

## PRODUCTION OF CELLULASE-FREE XYLANASE FROM A LOCALLY ISOLATED STREPTOMYCES PSEUDOGRISEOLUS

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### ABSTRACT

A total of 91 strains of actinomycetes were isolated from compost and soil from Aja city. These isolates were tested for their ability to produce xylanase qualitatively using three different screening tests and the strains that showed positive results were tested quantitatively to select the potent xylanase producer. Three isolates, two from compost (9C and 11C) and one isolate from soil (34S), were found to produce highest xylanase activity. These three isolates were identified as *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*, *S. werraensis* and *S. griseoflavus*. *S. pseudogriseolus* was selected for its highest cellulase-free xylanase activity. The enzyme production from this strain was maximized by optimizing the environmental and nutritional conditions. The crude enzyme showed an optimum activity at pH6 and showed pH stability over the range from 5 to 11. This enzyme also showed an optimum temperature of 60°C and thermally stable up to 40°C and retained 65% of its activity at 50°C and totally inactivated beyond 60°C.

**Key words:** Xylanase, *Streptomyces*, identification, production and characterization

### INTRODUCTION

Hemicelluloses including xylans are the second most abundant natural polysaccharide following cellulose (Collin et al., 2005). These compounds are present in the cell wall and in the middle lamella of plant cells. Agricultural residues contain 20- 40% hemicelluloses formed by pentose sugars (Magge and Kosaric, 1985). Monomers of various hemicelluloses are useful in the production of different antibiotics, alcohols, animal feed and fuels (Thompson, 1983). Hemicelluloses consist of a mixture of hexosans, pentosans and polyuronides. Xylan is the most known type of the hemicelluloses. It has a linear backbone

of  $\beta$ -1,4-linked D-xylopyranose residues that often has side chains of O-acetyl, arabinosyl and methylglucuronosyl substituents (Blanco et al., 1997; Maheshwari et al., 2000).

There is great interest in the enzymatic hydrolysis of xylan due to possible applications in feed stock, chemical production and paper manufacturing (Coughlan and Hazlewood, 1993). Endo- $\beta$ -1,4-xylanase (1,4- $\beta$ - D-xylan xylanohydrolase: E.C. 3.2.1.8) is the main enzyme responsible for the cleavage of the linkages within the xylan backbone (Belfaouih et al., 2002). Xylanases are widely distributed in many species of bacteria (Yang et al., 1995;

Roy, 2004; Pason et al., 2006) and fungi (Knob and Carmona, 2008; Antoine et al., 2009; Gupta et al., 2009), (Wong et al., 1988; Senior et al., 1989; Eriksson et al., 1990).

Actinomycetes play a significant role in recycling of nutrients and involve in the primary degradation of organic matter in compost and related materials (Sykes and Skinner, 1973). They are considered as an important source of enzymes involving in lignocelluloses degradation and activity against xylan (McCarthy, 1987). Actinomycetes xylanase activity is largely known from studies on *Streptomyces* spp. (Yasui, et al., 1988; Ball and McCarthy, 1989) and *Thermomonospora* spp. (Stutzenberger and Bodine, 1992).

This investigation was undertaken to isolate actinomycetes which are capable of producing high xylanase activity and to, identify the best produces and optimizing the culture conditions for the enzyme production. Also, the characterization of the crude enzyme from the best producer was studied.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Isolation of actinomycetes :**

An air dried samples of compost and soil (50gm of each) were dissolved separately in 200ml of sterile distilled water and subjected to shake on a reciprocal shaker for 2 hr. A serial dilution has been done ( $10^{-1}$  to  $10^{-6}$ ) and then used to inoculate the isolation medium. Starch-nitrate agar plates supplemented with the anti-fungus nystatin (50U/ml) and the anti-bacterium nalidixic acid (20mg/ml) (Seong et al., 2001) were inoculated with 100 ml

from the different dilutions and incubated at 30°C for 7-10 days and the appropriate plates were used for the isolation of single actinomycete colonies.

### **Qualitative screening of xylanase enzyme :**

Actinomycete isolates from both soil and compost were screened qualitatively on agar plates containing the medium adopted by Wang et al. (2003) which has the following ingredients (%): xylan (from oat spelt), 0.25; NaNO<sub>3</sub>, 0.1; K<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 0.1; MgSO<sub>4</sub>.7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.05; yeast extract, 0.05 and agar, 2.0. The pH was adjusted to about 7.0. Plates were incubated at 30°C for 3 days. Xylanase activity was checked by the formation of clear zone around growth, staining the plates with 0.5% Congo red for 15min. then destained with 1M NaCl or by flooding the plates with absolute ethanol for 16 h at room temperature.

### **Enzyme production :**

The isolate to be selected was cultivated in 250 ml-capacities Erlenmeyer flasks each containing 50ml medium composed of (g/l): xylan, 10.0; NaNO<sub>3</sub>, 1.5; KH<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub>, 3.0; K<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub>, 6.0; MgSO<sub>4</sub>. 7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.2; CaCl<sub>2</sub>, 0.05; MnSO<sub>4</sub>.7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.01; ZnSO<sub>4</sub>.7H<sub>2</sub>O, 0.001 and 1000ml distilled water. The pH was adjusted to 7 (Nascimento et al., 2003). The cultures were incubated for 6 days at 30°C on a rotary shaker (150 rpm) after inoculation with 5ml of a dense spore suspension. The cultures were then centrifuged at 5000 rpm for 20min. using a cooling centrifuge (Jouan E956) and xylanase activity was measured in the culture supernatant. CMcase, FPase and soluble protein were also measured.

**Taxonomic identification of the experimental isolates**

To identify these strains, the ISP methods were applied (Shirling and Gottlieb, 1966), and the diagnostic properties of the strain were compared with those reported for type culture of *Streptomyces* species according to ISP (Shirling and Gottlieb (1968a, 1968b and 1969 and 1972), and the strains were rather identified using Bergey's Manual of Systematic Bacteriology (1989) and Bergey's Manual of Determinative Bacteriology (1994).

**Enzymes and protein assays :**

The enzyme assay has been measured as described by Xiong et al. (2003) as follows: 1% xylan (from oat spelts) was dissolved in 0.05M acetate buffer (pH 5.0) for 15 min at 50°C. The released reducing sugars were determined by the method of Miller (1959). Xylanase unit is the amount of enzyme that liberates 1m mole of reducing sugar (measured as xylose) per min. Carboxymethylcellulase (CMCase) and FPase (C<sub>1</sub> cellulase) were measured according to Mandels et al. (1974) by adding 0.5ml of 1.0% of Carboxymethylcellulose (CMC) in citrate buffer (0.05M) with a pH value of 4.8. The mixture was incubated at 50°C for 30 min. FPase was assayed by mixing 1ml of 0.05M citrate buffer (pH 4.8) and 50mg of Whatmann filter paper no.1 (strips of 1x6cm) at 50°C for 1 hour. Reducing sugars from both CMCase and FPase were measured as glucose according to the method of Miller (1959). Protein was tested according to Lowry et al. (1951).

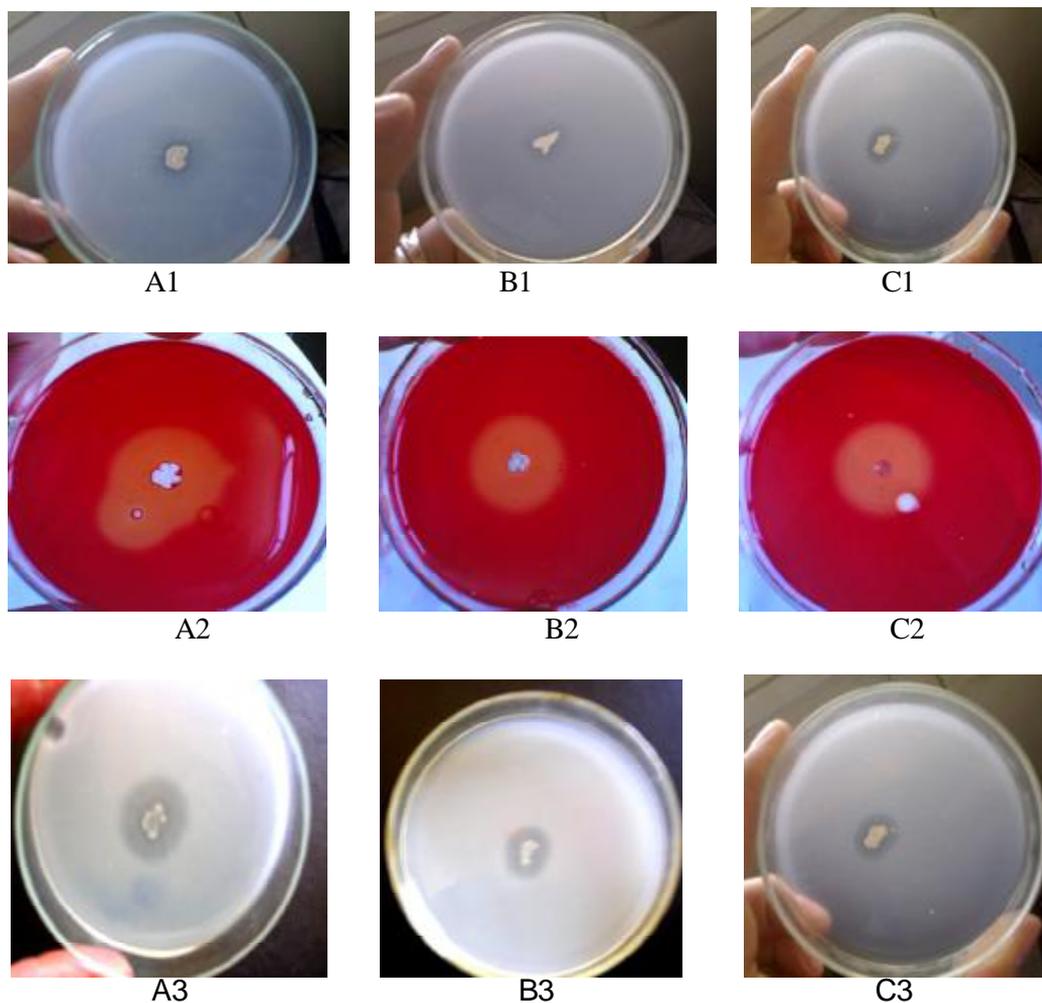
**RESULTS**

Screening studies on xylanase production from isolated actinomycetes

A number of ninety-one (fifty-two isolates from compost and thirty-nine isolates from soil) related to actinomycetes were isolated separately from compost and soil samples from Aga city (Mansoura, Egypt) using starch nitrate medium supplemented with both nystatin and nalidixic acid (Seong et al., 2001). These isolates were tested for xylanase activity qualitatively using xylan-agar plates, Congo red stained xylan-agar plates and ethanol (99.9%) flooded xylan-agar plates. All the strains isolated from compost showed xylanase activity except 3 isolates. On the other hand, only 23 strains of soil isolates showed xylanase activity. Fig. 1 illustrates the best xylanase positive results (formation of clear zone) when isolates 9C (compost), 11C (compost) and 34S (soil) were grown on xylan-agar plates (A1, B1 and C1), Congo red stained xylan agar plates (A2, B2 and C2) and ethanol flooded xylan agar plates (A3, B3 and C3), respectively. Quantitative studies for xylanase activity for the three isolates revealed that isolate no. 9C showed highest cellulose-free xylanase and therefore, it was chosen for further studies. Table 1 summarized the enzyme activities (xylanase, CMCase and FPase) of the best xylanase producers (9C, 11C and 34S). This has been established using liquid medium containing xylan as a sole carbon source (0.2%). Xylanase, CMCase and FPase activities were assayed after 6 days of incubation on a rotary shaker (150rpm).

**Taxonomical study of the experimental isolate :**

**Cell wall analysis :** The whole cell hydrolysate was examined to determine the isomers of diaminopimelic acid (DAP) and sugar pattern of isolates following the methods of Beck-



**Figure (1).** Qualitative screening of xylanase-producing isolates 9C, 11C and 34S when grown on xylana agar plates (A1, B1 and C1), Congo red stained xylan agar plates (A2, B2 and C2) and xylan agar plates flooded with ethanol (A3, B3 and C3), respectively.

**Table (1)** Quantitative screening of xylanase activity from potent xylanase producing streptomycetes isolates from compost and soil:

Isolate no.	Final pH	Protein (mg/ml)	Xylanase		Cellulases			
			Activity (U/ml)	Specific activity (U/mg protein)	CMCase		FPase	
					Activity (U/ml)	Specific activity (U/mg protein)	Activity (U/ml)	Specific activity (U/mg protein)
9C	6.6	0.176	9.24	52.50	-	-	-	-
11C	6.7	0.181	9.18	50.72	-	-	-	-
34S	6.5	0.179	8.96	50.06	0.60	3.35	0.13	0.73

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er et al, 1965) and Lechevalier and Lechevalier (1970). The chromatographic analysis of the cell wall hydrolysate revealed that the three isolates contain LL-DAP and no characteristic sugars, and was, therefore, classified belong to the Genus Streptomyces.

**Morphological characteristics:** Table (2) revealed the taxonomical results of the best three xylanase producing Streptomyces isolates. From this table all the three isolates showed open spiral spore chains (Fig.2 a, b &c) with smooth surface for isolate no. 9C

and spiny spore surfaces for both isolates 11C and 34S (Fig. 3 a, b&c). Aerial mass is white in color-series for both 9C and 11C but grey for 34S when grown on yeast-malt agar, oat-meal agar, salts-starch agar and glycerol asparagines agar. No distinctive or diffusible pigments were found with the previous media. Melanoid pigment was not produced. These strains were deposited in the microbial chemistry department collection, NRC, Egypt.

Optimization of xylanase production from Streptomyces

**Table (2)** Morphological, physiological and chemotaxonomical results of streptomycetes isolates that showed maximum xylanase production:

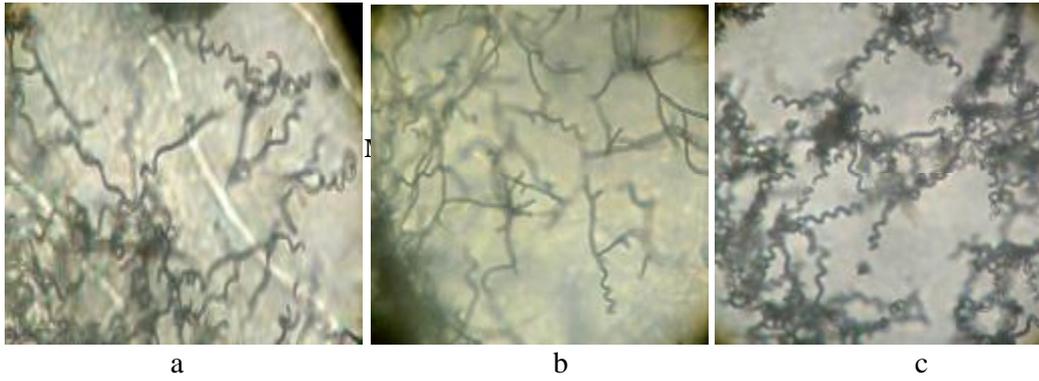
Isolate no.	Spore chain morphology	Spore surface	Color of colony	Reverse side of colony	Diffusible pigments	Melanoid pigment production
9C	Open spiral	Smooth	White	Yellow brown	-	-
11C	Open spiral	Spiny	White	Yellow brown	-	-
34S	Open spiral	Spiny	grey	Yellow brown	-	-

Table (2) continued

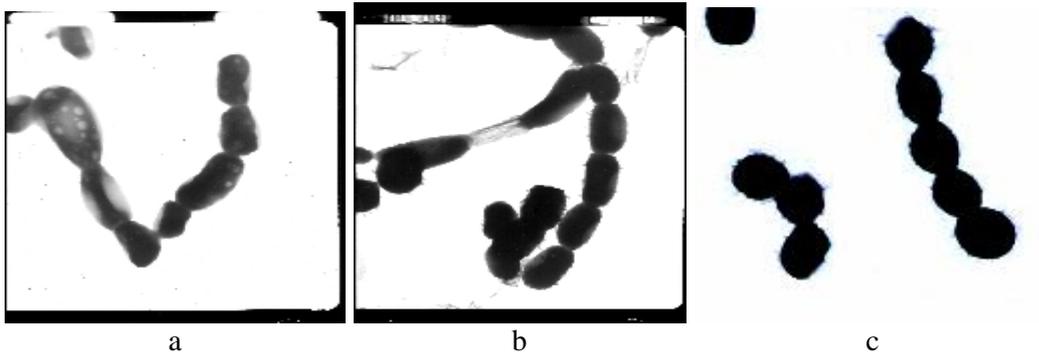
Isolate no.	Enzyme activities			Pectin decomposition	Chitin decomposition	Nitrate reduction	H <sub>2</sub> S production	Xanthine degradation
	Proteolysis	Lipolysis	Lecithinase					
9C	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
11C	-	-	-	+	-	-	+	-
34S	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-

Table (2) continued

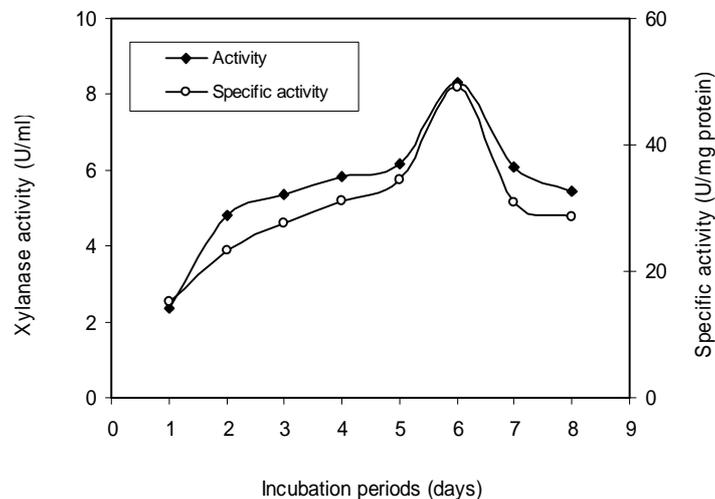
Utilization of different carbon sources										
-ve control	+ve control (glucose)	Arabinose	Fructose	Rhamnose	Sucrose	Mannitol	Xylose	Raffinose	Inositol	Galactose
+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	+	+



**Figure (2).** (a, b & c): Photographs showing spore chain morphology of streptomycete isolates no.9, 11 and 34, respectively (X400)



**Figure (3)** (a, b & c): Transmittance electron micrography (TEM) of spores of streptomycete isolates no. 9, 11 and 34, respectively (X 20,000).

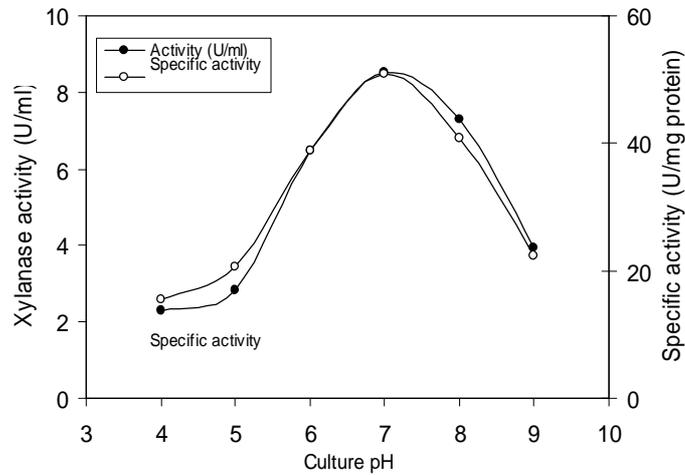


**Figure (4)** Effect of incubation periods (days) on xylanase production by *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus* using corn comb xylan.

**Effect of incubation period :**

The results presented in Fig. 4 revealed that there was an induction phase of xylanase enzyme in the first 24 h during which little xylanase was synthesized. It was indicated by an activity of 2.38 U/ml

and specific activity of 15.16 U/mg protein respectively. Following this phase, the enzyme production increased gradually reaching its highest degree (8.32 U/ml, 49.23 U/mg protein) after 6 days of growth.

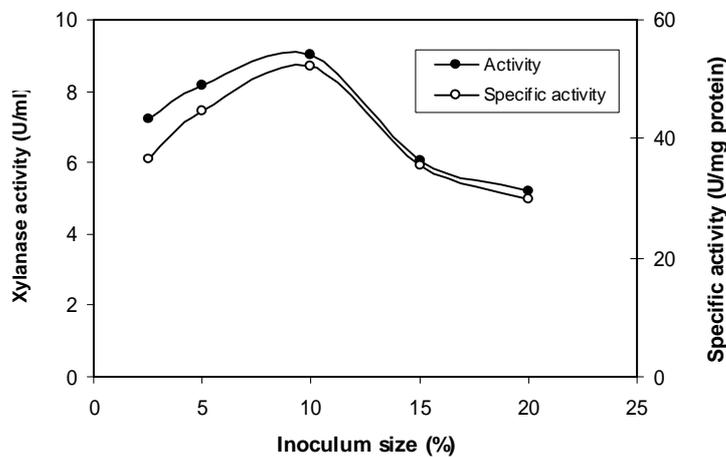


**Figure (5)** Effect of the culture initial pH on xylanase production by *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

**Effect of initial pH :**

The effect of initial pH of the fermentation medium on xylanase production by *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus* was investigated. The

results presented in Figure (5) revealed that the initial pH of 7 showed maximum enzyme activity (8.51 U/ml and 50.96 U/mg protein).

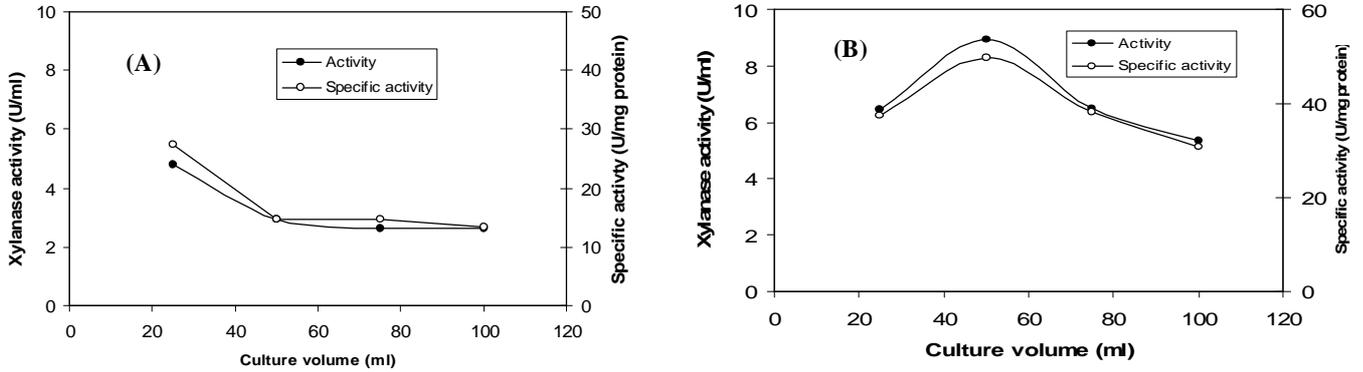


**Figure (6)** Effect of inoculum size on xylanase production by *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

**Effect of inoculum size**

An inoculum percent of 10% from previously prepared spore suspension ( $2.51 \times 10^9$  cell /ml) had a great effect on xylanase pro-

duction from the tested strain (Fig. 6). 10% of the prepared stock showed maximum xylanase activity (9.02U/ml) and a specific activity of 52.14U/mg protein.

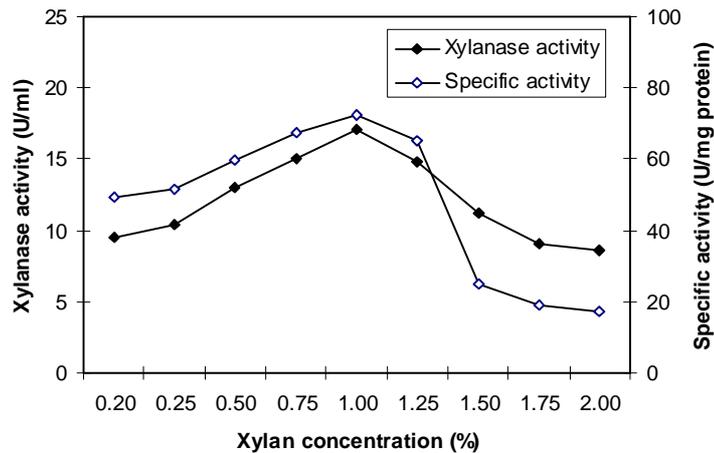


**Figure (7)** Effect of medium volume on the activity of xylanase enzyme produced from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*. A: (Static culture). B: (Shaken culture).

**Effect of medium volume/flask :**

The results presented in Figs. 7 (A & B) revealed that the highest level of xylanase activity was noticed in shaken culture with a medium volume of 50 ml/flask (250-ml). It reached 8.92U/ml with a specific activity of 49.83U/mg protein. Enzyme synthesis by the streptomycete under investigation needs high aeration. Furthermore, decrease in the enzyme levels have been observed with the increase in

medium volume accordingly, the decrease in aeration rate. On the other hand, the production of xylanase enzyme was greatly lowered in cultures incubated without shaking (static cultures). The activity was 4.80 U/ml in a static culture of air: medium ratio of 9:1. The phenomenon that was observed in static cultures may be related to secretion of other metabolites by the isolate that affected both growth and enzyme denaturation

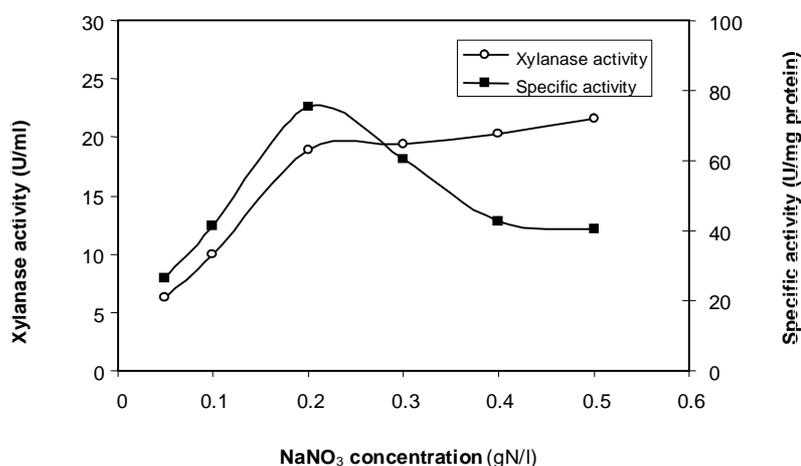


**Figure (8)** Effect of different xylan concentrations on xylanase production from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

**Effect of different carbon sources :**

It was found that xylan was the only carbon source stimulate xylanase production. Virtually, no enzyme activity could be detected in the case of the other carbon sources tested (CMC, cellulose, dextran, maltose, sucrose, fructose, glucose, galactose, xylose

arabinose). Also CMCase and FPase were also tested and the results showed that no cellulose activity was produced with any of these carbon sources. A xylan concentration of 1% (w/v) showed maximum xylanase production (17.12U/ml) with a specific activity of 72.54U/mg protein (Fig. 8).



**Effect of nitrogen sources :**

The optimal concentration of sodium nitrate (1.2g/l or 0.2gn/l) in the basal medium was replaced in nitrogen equivalent by different nitrogen sources. From the inorganic and organic nitrogen sources tested it was found that sodium nitrate was the best source for xylanase production with an activity of 20.34U/ml and specific activity of 78.54U/mg protein (Table 3). Fig. 9 demonstrates the effect of different concentrations of sodium nitrate (best nitrogen source) on xylanase production by Streptomyces pseudogriseolus. It was found that NaNO<sub>3</sub> in a concentration of 1.2g/l showed maximum xylanase production (19.94 U/ml and 77.29 U/mg protein).

**Characterization of crude xylanase :**

**Optimum pH:** Xylanase from Streptomyces pseudogriseolus, exhibited an optimum pH of 6 (Fig.10).

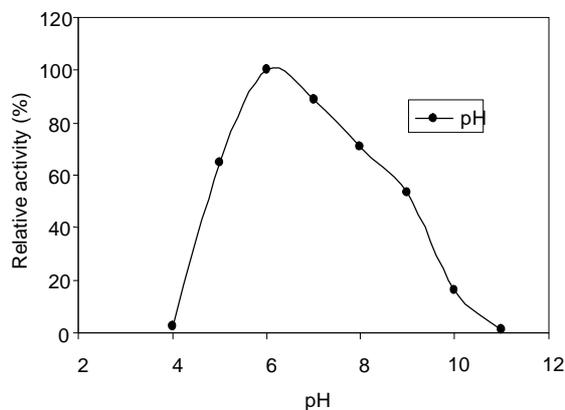
**pH stability:** Xylanase from Streptomyces pseudogriseolus, was stable over a pH range from 5 to 11, and at pH 12; 30% enzyme loss had been detected but at pH 13 there was no activity (Fig.11).

**Optimum temperature:** Results in Figure (12) revealed that xylanase enzyme showed an optimum at 60°C.

**Thermal stability:** The enzyme was ther-

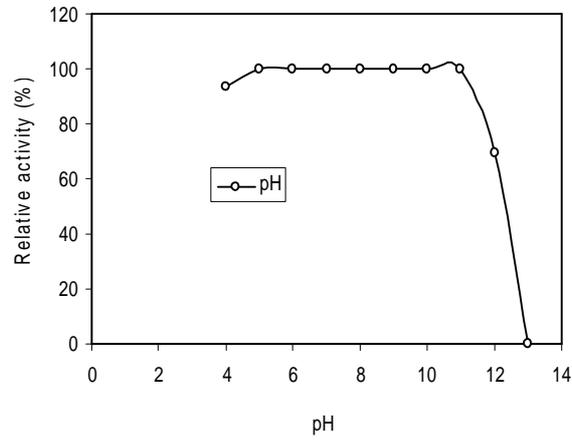
**Table (3)** Effect of different nitrogen sources on xylanase production from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

<b>Nitrogen source</b>	<b>Final pH</b>	<b>Protein (mg/ml)</b>	<b>Activity (U/ml)</b>	<b>Specific activity (U/mg protein)</b>
<b>NaNO<sub>3</sub></b>	7.21	0.259	20.34	78.53
<b>NH<sub>4</sub>Cl</b>	6.72	0.404	14.22	35.20
<b>KNO<sub>3</sub></b>	7.43	0.365	13.18	36.11
<b>NH<sub>4</sub>NO<sub>3</sub></b>	6.94	0.689	20.46	29.69
<b>Ca(NO<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub></b>	6.62	0.319	13.32	41.76
<b>(NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub></b>	6.91	0.312	20.24	64.87
<b>NH<sub>4</sub>H<sub>2</sub>PO<sub>4</sub></b>	6.96	0.283	17.82	62.67
<b>(NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub></b>	8.12	0.385	9.92	25.77
<b>(NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>3</sub>PO<sub>4</sub></b>	7.53	0.275	14.36	52.23
<b>Urea</b>	7.35	0.489	10.48	21.43
<b>Peptone</b>	7.28	0.506	6.20	12.26
<b>Casein</b>	7.23	0.578	8.60	14.88
<b>Yeast extract</b>	7.18	0.733	16.88	23.03

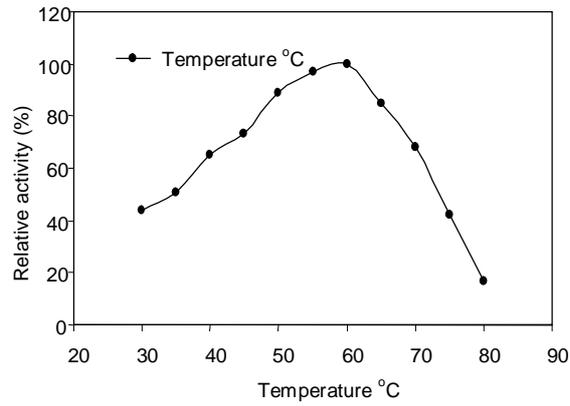


**Figure (10)** pH profile of crude xylanase enzyme from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

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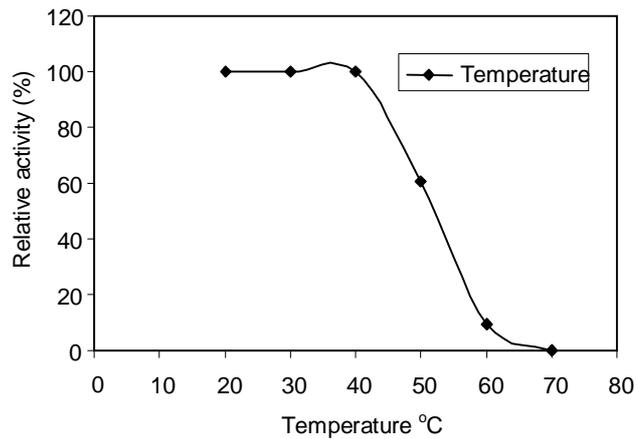
**Figure (11)** Determination of the pH stability of xylanase enzyme from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.



**Figure (12)** Optimum temperature of crude xylanase enzyme from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

mally stable up to 40°C and showed 35% activity loss at 50°C but at 60°C the enzyme

retained 10% of its maximum activity whereas, it lost its activity at 70°C (Fig.13).



**Figure (13)** Thermal stability of crude xylanase enzyme from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*.

## DISCUSSION

A total of 91 strains belonging to actinomycetes were isolated from both compost and soil at Aga city (Mansoura, Egypt) using starch-nitrate medium provided with nalidixic acid (anti-bacterium) and nystatin (anti-fungus) as described by Seong et al. (2001). These isolates were screened qualitatively for their xylanase activity using three visual methods. The first method depends on the formation of clear zones around the microbial growth on xylan-agar plates after 3 days (Roy and Zainul-Abidin, 2002; Wang et al., 2003), staining similar xylan-agar plates with an aqueous solution of Congo red (0.5%) after the same incubation period (Teather and Wood, 1982; Gessesse and Gashe, 1997; Ninawe et

al., 2006) or flooding xylan-agar plates with absolute ethanol after the same growth period (Rawashdeh et al., 2005; Saadoun et al., 2007). Isolates that showed positive results were screened quantitatively using broth medium containing xylan (0.2%) as sole carbon source. The highest three xylanase producing isolates (two from compost, 9C & 11C and one from soil, 34S) were taxonomically identified as *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus*, *S. werraensis* and *S. griseoflavus*, respectively. *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus* was selected for further studies as it had the highest cellulose-free xylanase.

*Streptomyces pseudogriseolus* was found to produce higher xylanase level after 6 days

with best initial pH of 7 using 250ml-Erlenmeyer conical flasks each had 50ml culture medium. These results are analogous to somehow to that found by Tsujibo et al. (1992). Xylan was found to be the sole carbon source responsible for enzyme production with a best concentration of 1%. Elegir et al. (2009) found that xylan (from oat spelt) at this concentration gave the best xylanase enzyme from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus* strain B-12-2. On the other hand, sodium nitrate at a concentration of 1.2g/l gave optimum xylanase production (Nascimento et al., 2003)

Crude xylanase enzyme from *Streptomyces pseudogriseolus* exhibited an optimum pH of 6 and this result was similar to that deduced from several *Streptomyces* strains (Kluepfel et al., 1990; Patel and Ray, 1994; Georis et al., 2000). This enzyme was stable over a pH range from 5 to 11 and this result is somewhat near to that investigated by Tsujibo et al. (1992). The temperature profile for this enzyme was also studied. This enzyme showed an optimum temperature range from 55 to 60°C with maximal activity at 60°C. These findings were comparable to that described by Flores et al. (1997), Beg et al. (2000) and Morosoli et al. (1986) or to some extent lower than that found by Nascimento et al. (2002). The thermal stability of this enzyme was also investigated from room temperature to 80°C and it was found that the enzyme conserved most of its activity up to 50°C. However, incubation of the enzyme for 1h at temperatures over 50°C inactivated it. These observations were equivalent to that had been found by Ruiz-Arribas et al. (1995)

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## الملخص العربي

إنتاج الزيلائيز الخالى من السليوليز من الاستريبتوميسيس بسودوجريسيولاس المعزول محلياً

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تشكل النفايات النباتية والمخلفات الزراعية (مثل قش الأرز وحطب القطن وغيرها) مشكلة بيئية كبيرة حيث يتم حرق هذه المخلفات، الأمر الذى يؤدي إلى تلوث البيئة والذي يساهم فى تفاقم ظاهرة الاحتباس الحرارى، وقد أجريت كثير من الدراسات التى تهدف إلى التحول الحيوى لتلك المخلفات واستخدامها كأعلاف خشنة غير تقليدية أو فى صناعة تربة البتموس فضلاً عن أهمية إنزيم الزيلائيز فى كثير من الصناعات وبصفة خاصة صناعة الورق، لذا فقد أجريت هذه الدراسة بهدف الحصول على سلالات بكتيرية ذات قدرة على تحلل تلك المخلفات بواسطة قدرتها الإنزيمية الهائلة خاصة إنزيمات الزيلائيز السليوليز، وتناولت هذه الدراسة عزل أجناس مختلفة من بكتريا الأكينوميسيتات من السماد العضوى (البلدى) والتربة من مدينة أجا، هذه العزلات تم اختبارها نوعياً لمعرفة قدرتها على إنتاج الزيلائيز باستخدام ثلاث طرق مختلفة والسلالات التى أظهرت نتائج موجبة تم اختبارها كيميائياً لاختيار أقواهم فى إنتاج الزيلائيز، وجد من بين هذه العزلات ثلاث سلالات، سلالتين من السماد العضوى (9C,11C) وواحدة من التربة (34S)، لهم قدرة عالية على إنتاج إنزيم الزيلائيز، تم تعريف هذه السلالات بالشكل الظاهرى والطرق الفسيولوجية والكيموتاكسونومية، هذه السلالات هى استريبتوميسيس بسودوجريسيولاس، واستريبتوميسيس ويرنيسيز، واستريبتوميسيس جريسيوفلافاس، تم اختيار استريبتوميسيس بسودوجريسيولاس لقدرتها على إنتاج الزيلائيز الخالى من السليوليز، تم تحسين الإنتاج من هذه السلالة بضبط الظروف البيئية والغذائية، الإنزيم الحام أظهر نشاط مثالى عند الأس الهيدروجينى 6 وأظهر ثبات للأس الهيدروجينى فى المدى من 5 إلى 11، هذا الإنزيم أظهر أيضاً درجة حرارة مثلى عند 60 درجة سليزيوس، وله ثبات حرارى يصل إلى 40 درجة سليزيوس، ويحفظ 65٪ من نشاطه عند 50 درجة سليزيوس، ويكبح نشاطه كلياً فيما فوق الـ60 درجة سليزيوس.



**PRODUCTION OF CELLULASE-FREE XYLANASE FROM  
A LOCALLY ISOLATED STREPTOMYCES PSEUDOGRISEOLUS**

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