

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

A simple and rapid method for isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf containing high polysaccharide and polyphenol contents

Xiaofang Liao^{1,2†}, Hongwei Li^{2†}, Aziz Khan^{2†}, Yanhong Zhao¹, Wenhuan Hou¹, Xingfu Tang¹,
Kashif Akhtar³, Ruiyang Zhou^{2*}

¹ Cash Crop Research Institute of Guangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences, Nanning, 530007, China

² Key Laboratory of Plant Genetic and Breeding, College of Agriculture, Guangxi University, Nanning 530005,
China

³Institute of Nuclear Agricultural Sciences, College of Agriculture and Biotechnology, Zhejiang University,
Hangzhou 310058, China

*Correspondent: ruiyangzhou@aliyun.com

†These three authors contributed equally to this work and are considered as first authors.

Abstract

The isolation of high-quality RNA from kenaf is crucial for genetic and molecular biology studies. However, high levels of polysaccharide and polyphenol compounds in kenaf tissues could irreversibly bind to and coprecipitate with RNA, which complicates RNA extraction. In the present study, we proposed a simplified, time-saving and low-cost extraction method for isolating high quantities of high-quality RNA from several different kenaf tissues. RNA quality was measured for yield and purity, and the proposed protocol yielded high quantities of RNA (10.1-12.9 µg/g-FW). Spectrophotometric analysis showed that $A_{260/280}$ ratios of RNA samples were in the range of 2.11 to 2.13, and $A_{260/230}$ ratios were in the range of 2.04-2.24, indicating that the RNA samples were free of polyphenols, polysaccharides, and protein contaminants after isolation. The method of RNA extraction presented here was superior to the conventional CTAB method in terms of RNA isolation efficiency and was more sample-adaptable and cost-effective than commercial kits. Furthermore, to confirm downstream amenability, the high-quality RNA obtained from this method was successfully used for RT-PCR, real-time RT-PCR and Northern blot analysis. We provide an efficient and low-cost method for extracting high quantities of high-quality RNA from plants that are rich in polyphenols and polysaccharides, and this method was also validated for the isolation of high-quality RNA from other plants.

Key words: Kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus*); RNA isolation; high polysaccharide and polyphenol

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

32 contents; RT-PCR; Northern blot analysis

33

34 **1. Background**

35 Obtaining RNA of high purity and integrity is important for conducting analytical studies, such
36 as reverse transcription, quantitative real-time polymerase chain reaction (qRT-PCR), Northern blot
37 and complementary DNA (cDNA) library construction, in plant molecular biology. However,
38 isolation of high-quality RNA from higher plant tissues is a challenging process due to the
39 interference of endogenous RNase activation and external RNase introduction. In particular, tissues
40 that are rich in polysaccharides, polyphenolic compounds and other types of secondary metabolites
41 complicate RNA isolation (Tong et al., 2012). Polysaccharides are visually evident by their viscous,
42 glue-like texture and make the pipetting of nucleic acids unmanageable (Wang and Stegemann,
43 2010), and they can also coprecipitate with nucleic acids and constitute the major hurdle for RNA
44 isolation (Ding et al., 2008). The coprecipitation of these compounds with RNA reduces yield and
45 increases the possibility of rapid degradation, making the sample unsuitable for further downstream
46 applications due to the severe inhibition of enzymatic activity (Yang et al., 2017; Fang et al., 1992;
47 Moser et al., 2004). In turn, polyphenols are known to be readily oxidized to form quinones that can
48 irreversibly interact with proteins and nucleic acids to form high-molecular-weight complexes that
49 hinder isolation of good-quality RNA (Japelaghi et al., 2011). Furthermore, with maturity or
50 stressful plant growth conditions, tissues contain increased quantities of polyphenols and
51 polysaccharides, which may further encumber the isolation of high-quality RNA (Choudhary et al.,
52 2016). Hence, with the removal of such components is necessary to achieve the isolation of RNA of
53 high quantity and quality. Many specific protocols, including those utilizing
54 cetyltrimethylammonium bromide (CTAB)/NaCl (Chang et al., 1993), CTAB/LiCl (Khairul-Anuar
55 et al., 2019), TRIzol (Guan et al., 2019) and sodium dodecyl sulfate (SDS) (Ma et al., 2015),
56 designed for plants with a high content of polysaccharides and polyphenols, have been developed
57 and used to render a high quantity of high-quality total RNA from young leaves (Dash, 2013).
58 However, the majority of them pose certain limitations, as they are often expensive (Li et al., 2017),
59 time consuming (Sivakumar et al., 2007), tissue specific (Guan et al., 2019) or technically complex
60 (Japelaghi et al., 2011).

61 Kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus*) is an important fiber crop that is widely used in paper-making
62 and weaving (Monti and Alexopoulou, 2013) and harbors significant heterosis in terms of phloem

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

63 fiber production. Therefore, understanding the genetic factors underlying heterosis in kenaf holds
64 promise for its breeding and production. Nucleic acid extraction from kenaf is notoriously difficult
65 because kenaf has high concentrations of polysaccharides and polyphenols, which could
66 coprecipitate with RNA and inhibit the enzymatic reactions in subsequent steps (Japelaghi et al.,
67 2011). Several protocols, such as those of commercial kits, have been reported for RNA isolation
68 from kenaf tissues (Li et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2019). However, the obtained RNA was
69 contaminated by polysaccharides and easily degraded by residual RNase that could not be inhibited.
70 Furthermore, although the extraction of nucleic acids was shortened using commercial reagent kits
71 compared to conventional CTAB methods, these are not only expensive, but also contaminated by
72 phenolic compounds, saccharides and proteins, resulting in low-quality RNA that is unsuitable for
73 downstream applications.

74 Here, we present a simplified, efficient and cost-effective method for the isolation of
75 high-quality total RNA from kenaf anthers, petals, leaves, stems and roots. For comparative
76 purposes, we established a protocol for RNA extraction using CTAB in the extraction buffer,
77 lithium chloride (LiCl) for precipitation (Zhou et al., 2015), and a commercially available
78 ready-to-use reagent (Huayueyang, Beijing) for nucleic acid extraction. In contrast to the other
79 tested methods, the RNA prepared by this protocol represented a significant improvement in terms
80 of time savings and economics; additionally, the RNA was of high quality, extracted in high
81 quantities and successfully used for downstream applications such as RT-PCR, qRT-PCR and
82 Northern blot analysis. The proposed protocol was subsequently employed for successful RNA
83 extraction from other plants, such as cotton, Roselle and soybean.

84 **2. Materials and methods**

85 **2.1. Plant material**

86 Kenaf was cultivated in the test field of Guangxi Academy of Agricultural Sciences (Nanning,
87 Guangxi, China), and leaves, stems, roots, petals and anthers were collected at the flowering stage.
88 Both cotton anthers and Roselle calyxes were collected at the flowering stage as well. Soybean stem
89 were harvested from sixty-day-old plants grown in the field. All samples were flash-frozen in liquid
90 nitrogen and stored at -80 °C for further use.

91 **2.2. RNA extraction**

92 **(1) Preparation**

93 Prior to RNA extraction, mortars and pestles were wrapped in tin foil and baked in an oven at

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

180 °C for 6 hours. All glassware was treated with 0.01% (v/v) diethylpyrocarbonate (DEPC) and autoclaved, and consumables (tips and tubes) were certified as RNase-free. All chemicals used were of molecular biology grade and purchased from Solarbio (Beijing, China). To limit exposure to noxious components (e.g., β -mercaptoethanol (B-ME), guanidine thiocyanate and phenol-chloroform), RNA extraction was conducted in a fume hood.

(2) Solutions and reagents

The RNA extraction buffer was composed of 100 mM Tris (pH 8.0), 25 mM EDTA (pH 8.0), 2 M NaCl, 2% CTAB (w/v) and 7% B-ME (V/V)¹. Other solutions used in this study included a saturated guanidinium isothiocyanate solution (5 M), 100 and 75% (v/v) ethanol, RNase-free distilled deionized water, and water-saturated phenol: chloroform: isoamyl alcohol (PCI) 25:24:1 (v/v/v). All solutions were prepared with 0.01% DEPC-treated distilled water. RNA isolation was carried out twice using independent pools of tissue samples.

Notes: ¹ added just before use.

(3) Nucleic acid isolation procedure

Nucleic acid isolation was carried out using the following steps:

- ① Initially, approximately 0.2-0.5 g of plant tissue sample was ground into a fine powder using a prechilled mortar and pestle under liquid nitrogen. Subsequently, the homogenized sample was immediately transferred into a 2-mL RNase-free centrifuge tube to minimize any RNA degradation.
- ② A total of 1 mL of extraction buffer that had been preheated to 65 °C was added, and the suspension was thoroughly mixed and incubated for 10 min at 65 °C for adequate lysis.
- ③ An equal volume of PCI (25: 24:1 v/v/v) was added and mixed thoroughly, and the mixture then centrifuged at 18,000 ×g for 10 min at 4 °C.
- ④ The aqueous phase was transferred into a new 2-mL RNase-free tube, and saturated guanidine isothiocyanate (5 M) was added at a ratio of 1.7/1 according to the volume of supernatant. Then, 0.5-fold volume anhydrous ethanol was added and mixed gently.
- ⑤ The mixture was transferred to an RNA purification column and centrifuged at 18,000 ×g for 30 s at 4 °C.
- ⑥ The eluate in the collection tube was discarded, and step ⑤ was repeated until all the mixture had been processed.
- ⑦ A total of 750 μ L of ethanol (75%) was added to the RNA spin column, which was then centrifuged at 18,000 ×g for 30 s at 4 °C to wash the spin column membrane. The eluate in the

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

125 collection tube was discarded.

126 ⑧ The RNA spin column was centrifuged for 2 min at full speed and 4 °C to ensure that no ethanol
127 remained in the column.

128 ⑨ The RNA spin column was placed in a new 1.5-mL RNase-free tube. Then, 50 µL of RNase-free
129 deionized water was added directly to the spin column membrane, and the column was placed on
130 ice for 2 min. The tube was centrifuged for 2 min at 18,000 × g at 4 °C to elute the RNA.

131 The other two comparative RNA extraction methods included the protocol described by Zhou
132 (2015) and a ready-to-use RNA extraction kit (Huayueyang, Beijing) that was implemented
133 following the manufacturer's instructions. Each kenaf tissue type (anthers, petals, mature leaves,
134 roots and stems) was extracted in two independent experiments and measured by each method.

135 **2.3. Assessment of RNA quantity and quality**

136 The purity and concentration of our RNA extracts were determined using a spectrophotometer
137 (NanoDrop 2000, Thermo Scientific, USA) by measuring absorbance ratios of A_{260}/A_{280} and
138 A_{260}/A_{230} . The integrity of total RNA was verified by running a 500-ng sample in a 1% (w/v)
139 agarose gel that was then stained with SYBR Green II (Tiandz, China) and imaged using a UV
140 transilluminator from Syngene (Bio-Rad, USA).

141 **2.4. Reverse Transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR), real-time RT-PCR and** 142 **Northern blots**

143 The isolated RNA samples were reverse transcribed to confirm downstream amenability. One
144 microgram of total RNA was used in a reverse transcription reaction using TransScript One-Step
145 gDNA removal and cDNA synthesis SuperMix (TransGene Biotech, Beijing, China) to obtain 20 µL
146 of cDNA solution following the manufacturer's instructions. The cDNA was PCR amplified by
147 *cox2*, in which primers were designed to span introns and amplify a 717-bp fragment for cDNA and
148 a 2208-bp fragment for gDNA, including a 1491-bp intron (primers are shown in Table 1). PCRs
149 were carried out in a final volume of 20 µL of reaction mixture containing 10 µL of 2 × Taq Master
150 Mix (Vazyme, China), 0.3 µM each forward and reverse primer and 50 ng of cDNA template. The
151 thermal cycling program for PCR amplification was as follows: predenaturation at 94 °C for 3 min,
152 followed by 35 cycles of 40 s at 94 °C for denaturation, 1 min at 58 °C for annealing, 2 min at
153 72 °C for extension, and a final step of 5 min at 72 °C. The amplified product was visualized by gel
154 electrophoresis in 1% (w/v) agarose gel. We also presented some samples for the expression of the
155 mitochondrial genes *cox3* and *atp9* using real-time RT-PCR and Northern blot analysis following

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

156 the procedure described by Liao et al (2016). All primer sequences used in this study are listed in
157 Table 1.

158

159 **Table 1** Primers used for this study.

Gene	Primer Sequence (5'-3')	Function
<i>cox2</i>	F: GGATTTCAAGACGCAGCAACACCTA R: TTAAGCTTCCCCGGTTTGGG	Primers for RT-PCR
<i>atp9</i>	qF: ATGAATGATAAAGCGCGTGACGAG qR: CGGTTAGAGCAAAGCCCAAATG	
<i>cox3</i>	qF: CGGAGCTTTGGCAACCACCG qR: ACGTAGAACATCGCGCCACCA	Primers for probe labeling
<i>atp9</i>	F: ATGAATGATAAAGCGCGTGACGAGA R: TCAGAATACGAATAAGATCAGAAAGGCCA	
<i>cox3</i>	F: ACCGAGGCAAAGTGTTTATGAT R: AGCCCGATTCTCTTTGTCTTC	

160 3. Results and discussion

161 3.1. Quantity, quality and yield of total RNA

162 Several total RNA extraction protocols specifically designed for kenaf have been reported.
163 However, these protocols present important limitations: many reported methods utilize expensive
164 commercial extraction kits (Li et al., 2017; Tang et al., 2019), others were time consuming, which
165 could cause a potential risk of RNA degradation in the process of extraction (Zhou et al., 2015),
166 while other kenaf-based protocols are for specific tissues (Chen et al., 2011). In the current study,
167 we described a rapid, efficient and reliable protocol that allowed for the extraction of high-quality
168 total RNA from several kenaf tissues. With our method, we successfully isolated high-quality RNA
169 from kenaf anthers (Fig. 1: lanes 1-2), sepals (Fig. 1: lanes 3-4), mature leaves (Fig. 1: lanes 5-6),
170 roots (Fig. 1: lanes 7-8) and stems (Fig. 1: lanes 9-10). RNA samples showed two sharp and
171 well-resolved ribosomal bands corresponding to the 28S and 18S rRNAs on 1.0% agarose gels (Fig.
172 1), and the 28S rRNA band was twice as abundant as the 18S rRNA band (Fig. 1), indicating that
173 little or no RNA samples isolated from the different tissues were degraded during the extraction.
174 Spectrophotometric analysis revealed A_{260}/A_{280} ratios ranging between 2.11 and 2.15 (Table 1),
175 indicating a lack of protein contamination. Similarly, the A_{260}/A_{230} ratios of all tested samples were
176 greater than 2.0, indicating that the obtained total RNA was highly pure and free of protein,
177 polyphenol and polysaccharide contamination (Dash, 2013; Guan et al., 2019; Khairul-Anuar et al.,
178 2019). The yields of total RNA extracted from different kenaf tissues were quite diverse depending

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

179 on the tissue sources. The kenaf anthers yielded the highest amount of total RNA (229.31 $\mu\text{g/g}$ fresh
180 weight (FW)), and the root issues displayed the lowest yield levels (76.24 $\mu\text{g/g}$ FW) (Table 1),
181 indicative of the higher number of RNA cells in kenaf anthers than in roots, resulting in high sample
182 recovery.

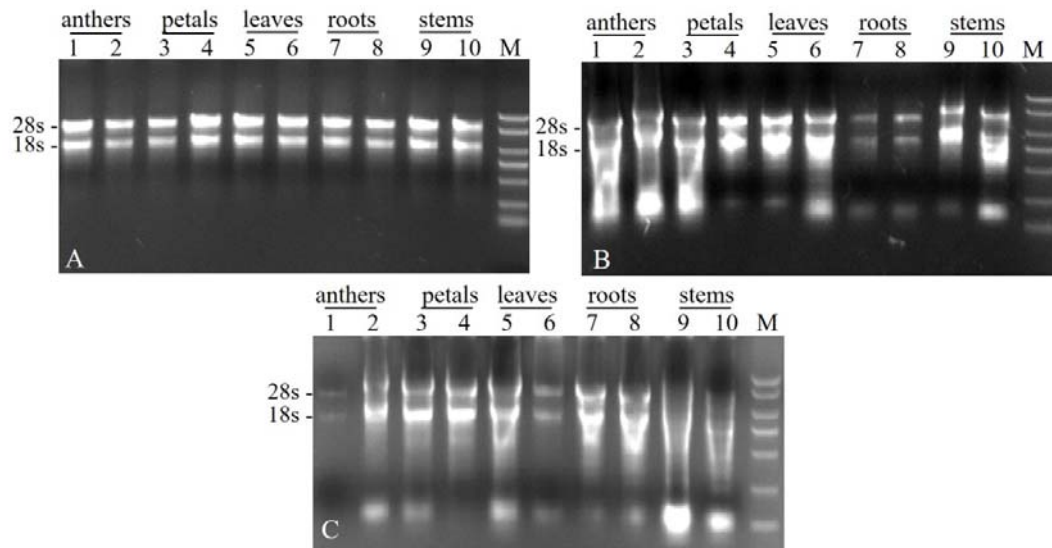
183 3.2. Comparison with the other RNA extraction methods

184 Nucleic acids isolated from kenaf tissues following the proposed protocol were compared in
185 terms of quantity and quality with those isolated from the LiCl-based protocol proposed by Zhou
186 (2015) and the ready-to-use RNA extraction kit (Huayueyang, Beijing). The quantity and purity of
187 kenaf RNA preparations when using this simple protocol were found to be superior to those
188 obtained using the previously reported protocols (Table 2 and Fig. 1). As shown in Table 2, the total
189 nucleic acid quantity was the highest when using the current protocol according to
190 spectrophotometric quantification, followed by similar amounts when using the RNA extraction kit,
191 and the yield was the lowest when using the method described by Zhou (2015). However, gel
192 electrophoresis showed that nucleic acids extracted from kenaf tissues were nearly degraded,
193 especially when using the Li-Cl-based protocol described by Zhou (2015) (Fig. 1B and 1C).
194 Nucleic acid purity indicated by A_{260}/A_{280} absorbance ratios was between 1.48 and 1.94 for the
195 LiCl-based and RNA extraction kit protocols, respectively. This suggested that the high yields
196 shown by spectrophotometric analysis were likely the result of false measurements of secondary
197 metabolite contaminants (Wang et al., 2012), as polysaccharides and polyphenolic compounds often
198 coprecipitate and contaminate nucleic acids during extraction, thereby affecting both the quality and
199 quantity of isolated nucleic acids (Kansal et al., 2008). Similarly, A_{260}/A_{230} absorbance ratios were
200 lower (ranging between 0.55 and 1.41) following these two protocols, indicative of contamination
201 with polyphenols and polysaccharides (Kim and Hamada, 2005).

202 In the proposed method, CTAB, a strong ionic denaturing detergent, at a final concentration of
203 2% (w/v) and a high concentration of B-ME (7% (v/v)) were added in the extraction buffer. This
204 could completely solubilize the cell membranes and bind to the nucleic acid, as well as eliminate
205 most of the polysaccharides and polyphenolic compounds (Kim and Hamada, 2005; Wang et al.,
206 2008). In addition, a relatively high NaCl content (2 M) in the extraction buffer promoted salting
207 out of the protein and avoided coprecipitation of polysaccharides with the RNA while leaving the
208 RNA in solution (El-Ashram et al., 2016). Moreover, guanidinium isothiocyanate is an RNase
209 inhibitor that can effectively inhibit the activity of RNase during extraction (Suzuki et al., 2001).

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

210 Furthermore, the presence of precooled 5 M guanidinium isothiocyanate and absolute ethyl alcohol
 211 that could bind to nucleic acids formed a jelly-like precipitate that could then be adsorbed by an
 212 RNA purification column. Taken together, these results show that good-quality total RNA was
 213 successfully obtained from kenaf tissues with high levels of secondary metabolites. The current
 214 protocol of RNA isolation was not only efficient but also required less time (~ 1.5 h) than earlier
 215 methods described by Chen et al (2011) and Zhou et al (2015), which required ~ 8 h.
 216 Simultaneously, lower amounts of reagents were used throughout the current procedure, thus
 217 contributing to reduced costs.



218

219 **Fig. 1** Gel electrophoresis of kenaf RNA isolated from different tissues using the proposed protocol
 220 (A), an RNA extraction kit (B) and a Li-Cl-based method (Zhou et al., 2015) (C). M, BM 5000
 221 marker.

222 **Table 2** The purity and quality determination of RNA from kenaf tissues isolated by three different
 223 protocols.

Protocol used	Tissue	Yield of total RNA ($\mu\text{g/g}$)	A_{260}/A_{280} ratio	A_{260}/A_{230} ratio
Current proposed	anthers	229.31 \pm 24.41	2.11 \pm 0.01	2.24 \pm 0.14
Current proposed	petals	91.56 \pm 9.73	2.11 \pm 0.01	2.27 \pm 0.09
Current proposed	leaves	95.75 \pm 6.1	2.15 \pm 0.01	2.04 \pm 0.08
Current proposed	roots	76.24 \pm 13.89	2.15 \pm 0.01	2.40 \pm 0.06
Current proposed	stems	105.96 \pm 13.32	2.13 \pm 0.02	2.32 \pm 0.21
RNA extraction kit	anthers	146.84 \pm 31.06	1.82 \pm 0.27	0.69 \pm 0.04
RNA extraction kit	petals	65.83 \pm 10.16	1.87 \pm 0.33	1.20 \pm 0.98
RNA extraction kit	leaves	80.52 \pm 14.72	1.48 \pm 0.03	1.11 \pm 0.42
RNA extraction kit	roots	19.04 \pm 5.62	1.94 \pm 0.07	1.41 \pm 0.55
RNA extraction kit	stems	65.35 \pm 9.53	1.90 \pm 0.07	1.38 \pm 0.78
Zhou (2015)	anthers	30.64 \pm 9.9	1.94 \pm 0.07	1.00 \pm 0.57

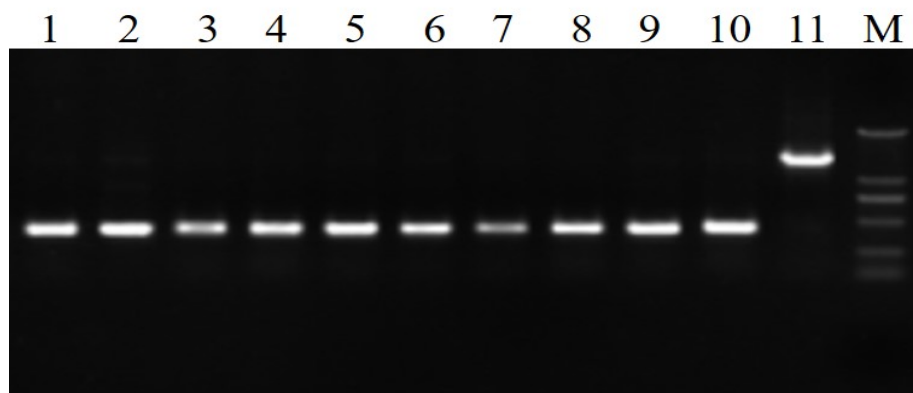
Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

Zhou (2015)	petals	33.85±10.22	1.68±0.30	0.92±0.15
Zhou (2015)	leaves	23.22±4.76	1.70±0.36	0.57±0.12
Zhou (2015)	roots	42.39±2.98	1.88±0.12	0.55±0.16
Zhou (2015)	stems	26.33±0.36	1.48±0.03	0.67±0.08

224

225 3.3. Reverse transcription and downstream application of the RNA

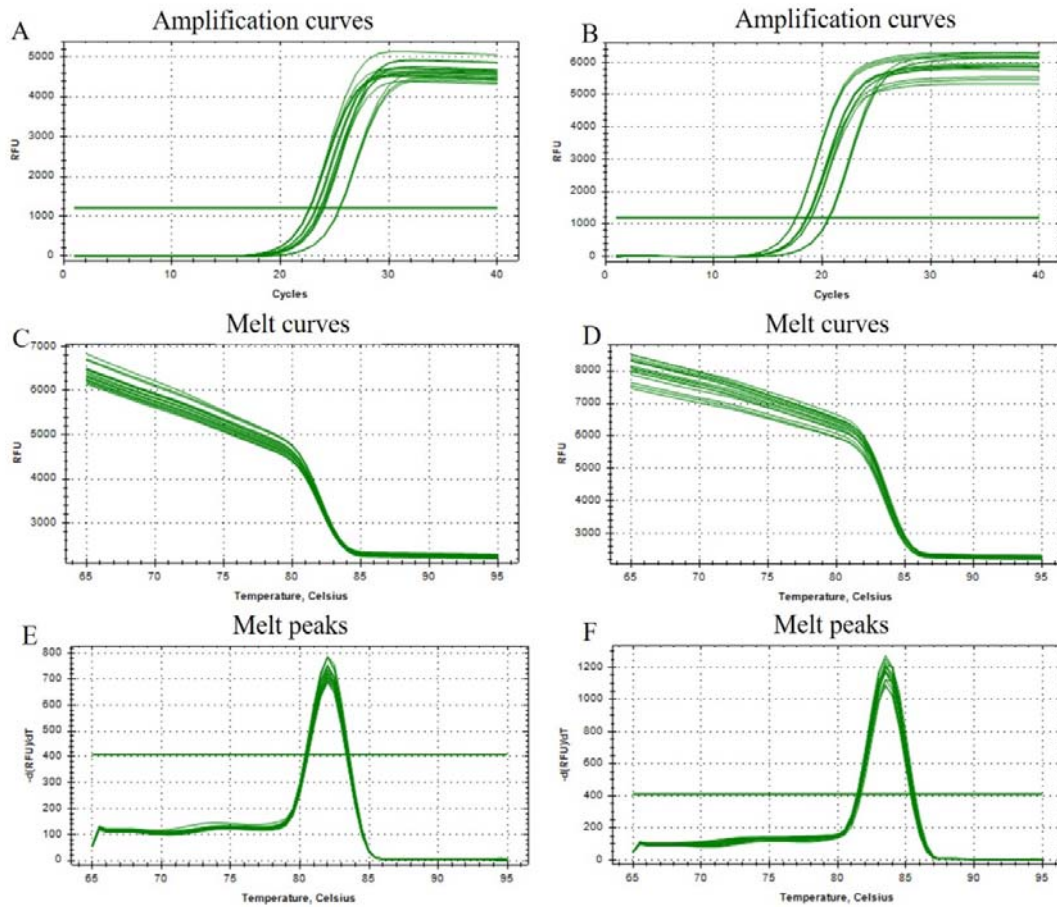
226 The RNA isolated by the proposed method was tested by amplifying the *cox2* gene fragment. A
227 2208-bp fragment was amplified using genomic DNA as a template, and a 717-bp fragment was
228 amplified using cDNA as a template (Fig. 2). This suggested that the genomic DNA was
229 successfully eliminated from all samples by the gDNA remover reagent during reverse transcription,
230 and PCR products using cDNA as the template indicated high-quality RNA extraction. Furthermore,
231 this differential amplification of fragments in genomic and cDNA samples not only proved the
232 quality of isolated RNA samples and the absence of DNA contamination but also confirmed the
233 amenability of this method for downstream processing without any ambiguity. Moreover, the
234 isolation of RNA with the current protocol was successfully employed for real-time RT-PCR
235 (qRT-PCR) gene expression analysis and Northern blot analysis. As shown in Fig. 3, the values of
236 qRT-PCR cycle thresholds (Ct) ranged from 17 to 25 cycles (Fig. 3A and 3B), and the melting
237 curve was specific, with a solitary peak occurring at approximately 82 °C to 83 °C (Fig. 3C-F). In
238 addition to qRT-PCR, Northern blot analysis was carried out to further demonstrate the quality of
239 RNA prepared by our protocol. The fluorescent signal with clear bands and high intensity was
240 detected in RNA transcripts (Fig. 4), indicating that high-quality RNA was isolated from kenaf
241 tissues and was suitable for downstream application.



242

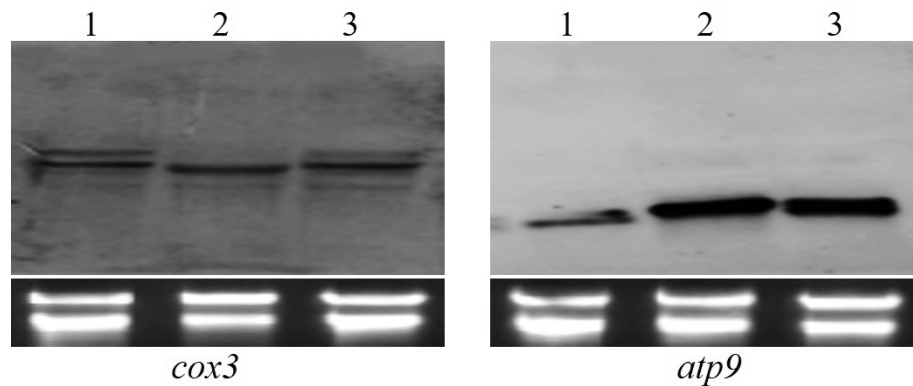
243 **Fig. 2** RT-PCR determination of the extracted RNA isolated by the current protocol. Lanes 1-10, the
244 amplification products of RT-PCR that used cDNA from kenaf anthers, petals, leaves, roots and stems as templates.
245 Lane 11, the PCR amplification product that used kenaf anther gDNA as the template. M, BM 5000 marker.

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf



246

247 **Fig. 3** qPCR analysis of *cox3* and *atp9* genes in kenaf tissues. A-B, application curves of the qPCR
248 products for *cox3* (left) and *atp9* (right); C-D, melting curves of the qPCR products for *cox3* (left) and *atp9* (right);
249 E-F, melting peaks of the qPCR products for *cox3* (left) and *atp9* (right).



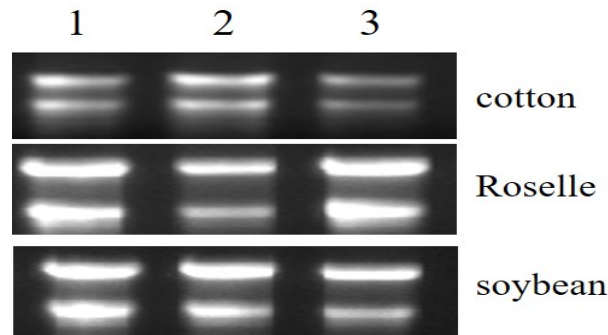
250

251 **Fig. 4** Northern blot analysis for *cox3* and *atp9* of three varieties of kenaf RNA extracted by the
252 current protocol. The three varieties of kenaf shown in lanes 1-3 were UG93A, UG93B and F1
253 (UG93A/UG93R), respectively.

254 The present protocol could also be successfully applied for RNA extraction from other
255 recalcitrant plant tissues, such as cotton and Roselle. The consistency of the results obtained from

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

256 independent biological replicates confirmed the reproducibility of this method and provided a
257 useful tool for molecular studies focusing on crops rich in secondary metabolites. The protocol was
258 also successfully employed using soybean stems as material (Fig. 5) therefore potentially having a
259 very wide range of applicability.



260

261 **Fig. 5** Gel electrophoresis of RNA isolated from different plants using the proposed protocol. Lanes

262 1-3 represent three independent biological replicates.

263

264 **4. Conclusions**

265 We reported a new protocol for the extraction of high quantities of high-quality RNA from
266 kenaf tissues with high levels of polysaccharides and polyphenols, and the extracted RNA was
267 suitable for subsequent gene isolation and expression experiments, such as reverse transcription,
268 qRT-PCR, and Northern blot analysis. This protocol is an easy, efficient, relatively inexpensive, and
269 highly reproducible method to isolate RNA from kenaf, especially from tissues such as anthers,
270 petals and leaves, which are rich in polyphenols and polysaccharides. Thus, this simple and fast
271 protocol has been routinely used in our laboratory for RNA isolation from cotton, Roselle, soybean
272 stems and other plants with high levels of secondary metabolites. This protocol greatly reduces
273 labor time and costs without compromising the quality and yield of RNA samples.

274

275 **Declaration of Competing Interest**

276 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

277

278 **Acknowledgments**

279 This study was supported by the National Science Foundation of China (No. 31571719 and No.
280 31660430), the Natural Science Foundation of Guangxi Province (No. 2018JJB130045 and
281 2019JJA130200), and Basic Business Expenses Project of Guangxi Academy of Agricultural
282 Sciences (No. Guinongke2019M23).

Isolating high-quality RNA from kenaf

283

284 **Author Contributions**

285 R. Z. initiated the experiment. X. L. conducted the experiment and drafted the manuscript. H.
286 L. isolated the RNA. Y. Z. and B. Z. conducted the Northern blot analysis. W. H. and X. T. assisted
287 with the experiment. C. L. provided suggestions for the manuscript. A. K. and K. A. revised the
288 manuscript and edit language.

289

290

Parsed Citations

- Chang, S., Puryear, J., and Cairney, J. (1993).** A simple and efficient method for isolating RNA from pine trees. *Plant Mol Biol Rep* 11, 113-116.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Choudhary, S.B., Kumar, M., Chowdhury, I., Singh, R.K., Pandey, S.P., Sharma, H.K., and Karmakar, P.G. (2016).** An efficient and cost effective method of RNA extraction from mucilage, phenol and secondary metabolite rich bark tissue of tossa jute (*C. olitorius* L.) actively developing phloem fiber. *3 Biotech* 6, 100.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Dash, P.K. (2013).** High quality RNA isolation from ployphenol-, polysaccharide- and protein-rich tissues of lentil (*Lens culinaris*). *3 Biotech* 3, 109-114.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Ding, L.W., Sun, Q.Y., Wang, ZY., Sun, Y.B., and Xu, ZF. (2008).** Using silica particles to isolate total RNA from plant tissues recalcitrant to extraction in guanidine thiocyanate. *Anal Biochem* 374, 426-428.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- El-Ashram, S., Al, N.I., and Suo, X. (2016).** Nucleic acid protocols: Extraction and optimization. *Biotechnol Rep (Amst)* 12, 33-39.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Fang, G., Hammar, S., and Grumet, R. (1992).** A quick and inexpensive method for removing polysaccharides from plant genomic DNA. *Biotechniques* 13, 52-54, 56.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Guan, L., Ma, X., Zhou, X., Tan, B., and Wang, ZY. (2019).** An optimized method to obtain high-quality RNA from cassava storage root. *3 Biotech* 9, 118.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Japelaghi, R.H., Haddad, R., and Garoosi, G. (2011).** Rapid and Efficient Isolation of High Quality Nucleic Acids from Plant Tissues Rich in Polyphenols and Polysaccharides. *Mol Biotechnol* 49, 129-137.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Japelaghi, R.H., Haddad, R., and Garoosi, G.A. (2011).** Rapid and efficient isolation of high quality nucleic acids from plant tissues rich in polyphenols and polysaccharides. *Mol Biotechnol* 49, 129-137.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Kansal, R., Kuhar, K., Verma, I., Gupta, R.N., Gupta, V.K., and Koundal, K.R. (2008).** Improved and convenient method of RNA isolation from polyphenols and polysaccharide rich plant tissues. *Indian J Exp Biol* 46, 842-845.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Khairul-Anuar, M.A., Mazumdar, P., Lau, S.E., Tan, T.T., and Harikrishna, J.A. (2019).** High-quality RNA isolation from pigment-rich *Dendrobium* flowers. *3 Biotech* 9, 371.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Kim, S.H., and Hamada, T. (2005).** Rapid and reliable method of extracting DNA and RNA from sweetpotato, *Ipomoea batatas* (L). *Lam Biotechnol Lett* 27, 1841-1845.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Li, H., Li, D., Chen, A., Tang, H., Li, J., and Huang, S. (2017).** RNA-seq for comparative transcript profiling of kenaf under salinity stress. *J Plant Res* 130, 365-372.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Liao, X., Zhao, Y., Chen, P., Zhou, B., Diao, Y., Yu, M., Huang, Z., and Zhou, R. (2016).** A Comparative Analysis of the *atp8* Gene Between a Cytoplasmic Male Sterile Line and Its Maintainer and Further Development of a Molecular Marker Specific to Male Sterile Cytoplasm in Kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus* L.). *Plant Mol Biol Rep* 34, 29-36.
Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)
Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)
- Ma, Z., Huang, B., Xu, S., Chen, Y., Li, S., and Lin, S. (2015).** Isolation of High-Quality Total RNA from Chinese Fir (*Cunninghamia*

lanceolata (Lamb.) Hook. Plos One 10, e130234.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Monti, A, and Alexopoulou, E. (2013). Kenaf: A Multi-Purpose Crop for Several Industrial Applications, Vol Library of Congress Control Number: 2013940075, (London,UK: Springer-Verlag London).

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Moser, C., Gatto, P., Moser, M., Pindo, M., and Velasco, R. (2004). Isolation of functional RNA from small amounts of different grape and apple tissues. Mol Biotechnol 26, 95-100.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Sivakumar, S., Franco, O.L., and Thayumanavan, B. (2007). Isolation of RNA from Polysaccharide-Rich Seeds. Preparative Biochemistry and Biotechnology 37, 323-332.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Suzuki, Y., Makino, A., and Mae, T. (2001). An efficient method for extraction of RNA from rice leaves at different ages using benzyl chloride. J Exp Bot 52, 1575-1579.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Tang, D., Wei, F., Kashif, M.H., Munsif, F., and Zhou, R. (2019). Identification and analysis of RNA editing sites in chloroplast transcripts of kenaf (*Hibiscus cannabinus* L.). 3 Biotech 9, 361.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Tong, Z, Qu, S., Zhang, J., Wang, F., Tao, J., Gao, Z., and Zhang, Z (2012). A modified protocol for RNA extraction from different peach tissues suitable for gene isolation and real-time PCR analysis. Mol Biotechnol 50, 229-236.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Wang, G., Wang, G., Zhang, X., Wang, F., and Song, R. (2012). Isolation of high quality RNA from cereal seeds containing high levels of starch. Phytochem Anal 23, 159-163.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Wang, L., and Stegemann, J.P. (2010). Extraction of high quality RNA from polysaccharide matrices using cetyltrimethylammonium bromide. Biomaterials 31, 1612-1618.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Wang, X., Tian, W., and Li, Y. (2008). Development of an efficient protocol of RNA isolation from recalcitrant tree tissues. Mol Biotechnol 38, 57-64.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Yang, F., Wang, G., Xu, W., and Hong, N. (2017). A rapid silica spin column-based method of RNA extraction from fruit trees for RT-PCR detection of viruses. J VIROL METHODS 247, 61-67.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Chen, M., Chen F., Yan, K., Liu X., Xu, J., Tao, A., and Qi, J. (2011). Comparison and analysis of methods of extracting high-quality total RNA from kenaf leaves. Journal of Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (Natural Science Edition) 40, 561-565.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)

Zhou, Y., Chen, C., Chen, P., Diao, Y., Zhou, R. (2015). A method of extracting high quality total rna from the anthers and petals of kenaf. Tianjin Agricultural Sciences. 21, 13-18.

Pubmed: [Author and Title](#)

Google Scholar: [Author Only Title Only Author and Title](#)