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Protein interactions of six tea plant extracts

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Polyphenols are a large group of natural organic compounds mainly found in plants, in whom they have diverse protective and metabolic functions. It's also known that phenolic compounds, especially tannins, interact with proteins in various significant and distinct ways. Tannins also complex proteins¹, which generally precipitates them and it's their most important industrially utilised characteristic. This study, which was a continuation of our previous work, focused on interactions of aqueous tea plant extracts with laccase from *Trametes versicolor* and β -amylase from *Ipomoea batatas*. Tea plants used in this study were *Satureja montana*, *Mentha piperita*, *Salvia officinalis*, *Matricaria chamomilla*, *Camellia sinensis* and *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*. Total phenolic content was determined using Folin-Ciocalteu reagent, which showed us that chosen plants vary considerably in their total phenolic content and the highest concentration was found to be in *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*. Protein interactions between tea plant extracts were measured using spectrophotometric, spectrofluorimetric and electrophoretic methods. These methods showed that tea plant extracts lead to various structural changes within the protein, nature of which require further research. Finally, it was also found that all tea plant extracts, except *Matricaria chamomilla* extract, reversibly precipitate β -amylase – whilst retaining most of its enzymatic activity after dissolving. Best results were obtained using *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* extract, which precipitated the highest quantity of β -amylase, with highest activity retention. Although being an interesting phenomenon, further research is necessary to determine the nature and importance of reversible tannic enzyme precipitation.

1. Adamczyk B, Salminen JP, Smolander A, Kitunen V. Precipitation of proteins by tannins: Effects of concentration, protein/tannin ratio and pH. *International Journal of Food Science and Technology*. 2012;47(4):875-878. Doi:10.1111/j.1365-2621.2011.02911.x