

REVIEW PAPER

Plant extract mediated biosynthesis of Al₂O₃ nanoparticles- a review on plant parts involved, characterization and applications

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ABSTRACT

Metal oxide nanoparticles (NPs) produced by green chemistry approaches have received notable attention because of their significant physico-chemical properties and their remarkable uses in the area of nanotechnology. Currently, the sustainable improvement of synthesizing NPs by distinctive parts of plant extract has become a major focus of scientists and researchers, because these NPs have a minimum detrimental effect on ecosystem and minimum noxiousness for the human health. Among the metal oxide nanoparticles, alumina nanoparticles (Al₂O₃ NPs) draw a special attention due to their significant applications in ceramics, textiles, drug delivery, catalysis, wastewater treatment and biosensor. Many natural biomolecules in plant extracts such as saponins, tannins, alkaloids, amino acids, enzymes, proteins, coumarins, polysaccharides, polyphenols, steroid and vitamins could be participated in bioreduction and stabilization of Al₂O₃ NPs. In the last decade, innumerable efforts were made to develop a sustainable eco-accommodating method of synthesis to avoid the perilous byproducts. This review focuses on the plants used for the green fabrication of Al₂O₃ NPs, their characterization methods and applications.

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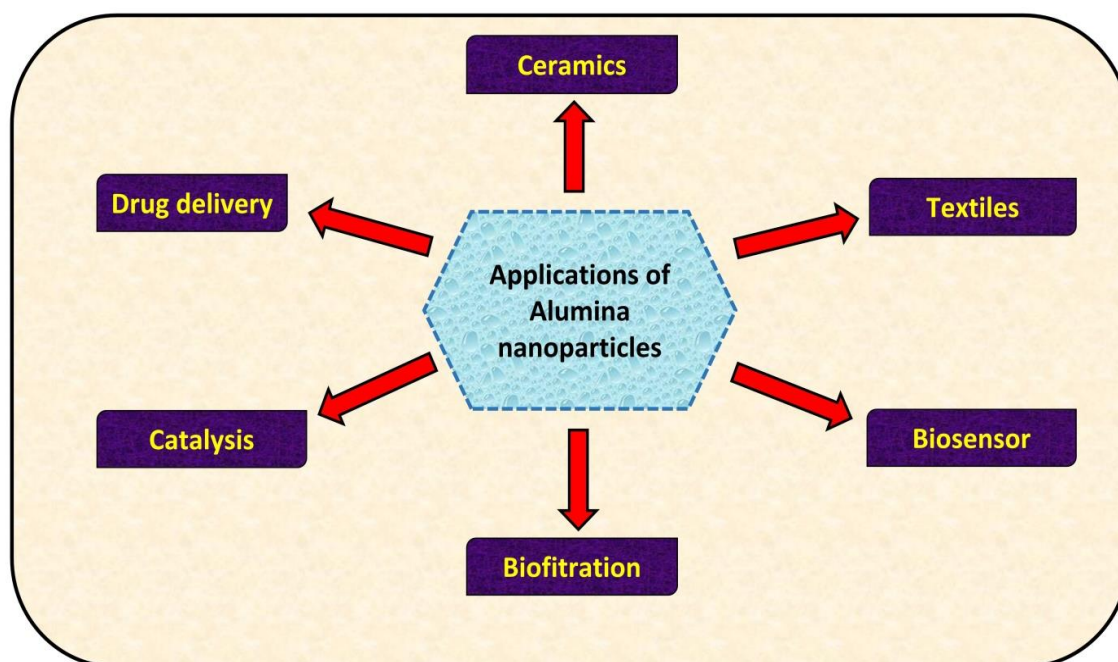
INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, metal oxide nanomaterials are found to have peculiar uses in the area of catalysis, ceramics, semiconductors, space industry, medical science, agriculture, capacitors, batteries, absorbents, defense, chemical and biological sensors, optoelectronics, textile and food industry [1-34]. Among all known metal oxide nanomaterials, Al₂O₃ NPs have drawn remarkable attention in the cutting edge of particular innovation, in the formulation and designing of recent antimicrobial agents for sustainable biomedical applications; because Al₂O₃ NPs are chemically bio-inert and hydrolytically more stable [35]. The biocompatibility of Al₂O₃ ceramic has already been mentioned by many researchers [36]. Al₂O₃ NPs with high purity were

the first bio-ceramics widely utilized in clinical application, and it was recommended that the lifespan of Al₂O₃ is longer than the concerned patients [37]. Accordingly, Al₂O₃ NPs have been utilized in several branches (Fig. 1.) consisting of structural ceramics [36], catalysis [38], textiles [39], wastewater treatment [40] and protein separation/purification [41]. Moreover, Al₂O₃ NPs also find extensive biomedical applications in biosensors [42], bio-filtration [41] and drug delivery [43].

Al₂O₃ NPs can be easily synthesized using several methods such as combustion [44], hydrothermal [45], laser ablation [46], mechanochemical [47], sol-gel [48], template method [49], microwave-assisted [50], pechini method [51], precipitation method [52], solvothermal [53], pyrolysis [54] and ball milling [55]. However, these synthetic routes are quite expensive, potentially hazardous and require

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Fig. 1. Various applications of Al_2O_3 NPs

long reaction time, perilous chemical precursors and special instruments for experimental work. Therefore, these routes create a bad impact on the ecosystem. This enhances the urgent need to replace or modify chemical preparation methodology and develop a sustainable, clean, non-toxic, cost effective and environmentally gracious process through green synthesis and other biological approaches. It is one of the promising pathways for fabrication of NPs as it is free from perilous chemicals as well as providing natural or herbal capping agents such as plant extracts, algae, fungi, bacteria, sugars, biodegradable polymers for the stabilization of Al_2O_3 NPs.

The present review article highlights the current scenario and knowledge concerning the capability of various plant materials for eco-benevolent synthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs and presents a database that future researchers may be based on the biosynthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs using various plant material sources.

GREEN SYNTHESIS OF Al_2O_3 NPs

Nowadays, several methods have been successfully used to fabricate the Al_2O_3 NPs, however, they have some demerits such as the higher cost of the method and not being eco-benevolent since they make lots of pollution in the ecosystem

because of using perilous solvents and toxic reducing agent. To mitigate these drawbacks, green chemistry approaches have been employed for the fabrication of Al_2O_3 NPs which are sustainable, less energy-intensive, eco-accommodating and increase the efficiency of the methods. Although chemical stabilizers are utilized more than plants part extract, that materials are not safe for the ecosystem and aspects of human health. The stabilization of Al_2O_3 NPs is dependent on biomolecules such as amino acids, enzymes, proteins, steroids, phenols, tannins, sugar and flavonoids, which are already present in the plant extracts having medicinal importance and are eco-benign [2-3]. The main principle in the green chemistry approaches (Fig. 2.) is that the phytoconstituents are present in the plant parts serve the dual role of a natural reducing agent and a NP stabilizer. Some plants are already reported to facilitate Al_2O_3 NPs biosynthesis and all of them are described in this review (Table 1). The various parts of plant such as leaves, seed fruit and flower are used to fabricate Al_2O_3 NPs in different morphologies and sizes by biological approaches. The aqua soluble heterocyclic constituents are mainly accountable for formation and stabilization of nanoparticles. Thereafter, the biosynthesized NPs need to be characterized by using numerous techniques.

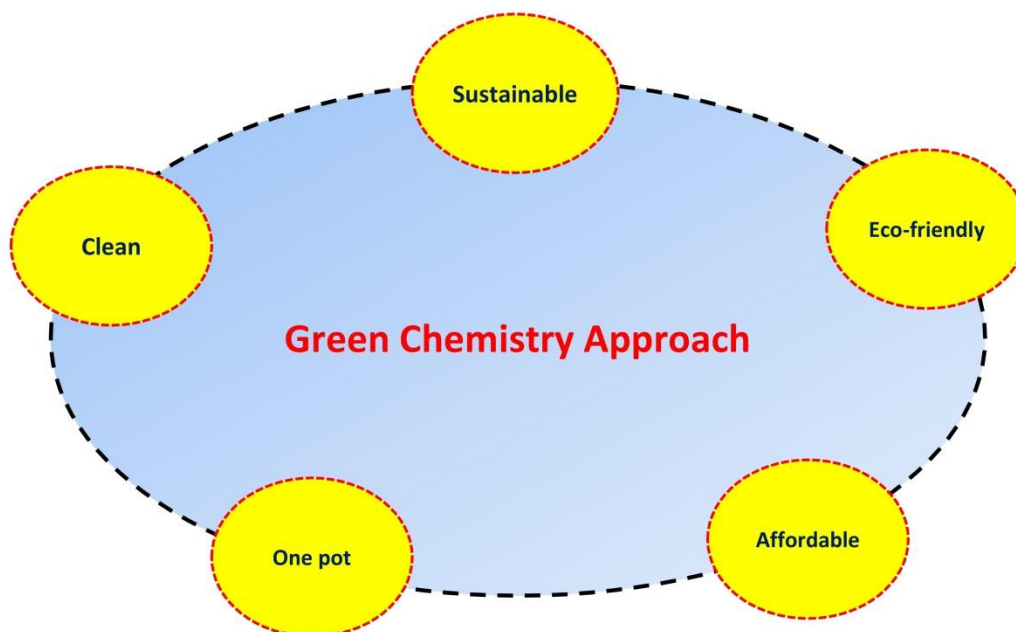


Fig. 2. Importance of green chemistry

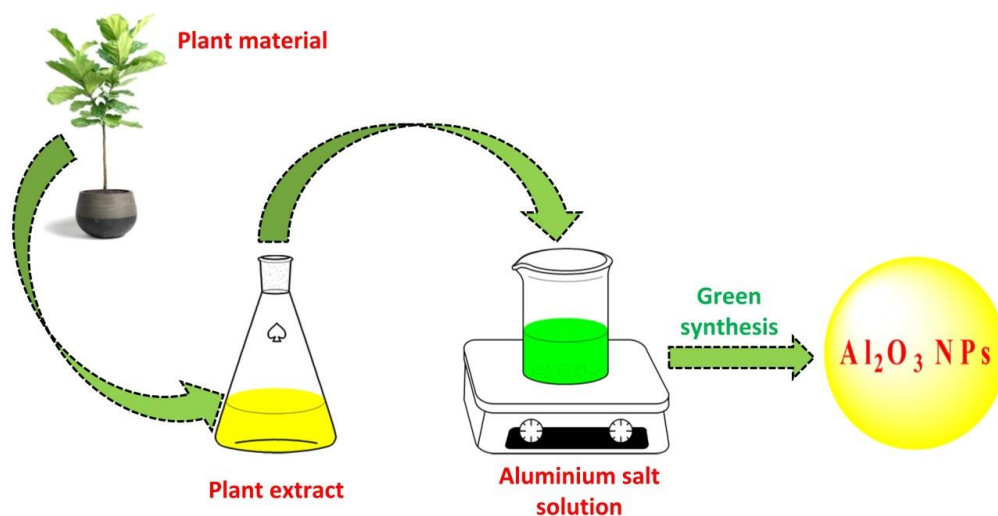
Table 1. Biosynthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs using different plant sources with morphology and size

Sr. No	Name of Plants	Part	Shape	Size	References
1.	<i>Cymbopogon citratus</i>	Leaf	Spherical	34.5 nm	56
2.	<i>Lemon</i>	-	-	460 nm	57
3.	<i>Lemongrass</i>	Leaf	Spherical	34.5 nm	58
4.	<i>Muntingia calabura</i>	Leaf	-	-	59
5.	<i>Neem</i>	Leaf	-	-	60
6.	<i>Syzygium aromaticum</i>	-	Spherical	8 nm	61
7.	<i>Origanum vulgare</i>	-	Spherical	3 nm	61
8.	<i>Origanum majorana</i>	-	Spherical	5 nm	61
9.	<i>Theobroma cacao</i>	-	Spherical	2 nm	61
10.	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	-	Spherical	9 nm	61
11.	<i>Parthenium</i>	Leaves Flower	-	42 nm	62
12.	<i>Prunus xyedonesis</i>	Leaf	Spherical & Hexagonal	50-100 nm	63
13.	<i>Rosa</i>	Leaves	Spherical	24.53 nm	64
14.	<i>Sargassum ilicifolium</i>	-	Rhombohedral	35 nm	65
15.	<i>Tea</i>	Leaves	Spherical	50-200 nm	50
16.	<i>Coffee</i>	-	Spherical	50-200 nm	50
17.	<i>Triphala</i>	Fruit	Spherical	200-400 nm	50
18.	<i>Aerva lanta</i>	Leaves	Spherical	50-70 nm	66
19.	<i>Terminalia chebula</i>	Seed	Spherical	50-100 nm	66

PROTOCOL FOR BIOSYNTHESIS OF Al_2O_3 NPs

Bio-fabrication of Al_2O_3 NPs is an effortless, rapid, one pot synthesis and eco-friendly route without participation of any harmful and perilous chemical. Al_2O_3 NPs are synthesized using distinctive parts of

plants such as leaves, fruit, seed and flower (Table 1). A completely easy and clean protocol is implemented for their biosynthesis (Fig. 3). The plant parts such as leaves, flowers, seeds, fruits, etc. are collected from distinctive sources and thoroughly washed with



Biosynthesis of alumina nanoparticles

Fig. 3. Schematic representation of green synthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs

ordinary water as well as double distilled water to remove other undesirable materials. The plant materials are either grinded or dried to form the fine powder or used directly to obtain extract. The plant parts are hewed into small pieces or ground to fine powder and boiled in different special solvents (ethanol, water, and many others) and boiled at a suitable temperature to acquire extract. Different concentrations of aluminum salts as a metallic precursor and as-prepared plant extract can be used for the biosynthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs. There may be no need to add external chemical reducing agents or stabilizers, simply plant extract is mixed with aluminum salt solution and the phytochemical present in plant extract acts as a bio-reducing agent as well as stabilizing agent for the biosynthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs. The precise protocol of biosynthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs by *Cymbopogon citratus* leaf extract is mentioned by authors reported in literature [43]. The synthesized Al_2O_3 NPs solution is further centrifuged to separate out the NPs at excessive rpm, and wash thoroughly with suitable solvents. A fine powder of Al_2O_3 NPs is obtained and this is carefully collected for further characterization purposes.

CHARACTERIZATION TECHNIQUES FOR Al_2O_3 NPs

To study the effect of synthesized Al_2O_3 NPs on ecosystem and human health, and affirmation in

their formation, diverse routes of their formation and monitoring their typical effect are needed. Different instrumental techniques are used to characterize synthesis of Al_2O_3 NPs.

Size

There are various methods to measure crystalline particles size of Al_2O_3 NPs. X-ray Diffraction (XRD) is also used to determine the particle size and exact phase identification of Al_2O_3 NPs. The size of suspended NPs in liquid phase is described by dynamic light scattering (DLS).

Crystallography

X-ray diffraction (XRD) is used to determine each and every crystal structure of Al_2O_3 NPs.

Morphology

Accurate morphology of Al_2O_3 NPs may be examined by using electron microscopies such as transmission electron microscope (TEM), atomic force microscopy (AFM) and scanning electron microscope (SEM).

Specific surface Area

The nitrogen absorption technique based on Brunauer–Emmett–Teller (BET) isotherm is most commonly used for solid state, and nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) technique is among the techniques could be used for liquid state.

Elemental composition

Mass spectrometry (MS), X-ray photoelectron spectroscopy (XPS), energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) and atomic emission spectroscopy (AES) could be used to examine purity and elemental composition of Al₂O₃ NPs.

APPLICATIONS OF BIOGENICALLY SYNTHESIZED Al₂O₃ NPs

Al₂O₃ NPs have many captivated applications in several branches of science and technology. However, the ceramics, textiles, biosensor and antimicrobial activities of the biosynthesized Al₂O₃ NPs are very prominent nowadays. Accordingly, their peculiar applications are described here as a guidance to new researchers for future prospects.

Jalal et al. reported the *Cymbopogon citratus* leaf extract mediated Al₂O₃ NPs with the size of 34.5 nm and investigated the antifungal activity of Al₂O₃ NPs against various *Candida spp.* isolated from oropharyngeal mucosa of HIV⁺ patients [56].

Ansari et al. reported the biosynthesis of Al₂O₃ NPs using leaf extract *lemongrass* and analyzed the antibacterial activity of the prepared NPs. These Al₂O₃ NPs exhibited an excellent antibacterial activity against MDR strains of *P. aeruginosa*, indicating their compatibility for pharmaceutical and other biomedical applications [58].

Besides, Manikandan et al. reported plant mediated synthesis of Al₂O₃ NPs using *Prunus xyedonesis* and examined the antibacterial activity of Al₂O₃ NPs against pathogenic bacteria. These biosynthesized Al₂O₃ NPs displayed effective antibacterial activity against gram-positive *S. aureus* and gram-negative *E. coli* bacteria. The synthesized Al₂O₃ NPs also showed nitrate removal ability. From the results, green synthesized Al₂O₃ NPs is found to have promising applications in pollutant ion removal from aquatic systems [63].

CONCLUSION

This review has summarized the current scenario of the research work in the area of green synthesis of Al₂O₃ NPs by using distinctive plant parts. This literature surveys displayed the multifarious experimental works on biosynthesis of NPs of silver, zinc, gold and copper NPs in comparison to Al₂O₃ NPs. Therefore, special attention of scientific community is required to develop this efficient, swift, sustainable, noxious, affordable and environmentally gracious method for biosynthesis of Al₂O₃ NPs through this green

chemistry bottom to top approach. Furthermore, multifarious plant species could be exploited in future era towards completely facile and rapid biosynthesis of metal oxide NPs. Further research needs to develop outstanding applications, use of distinctive plant parts for fabrication and highlight the exact mechanism behind the synthesis of Al₂O₃ NPs.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

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