaedah pembezaan pH. Kandungan fenol di dalam benih, kulit dan pulpa ditentukan dengan menggunakan kaedah kolorimetrik Folin-Ciocalteu. Aktiviti antioksidan di dalam benih, kulit dan pulpa dianalisis dengan menggunakan kaedah pemerangkapan radikal bebas DPPH. Kajian mendapati bahawa kandungan vitamin C dan kandungan fenolik dalam isi buah ajaib adalah sangat tinggi yang menyumbang kepada aktiviti antioksidan yang tinggi. Di samping itu, kandungan gula yang agak rendah dalam buah ajaib menjadikannya penting

sebagai makanan yang sihat, terutama bagi pesakit diabetes dan obesiti dengan mempertimbangkan potensinya sebagai bahan farmaseutik yang bermanfaat.

Minyak biji buah ajaib diekstrak daripada serbuk halus biji buah ajaib dengan menggunakan pemerah Soxhlet bersama eter petroleum. Profil trigliserida ditentukan oleh HPLC, komposisi asid lemak ditentukan oleh analisis GC selepas pengesteran metil, sifat haba ditentukan dengan kalorimeter pengimbasan perbezaan. Profil trigliserida dan komposisi asid lemak bebas menunjukkan bahawa asid lemak dalam minyak biji buah ajaib adalah sama dengan minyak sawit.

Miraculin adalah protein aktif yang merangsangkan rasa manis buah ajaib dan menunjukkan banyak faedah kepada manusia. Walau bagaimanapun, kaedah penulenan miraculin dari buah ajaib yang cekap tidak pernah dilaporkan. Kromatografi afiniti logam ion terikat (IMAC) dengan nikel-NTA digunakan untuk penulenan miraculin daripada ekstrak pulpa dengan pengoptimuman. Kesan penggunaan penimbal dalam pengekstrakan keatas jumlah protein yang diekstrak juga dianalisis. Kajian ini menunjukkan IMAC boleh digunakan sebagai salah satu kaedah untuk proses penulenan miraculin. Keputusan kajian menunjukkan pengaruh pH penimbal ikatan, pH ekstrak mentah dan kepekatan imidazole dalam penimbal elusi pada prestasi IMAC dengan nikel-NTA. Kesan pengoptimuman ekstrak mentah adalah lebih penting daripada pengoptimuman penimbal ikatan. Pada peringkat elusi, kesan imidazole adalah lebih penting daripada asid asetik.

Demi mengurangkan kos penulenan, penggunaan "reverse micelle" untuk penulenan miraculin juga diterokai. Hasil daripada kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa "reverse micelle" yang dibina daripada sistem AOT/isooktana boleh digunakan sebagai proses yang mudah, cekap dan kos rendah untuk penulenan miraculin daripada buah ajaib. Kesan yang berbeza untuk pengekstrakan hadapan dan pengupasan belakang juga telah dikaji. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pH merupakan faktor yang penting bagi kaedah penulenan ini, manakala kepekatan AOT dan kepekatan NaCl juga menjejaskan angkali hasil dan peratus ketulenan.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 23 April 2015 to conduct the final examination of He Zuxing on his thesis entitled "Purification of Miraculin from Miracle Fruit [*Synsepalum dulcificum* (Schumach. & Thonn.) Daniell]" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>APPROVAL</b>	<b>VIII</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b>	<b>IX</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>XIII</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	<b>XIV</b>
<b>LIST OF APPENDICES</b>	<b>XVI</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b>	<b>XVII</b>

### CHAPTER

<b>1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>1</b>
	1.1 Background	1
	1.2 Objectives	2
<b>2</b>	<b>LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>3</b>
	2.1 <i>Synsepalum dulcificum</i>	3
	2.1.1 Background	3
	2.1.2 Usage of miracle fruit	4
	2.2 Physico-chemical properties of miracle fruit	5
	2.2.1 Seed oil of miracle fruit	5
	2.2.2 Antioxidants	6
	2.2.3 Phenolic compounds	7
	2.2.4 Anthocyanins	7
	2.3 Miraculin	9
	2.3.1 Sweet-inducing activity of miraculin	9
	2.3.2 Classification of miraculin	10
	2.3.3 Recent studies about miraculin	10
	2.4 Purification strategies for protein	10
	2.4.1 Chromatography technique	10
	2.4.2 Electrophoresis	11
	2.4.3 Liquid-liquid extraction	11
	2.5 Extraction of miraculin	12
	2.6 Purification of miraculin	12
	2.6.1 Immobilized metal affinity chromatography (IMAC)	12
	2.6.1.1 Ni-NTA technology	13
	2.6.1.2 Application of IMAC	16
	2.6.2 Reverse micelle extraction (RME)	17
	2.6.2.1 Formation of RME	20
	2.6.2.2 Application of RME	23
	2.6.3 Historical purification methods of miraculin	26
	2.7 Concluding remarks	26

<b>3</b>	<b>THE PHYTOCHEMICALS WITH ANTIOXIDANT PROPERTIES OF MIRACLE FRUIT <i>SYNSEPALUM DULCIFICUM</i></b>	<b>29</b>
	3.1 Introduction	29
	3.2 Materials and methods	31
	3.2.1 Miracle fruit	31
	3.2.2 Proximate physico-chemical analysis	31
	3.2.3 Determination of anthocyanin, total phenolic, and antioxidant	31
	3.2.3.1 Sample preparation	31
	3.2.3.2 Determination of total antioxidant	32
	3.2.3.3 Determination of phenolic content	32
	3.2.3.4 Determination of total anthocyanin content	32
	3.2.4 Characterization of seed oil of miracle fruit	33
	3.2.4.1 Seed oil extraction	33
	3.2.4.2 GC analysis of seed oil of miracle fruit	33
	3.2.4.3 Determination of thermal behaviour of seed oil of miracle fruit	34
	3.2.4.4 Acylglycerol composition	34
	3.3 Results and discussion	35
	3.3.1 Proximate chemical analysis	35
	3.3.2 Determination of antioxidant phenolic, and anthocyanin content	36
	3.3.3 Proximate analysis of seed oil of miracle fruit	39
	3.3.3.1 Melting and crystallizing behavior	39
	3.3.3.2 Fatty acid composition	40
	3.3.3.3 Triacylglycerol (TAG) composition analysis	43
	3.4 Summary	45
<b>4</b>	<b>SINGLE-STEP PURIFICATION OF MIRACULIN FROM <i>SYNSEPALUM DULCIFICUM</i> BY IMMOBILIZED METAL ION AFFINITY CHROMATOGRAPHY</b>	<b>47</b>
	4.1 Introduction	47
	4.2 Materials and methods	48
	4.2.1 Miracle fruits	48
	4.2.2 Preparation of miraculin extract	48
	4.2.3 Purification of miraculin using IMAC	48
	4.2.4 Reversed-phase high-performance liquid chromatography analysis	49
	4.2.5 Thin-layer chromatography analysis	49
	4.2.6 SDS-PAGE analysis	49
	4.2.7 Determination of protein content	50
	4.3 Results and discussion	51
	4.3.1 Influence of extraction buffer on protein extraction	51

4.3.2	Optimization of different parameters for miraculin purification using IMAC	52
4.3.2.1	Effect of different binding buffers	52
4.3.2.2	Effect of the pH of the crude extract	53
4.3.2.3	Effect of pH of the binding buffer	54
4.3.2.4	Effect of the type of elution buffer and the concentration of imidazole	55
4.3.3	Determination of the purity of the target fraction	57
4.4	Summary	61
<b>5</b>	<b>REVERSE MICELLAR EXTRACTION OF MIRACULIN FROM <i>SYNSEPALUM DULCIFICUM</i></b>	<b>63</b>
5.1	Introduction	63
5.2	Materials and methods	64
5.2.1	Miracle fruits and miraculin standard	64
5.2.2	Chemicals	64
5.2.3	Preparation of miraculin extract	64
5.2.4	Forward extraction	64
5.2.5	Backward stripping	65
5.2.6	Total protein assay	65
5.2.7	Reverse-Phase High Performance Liquid Chromatography (RP-HPLC) analysis	65
5.2.8	SDS-PAGE and silver staining	65
5.2.9	Definition and calculation of purification performance	66
5.3	Results and discussion	67
5.3.1	Effect of AOT concentration in forward extraction	67
5.3.2	Effect of pH of crude in forward extraction	69
5.3.3	Effect of isopropanol concentration in backward stripping	71
5.3.4	Effect of pH in backward stripping	73
5.3.5	Effect of salt concentration in backward stripping	75
5.3.6	Determination of the purity of miraculin after reverse micelle treatment	77
5.4	Summary	80
<b>6</b>	<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE STUDIES</b>	<b>81</b>
6.1	Conclusions	81
6.2	Recommendations for future work	82
	<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>83</b>
	<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>96</b>
	<b>BIODATA OF STUDENT</b>	<b>103</b>
	<b>LIST OF PUBLICATIONS</b>	<b>104</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	The commonly used surfactants, solvents and co-surfactants	21
2.2	Some enzymes/proteins studied in reverse micellar system	24
3.1	The percentage of water, pulp, seeds and skin contributed to fresh weight and freeze-dried weight of miracle fruit	35
3.2	Proximate chemical composition of miracle fruit fleshes	36
3.3	Total anthocyanin, phenolic, flavonoid and antioxidant content in different parts of miracle fruit	37
3.4	Fatty acid composition of miracle fruit seed oil and other plant oils	41
3.5	TAG profile of miracle fruit seed oil and some other plant oils. L, linoleic acid; Ln, linolenic acid; O, oleic acid; P, palmitic acid; M, myristic acid; S, stearic acid. Others include DAG and /or unidentified TAG. For MFSO, the DAG is 22.5% (Source: (Lee et al., 2013a; Lida et al., 2002)	44
4.1	Effect of ionic strength of extraction buffer on protein extraction	52
4.2	Effect of different elution buffers on elution volume using IMAC	56
4.3	Total yield and purity of miraculin under optimum IMAC conditions.	60
5.1	Total yield and purity of miraculin purified under highest purity reverse micelle condition	79



## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
2.1	Photograph of miracle fruit, showing its skin, pulp and seed	3
2.2	Commercialized tablets produced from miracle fruit	4
2.3	General structure of anthocyanidin	8
2.4	Schematic diagram of IMAC procedure	13
2.5a	Structure of Ni-IDA	15
2.5b	Structure of Ni-NTA	15
2.6a	Procedure of a single stage reverse micelle method	18
2.6b	Procedure of two stages of reverse micelle method	19
2.7	Schematic representation of biopolymer separation by reverse micelle method	20
2.8	Structure of surfactant	21
3.1	Photograph of fruit of <i>S. dulcificum</i>	29
3.2	DSC profile of miracle fruit seed oil	40
3.3	TAG profile of miracle fruit seed oil	43
4.1	RP-HPLC chromatography of three crude extract samples using different extraction buffers (0.2 M PBS pH 7, 0.2 M Tris-HCl pH 7, and 0.5 M NaCl pH 6.8)	51
4.2	Effect of type of buffer on adsorption of miraculin	53
4.3	Effect of pH of the crude extract on adsorption of miraculin	54
4.4	Effect of pH of the binding buffer on adsorption of miraculin	55

4.5	Effect of imidazole concentration in elution buffer on elution of miraculin	57
4.6	RP-HPLC chromatography of the target fraction. 0.3 mL of the target fraction was used	58
4.7	TLC chromatograms of (a) the crude extract and (b) the target fraction	59
4.8	SDS-PAGE gel of purified miraculin	59
5.1	Effect of different AOT concentrations in forward extraction stage	68
5.2	Effect of different pHs in crude on the efficiency of forward extraction stage	70
5.3	HPLC chromatography of miraculin modifying crude in pH 3 and pH 7 in forward extraction stage	71
5.4	Effect of different isopropanol concentrations in aqueous phase on the efficiency of backward extraction stage	72
5.5	Effect of different pHs in aqueous phase on the efficiency of backward extraction stage	74
5.6	Effect of different salt concentrations in aqueous phase on the efficiency of backward extraction stage	76
5.7	RP-HPLC chromatogram of miraculin using reverse micelle under highest purity conditions	77
5.8	SDS-PAGE silver staining gel of crude and purified miraculin	78

## LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix		Page
A	Trolox standard curve	96
B	Miraculin standard curve using HPLC	97
C	BSA standard curve using standard procedure with microtiter plate	98
D	BSA standard curve using microassay procedure with microtiter plate	100
E	RP-HPLC of miraculin standard in RME	101
F	Turbid aqueous phase in the optimization of NaCl concentration in RME	102

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABTS	2, 2'-azinobis(3-ethylbenzothiazoline-6-sulfonic acid)
AOT	Aerosol-OT
Ag-RP-HPLC	RP-HPLC combined with silver chromatography
ATPS	Aqueous two-phase systems
BSA	Bovine serum albumin
DPPH	2,2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl
DSC	Differential scanning calorimetric
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetra acetic acid
ELSD	Evaporative light scattering detector
ESR	Electron spin resonance
FA	Fatty acids
FAMEs	Fatty acid methyl ester
FDA	Food and Drug Administration
FID	Flame ionization detector
FRAP	Ferric reducing ability of plasma
FW	Fresh fruit weight
GAE	Gallic acid equivalents
GC	Gas chromatography
GLC	Gas-liquid chromatography
HPLC	High-performance liquid chromatography
IDA	Iminodiacetic acid
IMAC	Immobilized-Metal Affinity Chromatography
LDL	Low-density lipoprotein
MFSO	Miracle fruit seed oil
MPP	Dipalmitic-myristic acid
NTA	Nitilotriacetic acid
NUS	Neglected and underutilized species
OLL	Dilinoleic-oleic acid
OOL	Dioleic-linoleic acid
OOO	Oleic acid
ORAC	Oxygen radical absorbance capacity
pI	Isoelectric point value
PLL	Dilinoleic-palmitic acid
PLP	Dipalmitic-linoleic acid
POL	Palmitic-oleic-linoleic acid
POO	Dioleic-palmitic acid
POP	Dipalmitic-oleic acid
POS	Palmitic-oleic-stearic acid
PPP	Palmitic acid
PPS	Dipalmitic-stearic acid
PSS	Distearic-palmitic acid
RME	Reverse micelle extraction
RP-HPLC	Reversed-phase high-performance liquid chromatography
SOO	Dioleic-stearic acid
TAG	Triacylglycerols

TLC  
Trolox

Thin-layer chromatography  
(S)-(-)-6-hydroxy-2,5,7,8-tetramethylchroman-2-carboxylic  
acid



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

The miracle fruit, *Synsepalum dulcificum*, is an evergreen shrub which belongs to the *Sapotaceae* family and *Synsepalum* genus. Among the 53 species identified in this genus (Anderberg and Swenson, 2003; Ayensu, 1972), *Synsepalum dulcificum* is the most widely known species. The plant was first discovered in West Africa, from Ghana to Congo (Wang et al., 2011), where the native diet revolved around a few basic foods, mostly of sour taste (Sun et al., 2006b). The sweet inducing active ingredient in *S. dulcificum*, known as miraculin, is a glycoprotein which can make the sour taste substances such as citric acid, ascorbic acid, acetic acid and hydrochloric acid to be tasted as sweet after consumption (Gibbs et al., 1996). Thus, miraculin may be used as low-calorie sweeteners because it has such distinctive ability but has almost no calories (Kant, 2005).

Human has used plant oil for hundreds of years. Plant oil is widely used as cooking oils salad oils, liquid and solid shortenings, ingredients in bakery products and fried foods (Cunha and Oliveira, 2006). Plant oil is also used in soap making, emulsions, lubricants, polyurethanes, insulation and also substrate such as *Jatropha curcas* oil for biodiesel production (Foidl et al., 1996). Plant oil is also the essential oil that fulfill the requirement of potential pharmaceuticals and therapeutics. Essential oils have shown cancer inhibition activity to many kinds of human cancer cell lines including human liver tumor, glioma, gastric cancer and colon cancer (Edris, 2007). The oil can be extracted from the plant seed which may have the potential to be applied as edible oil and essential oil.

Most free radicals in chemicals, food, and even in living systems are produced from the processes of oxidation. Although free radicals are important in food and chemical material degradation, more than one hundred disorders or diseases in humans are associated with free radicals (Gorghiu et al., 2004; Jalil and Ismail, 2008; Ye and Song, 2008). Nucleic acids, proteins and lipids are easily oxidized by highly reactive free radical and oxygen species presence in biological systems, resulting in degenerative disease (Bourgeois, 2003). Antioxidants such as tocopherols, polyphenols, glutathione, and carotenoids significantly prevent or delay the oxidation of substrates that easily oxidable (Pisoschi et al., 2009).

Phenolics and their functional derivatives are the substances possessing an aromatic ring bearing one or more hydroxyl group. Phenolics play an important role as free radical scavengers and chelators of pro-oxidant metals in plant

secondary metabolites and thus preventing low-density lipoprotein oxidation and DNA strand scission or enhancing immune function (Shahidi and Naczki, 2003). Fruits and vegetables naturally contain abundant anthocyanins. According to Hertog et al. (1993), People intake anthocyanins about 200 mg per day in the United States while the other dietary flavonoids daily intake is only 20 to 25 mg. Moreover, anthocyanin content of foods has many possible health benefits and thus leads to an increasing concern. For example, a study led by Wang has shown that anthocyanins exhibited anti-carcinogenic activity against tumor types *in vivo* and multiple cancer cell types *in vitro* (Wang and Stoner, 2008).

The purification of miraculin has been studied by several researchers (Duhita et al., 2009; Duhita et al., 2011; Inglett et al., 1965; Theerasilp and Kurihara, 1988). Immobilized metal affinity chromatography (IMAC) was the most recent method used for the purification of miraculin from biological sources (Duhita et al., 2009). IMAC has been utilized for protein purification for decades. It is one of the powerful tools to purify target protein from the crude with a large amount of impurities in single step purification.

In the past few decades, reverse micelle has successfully been applied as a novel method for separating and purifying many biological products, thus attracting a lot of attention (Leser and Luisi, 1990; Ono et al., 1996). As reverse micelle provides a special microenvironment in a bulk organic medium that retain the structure of biomolecules (Ono et al., 1996), a biotechnology application of reverse micelle as an alternative for solvent extraction methods has been developed.

## 1.2 Objectives

The main objectives of the present study were as follows:

1. To characterize miracle fruit seed oil and physico-chemical properties of miracle fruit
2. To purify miraculin from miracle fruit extract using immobilized metal ion affinity chromatography (IMAC)
3. To purify miraculin from miracle fruit extract using reverse micelle extraction (RME) method

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