

Exploring the Chemical Composition and Cytotoxic Effect of Hexane Extract of Aerial Portions of Iraqi *Amaranthus viridis* on A549 Cell-Line

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Abstract

Amaranthus viridis (green amaranth), which is naturally grown in Iraq, belongs to the Amaranthaceae family and is considered a pseudocereal. This herb displays various secondary metabolites, including polyphenols, phytosterols, terpenes, and fatty derivatives. Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antidiabetic, cardioprotective, and hepatoprotective are among the evaluated and proven clinical activities. Recently, herbal remedies have emerged as a noteworthy new therapeutic option for several cancers. The most common cause of cancer mortality in Iraq is lung cancer. Despite its wide distribution, there is no previous study regarding this herb's phytochemistry and cytotoxic effect in Iraq. The n-hexane extract of *Amaranthus viridis* whole aerial parts was prepared using maceration and Soxhlet extraction methods. It was subjected to gas chromatography/ mass spectrometry and high-pressure liquid chromatography analysis to characterize its constituents. High-pressure liquid chromatography was used to determine phytosterol contents qualitatively and quantitatively. The extraction yield was 0.66 % and 1.017% for cold and hot hexane extracts, respectively. Based on gas chromatography/ mass spectrometry, the number of identified compounds was 15 and 18. Bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate was the major constituent in the cold hexane extract. Omega-3 (9,12,15-Octadecatrienoic acid, (Z,Z,Z)-) was only detected in the cold extract. 2(4H)-Benzofuranone, 5,6,7,7a-tetrahydro-4,4,7a-trimethyl-, (R)- and squalene were identified in both extracts and at a higher proportion in the hot extract. 9,12-Octadecadienoic acid (Z,Z), homosalate were only detected in hot hexane extract, and for the first time in an Iraqi plant. High-pressure liquid chromatography analysis revealed the presence of campesterol, stigmaterol, spinasterol, and beta-sitosterol in greater amounts in the hot extract than cold extract. Campesterol is the least concentrated, while spinasterol is the most concentrated. Based on the results of gas chromatography/ mass spectrometry and high-pressure liquid chromatography, hot hexane extract was evaluated for its *in vitro* anticancer effect against the A549 cell line using (3-(4,5-dimethylthiazolyl-2)-2,5-diphenyltetrazolium bromide) assay. This assay showed a dose-dependent cytotoxic effect for hot hexane extract with a half-maximal inhibitory concentration (IC₅₀) value of 1393 µg/ml, possibly due to its antioxidant effect.

Keywords: *Amaranthus Viridis*, A549 Cell Line, Homosalate, Spinasterol, MTT Assay

Introduction

The Amaranthaceae family includes the genus *Amaranthus*, which is disseminated through tropical and subtropical areas. Genus *Amaranthus* contains about 60 species, about one-third of which are weeds, even though they are considered ornamentals, cereals, and leaf vegetables. *Amaranthus viridis* (*A. viridis*) is one of the widest-spreading weeds. *Amaranthus viridis* is known as the slender amaranth, green amaranth, and Chinese spinach. It is an annual leafy slender herb that is cultivated and also considered an invasive, problematic weed⁽¹⁻⁴⁾. Moisture, light, and warm conditions are the key requirements for its growth. hydrocarbons, and others. Yuenyong et al study reported the presence of the following fatty acids: palmitic acid, stearic acid, arachidic acid, oleic acid, and linoleic acid. Terpenoids such as squalene and cholecalciferol (Vitamin D3). Phytosterols such

A. viridis is naturally grown and distributed in Iraq⁽⁵⁾. Traditionally, this herb is used for pain management and fever; the whole plant is used for green and yellow dye production, and its infusion is used to purify blood. Dried or fresh leaves are used topically for infections such as orchitis and gonorrhoea. ⁽⁶⁾ *A. viridis* extract is used to increase the nutritional and antioxidant capacity through its polyphenolic and high amino acid contents; it is also considered a pseudocereal ⁽²⁾. Earlier studies reported the existence of different classes of phytochemicals, terpenoids in their variable subclasses, fatty acids and saturated as stigmaterol, campesterol, and β-Sitosterol were present in *Amaranthus* seed oil ^(7,8). 16,17,20,21-tetrahydro-16-(hydroxymethyl)-, methyl ester, (15.beta., 16E)- were identified in the ethyl acetate fraction of leaves extract using GC-MS⁽⁹⁾. Gas

chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) is an interesting analytical tool that provides both qualitative and quantitative profiles of examined extract or mixture constituents⁽¹⁰⁾. This technique incorporates two analytical methods. Mass spectroscopy identifies each component independently after gas chromatography separates the mixture's constituent parts.⁽¹¹⁾ HPLC is a common tool for herbal product authenticity, fingerprinting, measurement, and quality control⁽¹²⁾. Lung cancer is a common type of cancer that mostly affects males.⁽¹³⁾ According to Alwan's study, lung cancer is the most common cause of cancer mortality in Iraq⁽¹⁴⁾. 5-fluorouracil (5-FU), docetaxel, paclitaxel, cisplatin, and other chemotherapeutics are common options for lung cancer. Resistance and side effects are the most emergent causes for alternative treatment options, including drugs obtained from natural sources such as plants⁽¹⁵⁾. The present work aims to use GC/MS to compare constituents of aerial parts of Iraqi *A. viridis* hexane extracts obtained by two extraction methods, to determine their phytosterol contents by HPLC, and to evaluate the cytotoxic effect of hot hexane extract on the A549 cell line.

Materials and Methods

Collection of plant materials

Amaranthus viridis whole aerial plant was collected from Baghdad city (Al-Taji) during spring 2023. The plant was authenticated by Assistant Prof. Dr. Sukaena Abass in the herbarium of the College of Science, University of Baghdad. The plant was gently washed with water, shade-dried for three weeks, and milled to a fine powder using an electrical miller.

Preparation of the n-hexane extract

Hexane extract was prepared using two methods.

1. By maceration (cold method)

A dried plant sample (200 gm) was macerated in 1500 ml n-hexane for 48 hours with continuous stirring using a magnetic stirrer. The solvent was evaporated under reduced pressure in a rotary evaporator, yielding a dark orange to brown extract, and the percentage yield was determined⁽¹⁶⁾.

2. By Soxhlet (hot method)

Two hundred grams of desired parts were packed in a paper thimble, 1500 ml of hexane solvent was placed in a round-bottom flask, and the extraction was performed at 35 °C for 48 hours. The solvent was heated repeatedly and refluxed till complete exhaustion of the sample; the extract was filtered. Using a vacuum evaporator, the solvent was evaporated to get the dry extract. The percentage yield was determined⁽¹⁷⁾.

Qualitative phytochemical analyses of n-hexane extracts

1. By Thin-layer chromatography (TLC)

Hexane extracts were analyzed by TLC for their phytosterol contents using standards

(campesterol, stigmasterol, spinasterol, and beta-sitosterol). The used solvent system was toluene: methanol (18:2). The developed chromatogram was dried, sprayed with 5% ethanolic H₂SO₄, and placed in the oven at 110 °C for five minutes for colored spot development. Based on the TLC result, both extracts were subjected to GC/MS and HPLC analysis.

2. By Gas chromatography/Mass spectrometry (GC/MS) analysis

Extracts obtained by both extraction methods were subjected to GC/MS analysis to investigate their constituents. The investigation was accomplished using an Agilent 7820A Gas Chromatograph coupled to a Mass detector. This instrument can analyze liquid, gas, volatile, and solid samples. Using the National Institute of Standards and Technology's (NIST) database, the mass spectrum of the GC/MS instrument was interpreted. Analysis was performed in the Ministry of Industry and Minerals/ Baghdad. Components were separated using a capillary column type Agilent HP-5ms Ultra Inert, its dimensions (30 m length x 250 µm inner diameter was 0.25 µm film thickness). Helium (99.99%) was used as a carrier gas. Pressure 11.933 psi. Injection volume 1 µl, Injection Type: Splitless, Scan Range: m/z 25-1000. GC Inlet Line Temperature: 250 °C, Aux heaters Temperature 320 °C. Injector Temperature: 250 °C. A certain temperature program was adopted for effective separation, which is shown in "Table 1".

Table 1. GC Temperature Program Development.

Oven Program	Temperature
Ramp 1	65 °C
Ramp 2	60 °C to 180 °C 8 °C/min
Ramp 3	180 °C to 300 °C 7 °C/min
Ramp 4	300 °C hold to 5 min

Qualitative and quantitative HPLC identification of phytosterols from hexane extracts

HPLC separation was done on a SYKAMN HPLC chromatographic system equipped with a UV detector. The separation was performed in a C18-ODS column (25 cm x 4.6 mm). The mobile phase consists of acetic acid and acetonitrile using gradient elution mode, which is shown in "Table 2".

Table 2. HPLC mobile phase composition.

Mobile phase composition	Duration
A = 30 % acetonitrile, B = 5 % acetic acid	0 – 5 min
A = 50 % acetonitrile, B = 5 % acetic acid	6 – 15 min

Analysis was done at room temperature. The wavelength of the UV detector was set to 220 nm, the flow rate was 1 ml/min, and the injection volume was 0.1 µl for extracts and standards. Accurately weighted 10 mg solvent-free dried extracts were

dissolved in 5 mL methanol (HPLC grade) to prepare a concentration of 2 mg/ml. The aliquot was then filtered through a 0.45 µm filter to get a clear solution before injection⁽¹⁸⁾. Regarding the HPLC profile, different phytosterols were used, including campesterol, β-sitosterol, stigmasterol, and spinasterol. The studied standards were prepared in methanol to get a concentration of 10 µg/ml. The existence of phytosterols was singled out by comparing the retention times for separated constituents to the retention times' standards. Since the area under a certain compound's peak in the HPLC method is proportionate to its concentration, a quantitative determination of each component in the chromatogram was computed by serially concentrating reference standards (5,10,15,20 ppm) to create a calibration curve between the concentration and its equivalent peak area. A linear equation was used to estimate concentrations. "Y=a X +b"

Y: symbolized the response factor (AUC). a: is the slope of the curve (slop=y/x). x: designated the concentration in part per million (ppm), the y-intercept is shown by b. Using calibration curves of those standards, the concentration of those phytosterols was determined and expressed as µg/gm of dried sample.

Determination of the cytotoxicity of n. hexane extract on the A549 cell line

To assess the cytotoxic activity of n-hexane extract against lung cancer, A549 cells were employed as models⁽¹⁹⁾. Human adenocarcinoma alveolar basal epithelial cells, or A549 cells, were initially created in 1972 by D. J. Giard and colleagues. The targeted cells were extracted by isolating and cultivating malignant lung tissue from the removed tumor of a 58-year-old Caucasian man.

Maintenance of cell cultures

Maintaining A549 cells required incorporating 10% fetal bovine serum, 100 µg/mL streptomycin, and 100 units/mL penicillin into Minimum Essential Medium (MEM). Once passing through trypsin-EDTA, the cells were reseeded twice a week at 50% confluence and cultivated at 37 °C.

Combination cytotoxicity assays

To assess the cytotoxic effect, 1×10^4 cells/well were utilized to seed the cell line. The cells were incubated at 37 °C for 72 hours till a monolayer confluence layer was obtained. The investigated substance (n. hexane extract was introduced to the cells using a series of concentrations (31.75, 62.5, 125, 500, 1000 µg/ml) and incubated for 24 hours. After eradicating the media and adding 28 µL of a 2 mg/ml MTT solution, an assessment of the cell viability was done. The cells were then incubated for three hours at 37 °C. After removing the MTT solution, 1.0 µL of dimethyl sulfoxide was added to the wells to solubilize the remaining crystals. The wells were

then shaken and incubated for fifteen minutes at 37 °C. Using a microplate reader, the absorbency was established in triplicate at the test wavelength of 492 nm. The following formula was used to calculate the percentage of cytotoxicity, or cell growth inhibitory rate:

$$\% \text{ Viability of cells} = (\text{Ab2}-\text{Ab1}/\text{Ab2}) \times 100\%$$

$$\% \text{ Cytotoxicity} = 100 - \text{cell viability}$$

Ab 1: The treated cell's absorbance

Ab 2: Untreated cell absorbance⁽²⁰⁾.

Statistical analysis

The collected data were statistically examined using GraphPad Prism one-way ANOVA and multiple comparison Tukey's test with a level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. The values were shown as the triple measurements' mean \pm standard deviation.

Result and Discussion

Certain medicinal components found in plants have amazing physiological effects; these components can be isolated and employed in the manufacture of drugs⁽²¹⁾. The % yield was 0.66 % and 1.017% for cold and hot methods, respectively. TLC result gave preliminary estimation for the presence of terpenoids, including phytosterols, "Figure 1". Hexane extracts of Iraqi *A. viridis* (from cold and hot methods) are evaluated by GC/MS "Figure 2, and 3". The identified compounds that exhibit 90% mass spectra similarity hits are displayed, whereas those that do not meet this threshold are not recognized. According to these, thirteen compounds were identified in the cold extract, while seventeen compounds were identified in the hot extract.

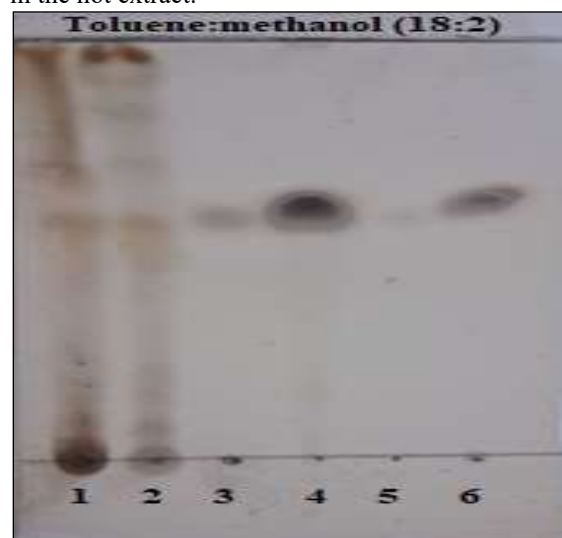


Figure1. TLC chromatogram for hexane extracts. 1: cold hexane extract, 2: Hot hexane extract, 3: Campesterol, 4: β-sitosterol. 5: Spinasterol, 6: Stigmasterol. Detection after spraying with 5% ethanolic H₂SO₄ and heating for five minutes.

Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate is the major constituent in the cold extract; meanwhile, 9,12-Octadecadienoic acid (Z, Z) is the main one in the hot extract. Linolenic acid (omega-3) is the only detected fatty acid in cold extract, and it is one of the major components, esters of fatty acids are also present in higher percentages and exert diverse actions as antimicrobial and antioxidant actions⁽²²⁾. Saturated hydrocarbons, both linear and branched, were present as minor ingredients. In the hot

extract, β -ionone (apocarotenoids) is a beta carotene cleavage product by the dioxygenase enzyme. Homosalate, salicylic acid ester (3,3,5-trimethylcyclohexenyl salicylate) was reported for the first time in the plant. This ester acts as a UV radiation absorber to protect the plant from sunlight, and it is principally present in desert plants⁽³⁶⁾.

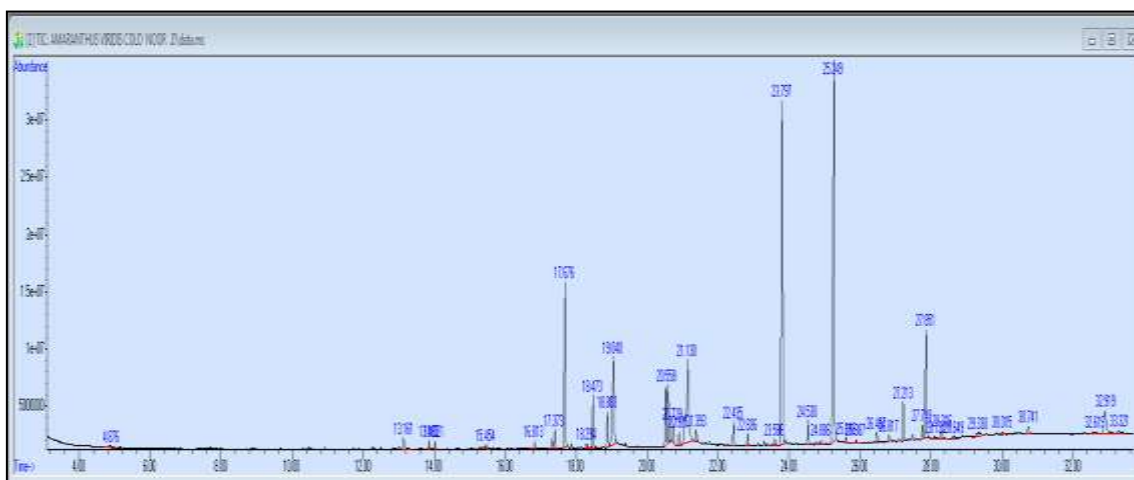


Figure 2. GC/ MS Chromatogram of *Amaranthus viridis* n-hexane extract obtained by maceration extraction method.

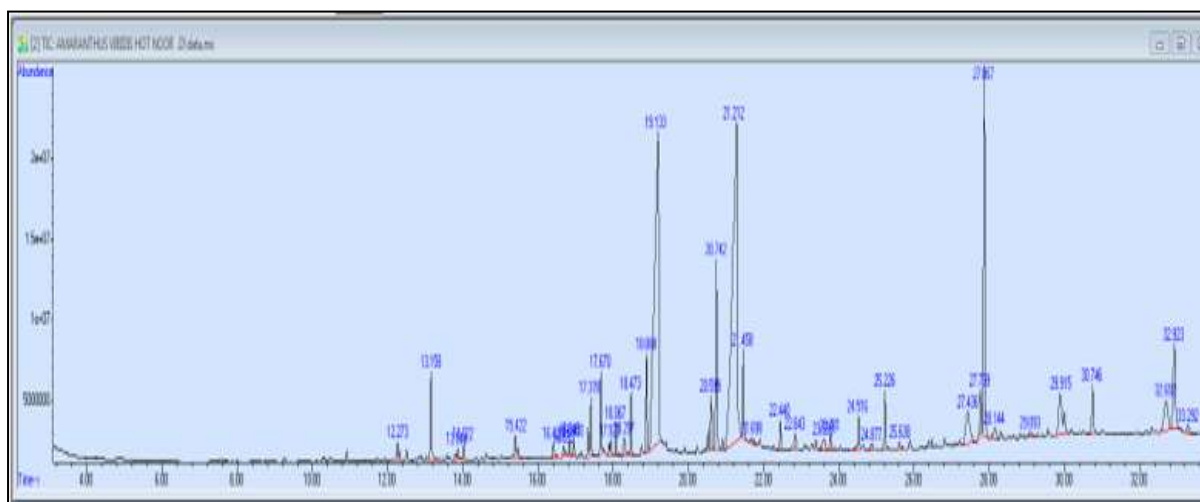


Figure 3. GC/ MS Chromatogram of *Amaranthus viridis* n-hexane extract obtained by Soxhlet extraction method.

Beta-sitosterol was the only detected phytosterol in the hot extract obtained by Soxhlet. Campesterol and spinasterol are not included in the NIST database. Terpenoids, including dihydroactinidiolide, squalene, and phytol, in addition to vitamin E, were detected in both extracts, all of them present in higher amounts in the hot extract. This may be attributed to the effect of temperature that increases compound solubility and

enhances mass transfer and thus increasing the yield⁽³⁷⁾. Previous studies reported the presence of phytol in leaves and squalene in stems and leaves⁽³⁸⁾. Acetic acid, chloro-, hexadecyl ester is another terpenoid detected in a small concentration of hot extract. The chemical constituents of cold and hot extracts are demonstrated in “Tables 3 and 4”, respectively.

Table 3. GC/MS analysis of cold hexane extract.

Peak no	Retention time	Compound name and molecular formula	%Peak area	Compound nature	Biological activity
2	13.162	2(4H)-Benzofuranone, 5,6,7,7a-tetrahydro-4,4,7a-trimethyl-, (R)- (Dihydroactinidiolide) C ₁₁ H ₁₆ 3	0.74	Volatile triterpene	Antimicrobial ⁽²⁷⁾
4	14.018	Tetradecane C ₁₄ H ₃₀	0.29	Alkane hydrocarbon	Antibacterial and antifungal ⁽²⁸⁾
10	18.476	Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester (methyl palmitate) C ₁₇ H ₃₄ O ₂	2.37	Fatty acid methyl ester	potent antioxidant activity ⁽²⁹⁾
11	18.883	Dibutyl phthalate	1.59	Phthalates	Antibacterial activity ⁽³⁰⁾
14	20.744	Phytol C ₂₀ H ₄₀ O	0.74	acyclic diterpene alcohol	potent anti-inflammatory effect ⁽³¹⁾
15	20.899	Methyl stearate C ₁₉ H ₃₈ O ₂	0.51	Fatty acid methyl ester	antimicrobial activity ⁽³²⁾
16	21.133	9,12,15-Octadecatrienoic acid, (Z,Z,Z)-linolenic acid (omega-3) C ₁₈ H ₃₀ O ₂	8.94	Polyunsaturated fatty acid	neuroprotective, anti-inflammatory, and anti-depressant, satiation-inducing properties ⁽³³⁾
18	22.431	Hexacosane C ₂₆ H ₅₄	1.01	Alkane hydrocarbon	Antimicrobial ⁽³⁴⁾
19	22.838	Heneicosane	0.50	Alkane hydrocarbon	Antimicrobial ⁽³⁵⁾
21	23.799	<u>Hexanedioic acid, bis (2-ethylhexyl) ester</u> (Diisooctyl adipate) C ₂₂ H ₄₂ O ₄	19.18	Fatty acid ester	
22	24.526	2-methyl octacosane (Isononacosane) C ₂₉ H ₆₀	1.06	Alkane hydrocarbon	antimicrobial ⁽²²⁾
24	25.253	<u>Bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate</u> C ₂₄ H ₃₈ O	25.11	Ester	antibacterial and larvicidal action ⁽³⁶⁾
27	26.465	2-methyl hexacosane C ₁₇ H ₃₆	0.41	Branched alkane	Antimicrobial ⁽²²⁾
31	27.867	Squalene C ₃₀ H ₅₀	4.98	Triterpene	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-atherosclerotic properties ⁽³⁷⁾
37	30.749	Vitamin E C ₂₉ H ₅₀ O ₂	0.44	fat-soluble vitamin	Antioxidant ⁽³⁸⁾

Table 4. GC/MS analysis of hot hexane extract

Peak No	Retention time	Compound name and molecular formula	%Peak area	Compound nature	Biological activity
1	12.270	trans-beta-Ionone β -ionone C ₁₃ H ₂₀ O	0.55	Apocarotenoids	Antitumor, antifungal, antibacterial activities ⁽³⁹⁾
2	13.162	2(4H)-Benzofuranone, 5,6,7,7a-tetrahydro-4,4,7a-trimethyl-, (R)- (Dihydroactinidiolide) C ₁₁ H ₁₆ O ₃	2.06	Volatile triterpene	Antimicrobial ⁽²⁷⁾
4	14.019	Hexadecane (cetane) C ₁₆ H ₃₄	0.27	Alkane hydrocarbon	antibacterial, antioxidant activities ⁽⁴⁰⁾
5	15.421	Not identified	0.85		
6	16.416	Tetradecanoic acid (Myristic acid) C ₁₄ H ₂₈ O ₂	0.56	Saturated fatty acid	Nematicide, hypercholesterolemic, Lubricant ⁽²⁷⁾
8	16.840	Heneicosane C ₂₁ H ₄₄	0.27	Alkane hydrocarbon	antimicrobial ⁽³⁵⁾
12	17.922	Acetic acid, chloro-, hexadecyl ester (Hexadecyl chloroacetate) C ₁₈ H ₃₅ ClO	0.58	Terpenoid	Not reported in the literature
13	18.069	Homosalate C ₁₆ H ₂₂ O ₃	0.62	Salicylates	Use as sunscreen ⁽⁴¹⁾
15	18.476	Hexadecanoic acid, methyl ester (methyl palmitate) C ₁₇ H ₃₄ O ₂	1.20	Fatty acid methyl ester	Potent antioxidant activity ⁽²⁹⁾
16	18.883	Dibutyl phthalate C ₁₆ H ₂₂ O ₄	1.90	Phthalates	Antibacterial activity, Natural anticancer agents inhibiting melanogenesis ⁽¹¹⁾ ⁽³⁰⁾
19	20.744	Phytol C ₂₀ H ₄₀ O	4.04	Acyclic diterpene alcohol	Potent anti-inflammatory effect ⁽³¹⁾
20	21.211	<u>9,12-Octadecadienoic acid (Z,Z) (alpha-linoleic acid)</u> C ₁₈ H ₃₂ O ₂	27.30	unsaturated fatty acid	Antimicrobial activity ⁽⁴²⁾
23	22.440	2-methyloctacosane	0.55	Branched alkane	Antimicrobial ⁽²²⁾
24	22.838	Hexacosane C ₂₆ H ₅₄	0.32	Alkane hydrocarbon	Antimicrobial activity ⁽³⁴⁾
29	25.227	Phthalic acid, di(2-propylpentyl) ester	1.27	Esters of phthalic acid	Allelopathic, antimicrobial, insecticidal effects ⁽⁴³⁾
30	25.634	1,54-Dibromotetrapentacontane C ₅₄ H ₁₀₈ Br ₂	0.27	Halogenated hydrocarbon	
31	27.434	Beta-Sitosterol C ₂₉ H ₅₀ O	2.40	Phytosterol	Cholesterol-lowering action, anti-inflammatory action ⁽⁴⁴⁾
33	27.867	Squalene_C ₃₀ H ₅₀	9.01	Triterpene	Antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, and anti-atherosclerotic properties ⁽³⁷⁾
37	30.749	Vitamin E C ₂₉ H ₅₀ O ₂	1.33	fat-soluble vitamin	Antioxidant ⁽³⁸⁾

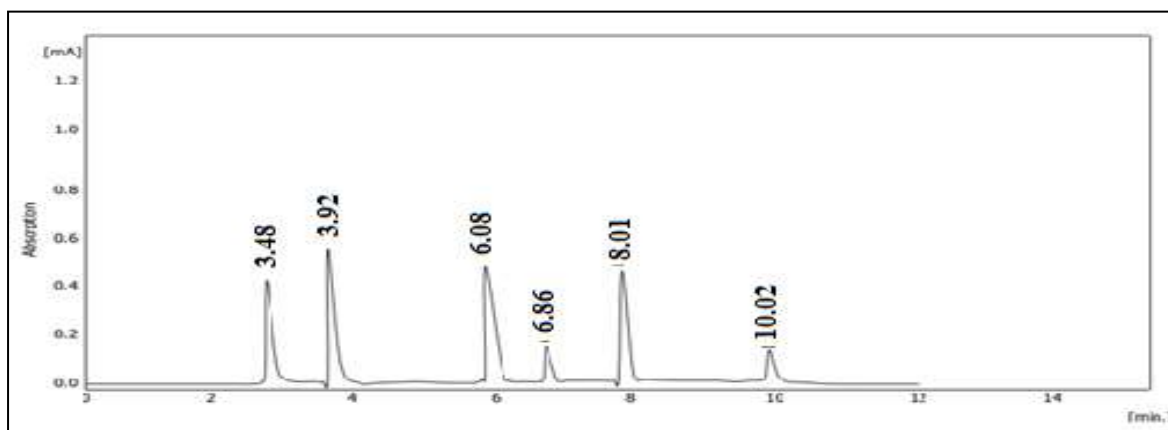
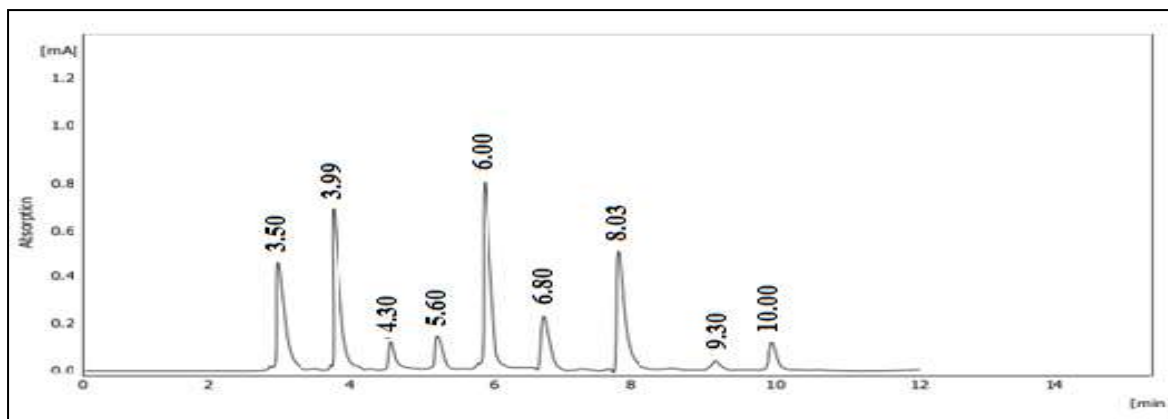
HPLC identification of phytosterol

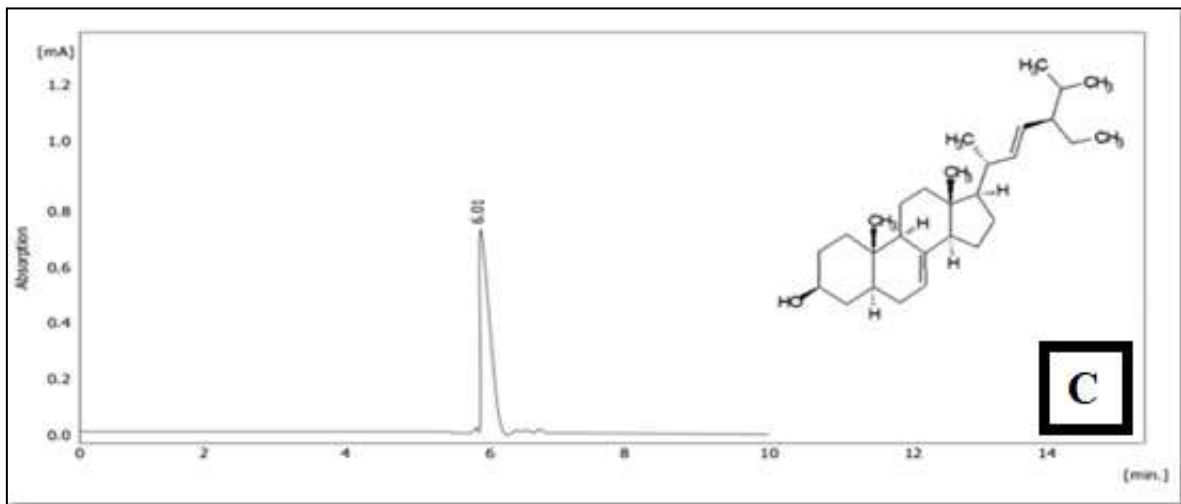
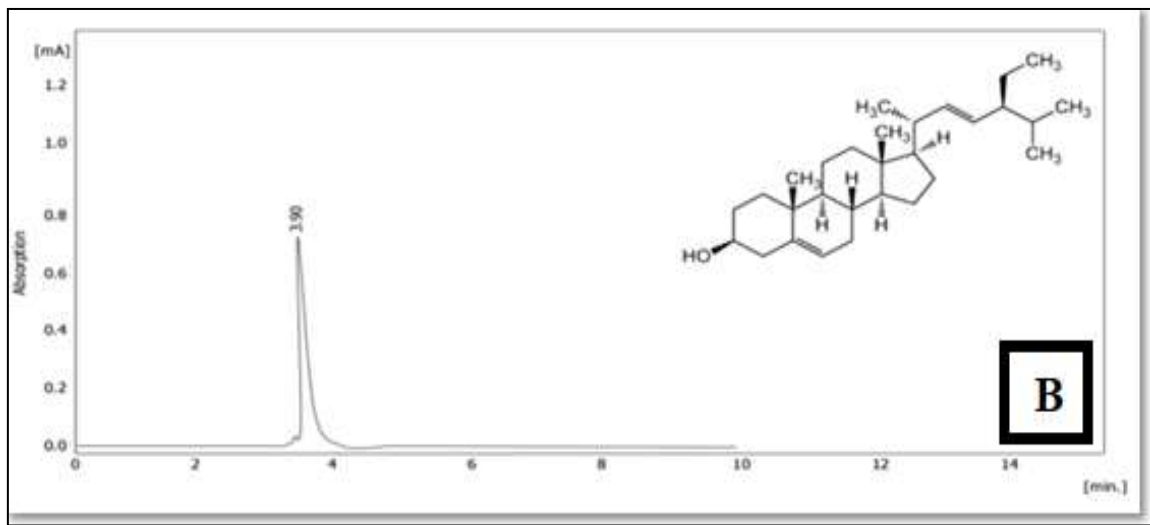
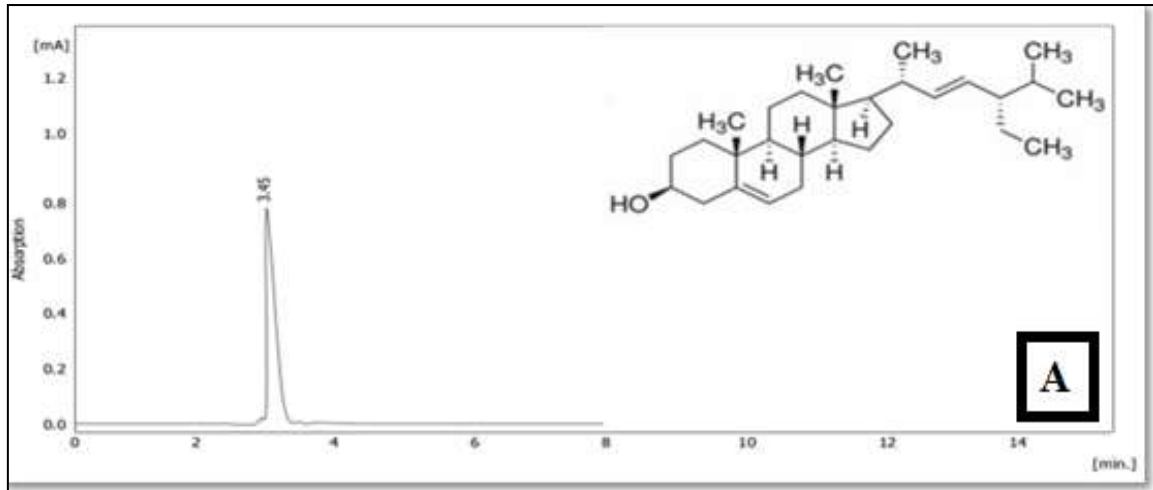
HPLC method (reversed-phase) combined with a UV-detector is a suitable technique for phytosterols analysis. According to previous literature, enhanced resolution and better peak shape can be achieved by the C-18 column⁽⁴⁵⁾. HPLC chromatograms for cold and hot hexane extracts are demonstrated in “Figures 4 and 5”, respectively. Full separation with great peak resolution was achieved for the phytosterol standards. In “Figure 6”, the chromatogram is displayed in the coordinate’s

retention time-line intensity/ (minutes on x-axis)- (mAU on y-axis). Campesterol appeared first at 3.45 min, followed by stigmasterol at 3.9 min, then spinasterol at 6.01 min, and finally β -sitosterol at 8.08 min “Table 5”. For the quantitative assessment of particular phytosterols in comparison to phytosterol standards, the same chromatographic parameters were used. HPLC chromatograms of standards with their chemical structures are demonstrated in “Figure 6”.

Table 5. Retention time, height, and area of phytosterols standards.

Phytosterol standard	Retention time (min)	Height (mAU)	Area (mAU.s)
Campesterol	3.45	764.80	1920.11
Stigmasterol	3.9	791.58	1865.08
Spinasterol	6.01	774.13	854.11
β -sitosterol	8.08	585.44	690.48

**Figure 4. HPLC chromatogram of n-hexane extract obtained by the cold method.****Figure 5. HPLC chromatogram of n-hexane extract obtained by the hot method.**



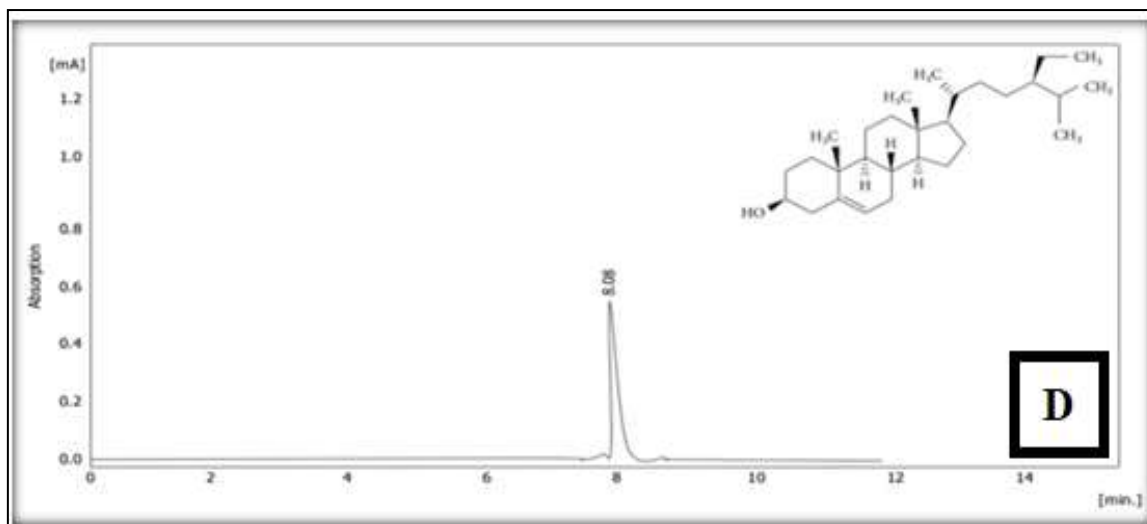


Figure 6. HPLC chromatogram of standards (A): Campesterol standard and its chemical structure, (B): Stigmasterol and its chemical structure, (C): Spinasterol and its chemical structure, (D): Beta-sitosterol and its chemical structure.

HPLC chromatogram of cold and hot hexane extracts revealed the presence of six and nine compounds, respectively, by comparing the retention time of the observed peaks of HPLC chromatograms with the retention time of standards (campesterol, stigmasterol, spinasterol, and β -sitosterol). Calibration curves of standards with their straight-line equations are shown in "Figure 7". The concentrations were determined using the obtained equation for each standard and the area under the curve for each identified phytosterol in extracts

obtained from cold and hot methods. Phytosterol concentrations were determined, and according to the results demonstrated in "Tables 6, and 7", all the detected phytosterols were present in higher concentrations in the hot extract. In both extracts, campesterol has the lowest concentration; meanwhile, spinasterol has the highest concentration. The total phytosterol content in *Amaranthus* oil in a published study was about 2326 $\mu\text{g/g}$ ⁽⁷⁾.

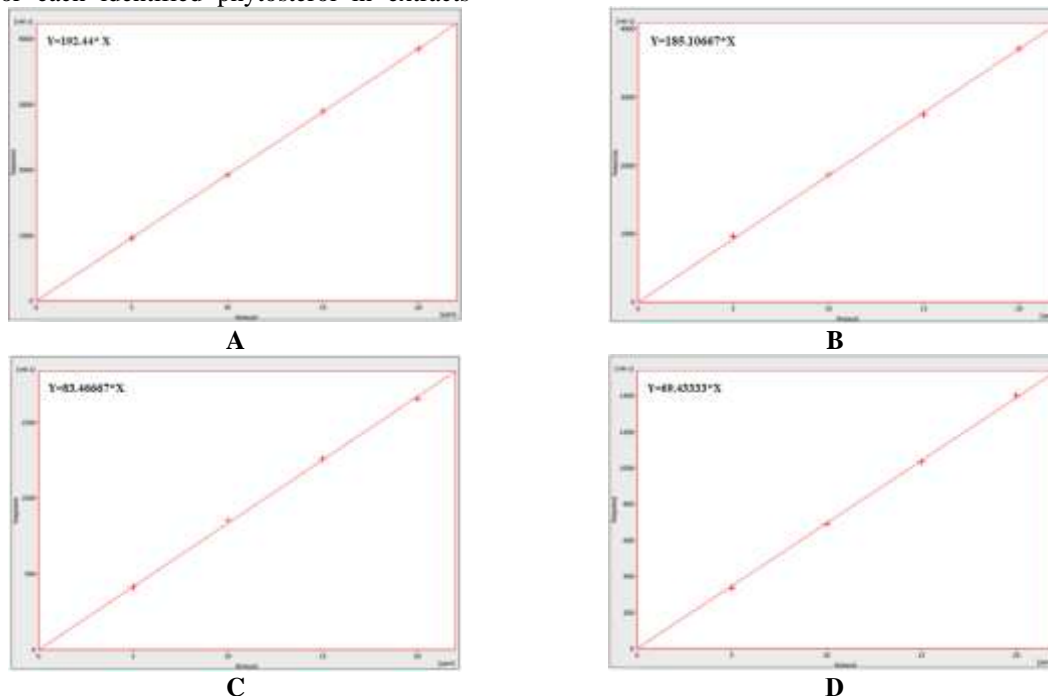


Figure 7. Calibration curves with their straight-line equations for A: Campesterol, B: Stigmasterol, C: Spinasterol, D: Beta-sitosterol.

Table 6. Phytosterol compounds present in the n-hexane fraction obtained by the cold method

Peak no	Peak ID	Retention time (min)	Height (mAU)	Area (mAU.s)	Concentration $\mu\text{g}/0.35\text{gm}$ dry extract	Concentration $\mu\text{g}/100\text{gm}$ dry plant
1	Campesterol	3.48	400.12	105985.44	550.7	157354.33
2	Stigmasterol	3.92	560.80	130254.87	703.7	201149.76
3	Spinasterol	6.08	530.90	245718.14	2943.9	838542.86
5	Beta-Sitosterol	8.01	520.11	111268.14	1602.5	457877.14

Table 7. Phytosterol compounds present in the n-hexane fraction obtained by the hot method.

Peak no	Peak ID	Retention time (min)	Height (mAU)	Area (mAU.s)	Concentration $\mu\text{g}/0.35\text{gm}$ dry extract	Concentration $\mu\text{g}/100\text{gm}$ dry plant
1	Campesterol	3.5	430.25	250458.99	1353.1	386600
2	Stigmasterol	3.99	684.18	364158.80	1967.3	562085.71
5	Spinasterol	6.00	800.95	587415.99	7037.73	2011780
7	Beta-Sitosterol	8.03	490.44	190854.14	2748.7	785342.86

Ragasa CY *et al* reported the isolation of spinasterol from *Amaranthus* stems and roots⁽³⁸⁾. A previous study reported that the Soxhlet method provides higher phytochemical contents, including phytosterols⁽⁴⁶⁾. The higher temperature applicable in the Soxhlet extractor improves the kinetics of the process. Also, the continued contact of plant material with the desired solvent increases mass transfer and ultimately increases the extraction yield⁽⁴⁷⁾.

Cytotoxic effect of hot n-hexane extract

Hexane extract obtained by Soxhlet was evaluated for its cytotoxic potential against A549 lung cancer cells using rising concentrations for IC₅₀ value determination. MTT assay based on the color change of tetrazolium salt. In viable cells, NADH

and NADPH caused the reduction of yellow-soluble tetrazolium to insoluble purple formazan crystals⁽⁴⁸⁾. According to the result demonstrated in the Figure. 8” The cytotoxic effect is concentration-dependent, as the extract concentration increases, the number of viable cells decreases, and the maximum cytotoxic effect is observed at the highest concentration of about 59.6%. Log dose-response curve used to obtain IC₅₀. IC₅₀ is the log concentration of the tested sample that inhibits fifty percent of cell viability⁽⁴⁹⁾. The effect of n. hexane fraction over A549 cell growth and IC₅₀ of the tested fraction on the A549 cell line is demonstrated in Figure 8. The morphological features of treated and untreated cells are stated in “Figure 9”.



A



B

Figure 8. (A): Effect of n-hexane fraction on A549 cell growth. The result is stated as % of cytotoxicity, (B): IC₅₀ of hot n-hexane fraction on the A549 cell line.

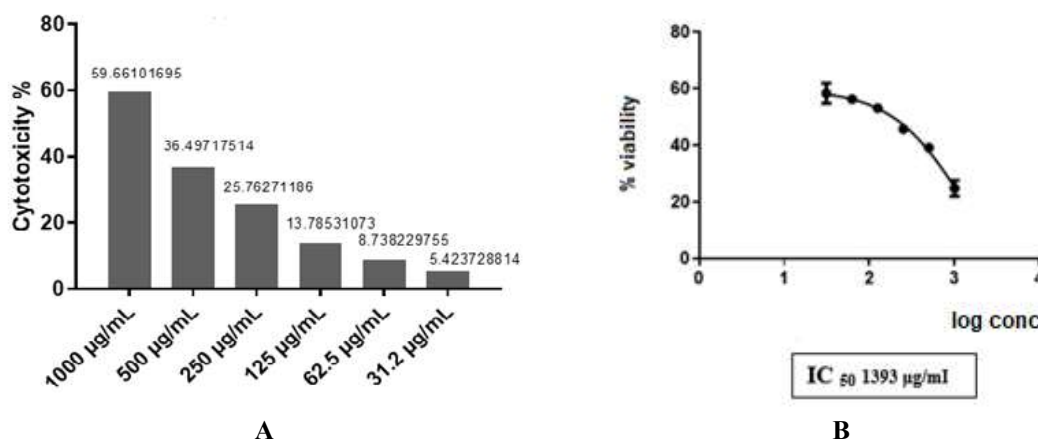


Figure 9. The morphological image of the A549 lung cancer cell line *in vitro*, seen at 10x magnification, shows (a) control cells and (b) cells treated with n. hexane fraction.

The value of IC₅₀ is 1393 µg/ml, and a concentration-dependent cytotoxic effect was produced. However, previous studies demonstrated a significant cytotoxic effect of the ethanolic leaf extract of *A. viridis* on the MCF-7 breast cancer cell line (IC₅₀ of 18.33 µg/ml)⁽⁵⁰⁾. Additionally, ethyl acetate extract from the whole plant has stronger anticancer properties against HepG2 and HT-29 cancer cells⁽⁵¹⁾. Several mechanisms induce the cytotoxic effect. One mechanism of cytotoxicity involves increasing the oxidative stress, leading to the interference of DNA replication and proliferation of the neoplastic cells, thus inducing apoptosis through reactive oxygen species formation in cancer cells. In neoplastic cells, antioxidants can decrease the reactive oxygen species to a level that promotes cancer growth, proliferation, and migration while decreasing some detrimental effects, like DNA damage⁽⁵²⁾. n-hexane extract of *A. viridis* contains significant amounts of antioxidants such as phytosterols, squalene, vitamin E, and other natural antioxidant compounds that terminate the effect of reactive oxygen species and thus modulate the extract's cytotoxic effect. The other possible explanation for this effect is that A549 is an adenocarcinoma cell line that might have a weak response to certain chemotherapeutic agents, such as pemetrexed and cisplatin. When tumors resist chemotherapeutic agents, they generally become cross-resistant to other anticancer drugs^(53, 54).

Conclusion

The plant is a rich source of terpenoids, especially phytosterols and squalene, particularly when the hot extraction method is used. The obtained data demonstrated the presence of homosalate only in the hot hexane extract and in a small concentration. The present study shows that the hot hexane extract of *Amaranthus viridis* exhibits a dose-dependent cytotoxic effect against the lung carcinoma (A-549) cell line. Further studies are required to evaluate the *in vitro* cytotoxic effect using other tests and higher concentrations.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

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Author Contributions

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استكشاف التركيب الكيميائي والتأثير السام للمستخلص الهكساني للأجزاء الهوائية من نبات عرف الديك

البري على سلالة الخلايا A549
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الخلاصة

ينتمي نبات عرف الديك البري (الأمارانث الأخضر) إلى عائلة الأمارانثوس، وهو يعتبر من الحبوب الكاذبة. يُظهر هذا العشب العديد من المستقلبات الثانوية، بما في ذلك البوليفينولات، والفيوتوستيرولات، والترينينات، والمشتقات الدهنية. ومن بين الأنشطة السريرية التي تم تقييمها وإثباتها أنه مضاد للالتهابات، ومضاد للأكسدة، ومضاد للسكري، وواقٍ للقلب، وواقٍ للكبد. ظهرت مؤخرًا العلاجات العشبية كخيار علاجي جديد جدير بالملاحظة للعديد من أنواع السرطان. السبب الأكثر شيوعًا لوفيات السرطان في العراق هو سرطان الرئة. في العراق، لا توجد دراسة سابقة حول الكيمياء النباتية والتأثير السام للخلايا لهذا العشب على الرغم من انتشاره الواسع. تم تحضير مستخلص ن. هكسان من الأجزاء الهوائية الكاملة من نبات الأمارانثوس فيريديس عن طريق النقع واستخراج سوكسليت. تم إخضاعه للكروماتوغرافيا الغازية / مطياف الكتلة وتحليل الكروماتوغرافيا السائلة عالية الضغط لتوصيف مكوناته. تم استخدام كروماتوغرافيا السائل عالي الضغط لتحديد الفيوتوستيرولات نوعيًا وكميًا. كان محصول الاستخلاص 0.66% و 1.01% لمستخلص الهكسان البارد والساخن على التوالي. في كروماتوغرافيا الغاز / مطياف الكتلة، كان عدد المركبات التي تم تحديدها 15 و 18. كان ثنائي (2-إيثيل هكسيل) فتالات هو المكون الرئيسي في مستخلص الهكسان البارد. تم الكشف عن أوميغا 3 (حمض 9،12،15-أوكتايديكاترينويك، Z، Z، (-Z) فقط في المستخلص البارد. تم تحديد 2 (H4) - بنزوفورانون، 6،7،7،a-تتراهيدرو-4،4،7-ثلاثي ميثيل-، (R) - والسكوالين في كلا المستخلصين ونسبة أعلى في المستخلص الساخن. تم الكشف عن حمض 9،12-Octadecadienoic acid (Z,Z) والهوموسالات فقط في مستخلص الهكسان الساخن ولأول مرة في مصنع عراقي. كشف تحليل كروماتوغرافيا السائل عالي الضغط عن وجود كامبسترول وستيغماستيرول وسبيناسترول وبيتا سيتوستيرول بكميات أكبر في المستخلص الساخن منه في البارد. كامبسترول هو الأقل تركيزًا، بينما سبيناسترول هو الأكثر تركيزًا. بناءً على النتائج، تم تقييم مستخلص الهكسان الساخن لتأثيره المضاد للسرطان في المختبر ضد خط الخلايا A549 باستخدام اختبار (3-، 4، 5-ثنائي ميثيل ثيازوليل) (2-، 2، 5-بروميد ثنائي فينيل تترازوليوم). أظهرت نتائج هذا الاختبار تأثيرًا سامًا يعتمد على الجرعة لمستخلص الهكسان الساخن بقيمة نصف التركيز المثبط الأقصى (IC50) البالغة 1393 ميكروجرام / مل، وقد يكون ذلك بسبب تأثيره المضاد للأكسدة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *Amaranthus viridis*، خط الخلية A549، هوموسالات، سبيناسترول، MTT