

DESCRIPTION

BEVERAGE CONTAINING CATECHIN COMPOUND(S) AND REBD AND/OR REBM

TECHNICAL FIELD

[0001] Embodiments of the present invention relate to a beverage containing catechin compound(s) and RebD and/or RebM.

BACKGROUND ART

[0002] Physiological effects of polyphenols have recently attracted attention due to the increase in health consciousness and the demand for polyphenol-rich beverages has increased too. For example, catechin compound(s), which are a type of polyphenols, are known to have an inhibitory effect on increase in cholesterol and there are needs for beverages containing catechin compound(s). However, catechin compound(s) have a characteristic bitter taste and astringency and therefore methods for reducing the bitter taste and astringency have been proposed to make such beverages more drinkable. For example, Patent Literature 1 discloses that astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) can be suppressed by adjusting the glutamic acid concentration in beverages containing catechin compound(s) within a certain range.

CITATION LIST

PATENT LITERATURE

[0003] Patent Literature 1: Japanese Patent Laid-Open No. 2006-042728

SUMMARY

TECHNICAL PROBLEM

[0004] Objects of embodiments of the present invention are to provide catechin compound(s)-containing beverages having reduced bitterness and astringency of catechin compound(s) while maintaining tea-like preferable flavors, methods of production thereof, and the like.

SOLUTION TO PROBLEM

[0005] Embodiments of the present invention provide beverages comprising catechin compound(s) at a content of 1 to 600 ppm and RebD and/or RebM at a total content of 20 to 300 ppm, wherein a weight ratio (B/A) of a total content (B) of RebD and RebM to a content (A) of the catechin compound(s) is 0.43 to 3.00, but embodiments of the present invention are not limited thereto.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0006][Figure 1] Figure 1 illustrates the results of evaluation of masking effect of a catechin compound(s) content (A) and a RebD content (B) in beverages and a weight ratio (B/A) thereof on bitterness and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) and the effect thereof on the tea-like flavor.

[Figure 2] Figure 2 illustrates the results of evaluation of masking effect of RebD and RebA on bitterness and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) and the effect thereof on the tea-like flavor.

[Figure 3] Figure 3 illustrates the results of evaluation of masking effect of a catechin compound(s) content (A) and a RebM content (M) in beverages and weight ratio (M/A) thereof on bitterness and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) and effect thereof on the tea-like flavor.

DESCRIPTION OF EMBODIMENTS

[0007] <Beverage>

Embodiments of the present invention are beverages comprising catechin compound(s) at a content within a certain range and RebD and/or RebM at a total content within a certain range, wherein a weight ratio (B/A) of a total content (B) of RebD and RebM to a content (A) of the catechin compound(s) is within a certain range.

[0008] Catechin compound(s) are known to be a type of polyphenols and have a characteristic bitter taste and astringency. As used herein, the bitter taste and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) may be described as the "bitterness and astringency".

[0009] In embodiments of the invention, the content of catechin compound(s) is 1 to 600 ppm (0.0001 to 0.06% by weight), preferably 30 to 500 ppm, more preferably 60 to 400 ppm, further more preferably 100 to 300 ppm, and particularly preferably 150 to 250 ppm relative to the weight of beverage. Unless otherwise specified, "ppm", as used herein, means weight/weight (w/w) ppm.

[0010] As used herein, the "catechin compound(s)" refers to a generic name of catechin, epicatechin, gallocatechin, epigallocatechin, catechin gallate, epicatechin gallate, gallocatechin gallate, and epigallocatechin gallate. Accordingly, in embodiments of the present invention, catechin compound(s) may comprise one or more selected from the group consisting of catechin, epicatechin, gallocatechin, epigallocatechin, catechin gallate, epicatechin gallate, gallocatechin gallate, and epigallocatechin gallate. Stating for confirmation, the content of catechin compound(s) mentioned above means the sum of the contents of the aforementioned 8 compounds.

[0011] Moreover, in embodiments of the present invention, the percentage of the total amount of gallocatechin gallate and epigallocatechin gallate relative to the content of catechin compound(s) is preferably 30% or more, more preferably 35% or more, and further more preferably 40% or more.

[0012] In embodiments of the present invention, the origin of the catechin compound(s) is not particularly limited. For example, they may be those derived from a natural product, those obtained from the market, or those synthesized by a technique in organic chemistry, but they are preferably catechin compound(s) derived from a natural product in view of a recent increase in nature orientation. Examples of the natural product include, but are not limited to, tea (green tea, white tea, black tea, oolong tea, mate, and the like), chocolate, cocoa, red wine, fruits (grapes, berries, apples), and the like. In embodiments of the present invention, the catechin compound(s) are preferably derived from a tea extract and the tea extract is preferably derived from *Camellia sinensis*.

[0013] Rebaudiosides (hereinafter, abbreviated as "Rebs") are known as sweet components contained in stevia extracts. The stevia extracts are extracts obtained by extraction and/or purification from stevia dry leaves. Stevia is a perennial plant in Asteraceae that is native to Paraguay in South America and its scientific name is *Stevia Rebaudiana* Bertoni. Because stevia contains components having about 300 times or more the sweetness of sugar, it is grown for extraction and use of these sweet components as a natural sweetener. Known Rebs include RebA, RebB, RebC, RebD, and RebE. Furthermore, the presence of various glycosides such as RebM described in National Publication of International Patent Application No. 2012-504552 has been recently reported. Embodiments of the present invention involve particularly RebM and RebD as stevia extracts. RebD and RebM may be obtained on the market or synthesized by an organic chemical method. Moreover, RebD and RebM may be separated and purified from a stevia extract as a starting raw material. For example, RebD can be purified according to the method described in US8414949 and RebM can be purified according to the method described in Foods 2014, 3 (1), 162-175; doi: 10.3390/foods3010162. Methods for analyzing RebD and RebM are not particularly limited and known methods may be used, but, for example, they can be analyzed with a high performance liquid chromatograph (HPLC) under the conditions described in National Publication of International Patent Application No. 2012-504552. RebD and RebM are analyzed herein by the method, unless otherwise described.

[0014] Beverages of embodiments of the present invention may contain one or both of RebD and RebM and the total content of RebD and RebM relative to the weight of the beverage is 20 to 300 ppm (0.002 to 0.03% by weight), preferably 30 to 280 ppm, more preferably 40 to 260 ppm, and further more preferably 50 to 250 ppm.

[0015] In embodiments of the present invention, bitterness and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) can be reduced while maintaining the tea-like preferable flavor in the catechin compound(s)-containing beverages by adjusting the content of the catechin compound(s) and the total content of RebD and RebM within the ranges described above.

In embodiments of the present invention, tastes and aromas of the catechin compound(s) themselves may remain as long as bitterness and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) can be reduced. The "tea-like preferable flavor" as used herein refers to having a refreshing aroma and a rich taste characteristic of tea.

[0016] Furthermore, in the embodiments, the weight ratio of a total content (B) of RebD and RebM relative to a content (A) of catechin compound(s) ($[\text{total content of RebD and RebM}]/[\text{content of catechin compound(s)}]$ (B/A)) is 0.43 to 3.00, preferably 0.45 to 2.00, more preferably 0.50 to 1.50, and further more preferably 0.60 to 1.20, and particularly preferably 0.60 to 0.80. If A and B meet the conditions, then bitterness and astringency of catechin compound(s) can be effectively reduced while maintaining the tea-like preferable flavor in the catechin compound(s)-containing beverages.

[0017] Moreover, in beverages of embodiments of the present invention, the content of RebD relative to the weight of the beverage is preferably 20 to 300 ppm (0.002 to 0.03% by weight), more preferably 30 to 280 ppm, further more preferably 40 to 260 ppm, and most preferably 50 to 250 ppm. Furthermore, in embodiments of the present invention, the weight ratio of the content of RebD to the content of catechin compound(s) ($[\text{content of RebD}]/[\text{content of catechin compound(s)}]$) is 0.43 to 3.00, preferably 0.45 to 2.00, more preferably 0.50 to 1.50, and further more preferably 0.60 to 1.20, and particularly preferable to be 0.60 to 0.80.

[0018] In beverages of an embodiment of the present invention, the content of RebM relative to the weight of the beverage is 20 to 300 ppm (0.002 to 0.03% by weight), more preferably 30 to 280 ppm, further more preferably 40 to 260 ppm, and particularly preferably 50 to 250 ppm. Furthermore, in an embodiment of the present invention, the weight ratio of the content of RebM to the content of catechin compound(s) ($[\text{content of RebM}]/[\text{content of catechin compound(s)}]$) is 0.43 to 3.00, preferably 0.45 to 2.00, more preferably 0.50 to 1.50, and further more preferably 0.60 to 1.20, and particularly preferable to be 0.60 to 0.80.

[0019] Beverages of embodiments of the present invention may contain, as needed, additives usually contained in beverages, for example, antioxidants, emulsifiers, nutrient supplements (vitamins, calcium, minerals, amino acids), flavors, pigments, preservatives, flavoring agents, extracts, pH regulators, quality stabilizer, fruit juice, fruit juice puree, and the like. These additives may be blended singly in the beverages or a plurality of these components may be blended in combination in the beverages.

[0020] Embodiments of the present invention are not particularly limited, but examples include refreshing beverages, non-alcoholic beverages, alcoholic beverages, and the like. The beverages may be beverages containing no carbonic acid gas or may be beverages containing carbonic acid gas. Examples of the beverages containing no carbonic acid gas include, but are not limited to, tea beverages such as green tea, oolong tea, black tea, barley tea, mate, and the like, coffee, fruit juice beverages, milk beverages, sports drinks, and the like. Examples of the beverages containing carbonic acid gas include, but are not limited to, cola, diet cola, ginger ale, soda pop, and carbonated water provided with a fruit juice flavor. In particular, from a point of view to maintain the tea-like preferable flavor, embodiments of the present invention are preferably tea beverages such as green tea, oolong tea, black tea, barley tea, mate, and the like.

[0021] Beverages of embodiments of the present invention may be provided in containers, as needed. The form of the containers is not limited at all and the beverages may be filled into containers such as bottles, cans, barrels, or PET bottles and provided as beverages in containers. Moreover, the method of filling the beverages into containers is not particularly limited.

[0022] <Method of production of beverage and method of reducing bitterness and astringency of catechin compound(s) while maintaining tea-like preferable flavor>

According to another aspect of embodiments of the present invention, methods of producing beverages are provided. A method of production according to an embodiment of the present invention comprises the step of blending catechin compound(s) and RebD and/or

RebM such that the content of the catechin compound(s) becomes 1 to 600 ppm, the total content of RebD and RebM becomes 20 to 300 ppm, and the weight ratio (B/A) of the total content (B) of RebD and RebM to the content (A) of the catechin compound(s) is 0.43 to 3.00. The method of blending the catechin compound(s) is not particularly limited and, for example, the catechin compound(s) themselves may be blended or a raw material containing the catechin compound(s) may be blended. Moreover, the method of blending RebD and/or RebM is not particularly limited as well and RebD and/or RebM itself may be blended or a raw material containing RebD and/or RebM may be blended. Preferable catechin compound(s) and preferable content ranges thereof, preferable total content ranges of RebD and RebM, and preferable ranges of the weight ratio (B/A) are as described above as for beverages.

[0023] The method of production according to the embodiment of the present invention may comprise the step of blending an additive that is usually blended into beverages and/or the step of filling a beverage into a container. Types of the additive and the container are as described above as for beverages and filling of the container may be done by using a known method.

[0024] The method of production according to the embodiment of the present invention can reduce bitterness and astringency characteristic of catechin compound(s) while maintaining a tea-like preferable flavor in catechin compound(s)-containing beverages. Accordingly, the method of production is, in another aspect, a method for reducing bitterness and astringency of catechin compound(s) while maintaining a tea-like preferable flavor in a beverage.

[0025] Hereinafter, embodiments of the present invention are described referring to specific examples, but the present invention is not limited thereto.

[0026] The effect of the catechin compound(s) content (A), RebD and/or RebM content (B) in beverages, and the weight ratio (B/A) thereof on the tea-like preferable flavor and the bitterness and astringency of catechin compound(s) can be determined as follows. First, green tea leaves and black tea leaves (Assam) were mixed at a certain ratio and a catechin

formulation (Sunphenon, manufactured by Taiyo Kagaku Co., Ltd. Percentage of the total amount of gallocatechin gallate and epigallocatechin gallate to the total amount of catechin compound(s) was approximately 60%.) and RebD were blended to prepare sample beverages (Examples 1 to 10, Comparative Examples 1 to 8). The catechin compound(s) content and the RebD content in the beverages were measured. Furthermore, based on the catechin compound(s) content (A) and the RebD content (B) measured, the RebD content/ catechin compound(s) content weight ratio (B/A) was calculated. Subsequently, a sensuality evaluation test for "masking effect of bitterness and astringency" and "tea-like flavor" by expert panels was conducted by tasting of sample beverages according to the following standards. 5 expert panels conducted the evaluation and graded the samples 1 to 5 points at 0.1 points intervals for the evaluation criteria. × was marked when the average of points by the 5 panels is less than 3; ○ was marked when the average is equal to or more than 3 and less than 4.5; and ◎ was marked when the average is equal to or more than 4.5.

[0027] <Criteria for sensuality evaluation>

◎: very preferable

○: preferable

×: unfavorable

The catechin compound(s) content and the RebD content in sample beverages and the results of the sensuality evaluation are illustrated in Figure 1. It was shown, as described in Figure 1, that the bitterness and astringency of the catechin compound(s) can be masked while maintaining the tea-like flavor by adjusting the catechin compound(s) content and the RebD content within the range according to the present invention and adjusting the weight ratio of RebD content/catechin compound(s) content within the range according to the present invention.

[0028] Furthermore, the difference between the effects of RebD and RebA on the tea-like preferable flavor and the bitterness and astringency of the catechin compound(s) in catechin compound(s)-containing beverages was examined as follows. First, sample beverages

(Examples 11 to 12, Comparative Examples 9 to 10) were prepared in the same way as described above. The catechin compound(s) content and the RebA or RebD content in each beverage were measured and the weight ratio of RebA or RebD content/catechin compound(s) content (C/A or B/A) was calculated (Figure 2). A sensuality evaluation test was conducted according to the method described above. The results are shown in Figure 2. It was revealed, as described in Figure 2, that the effect that allows masking bitterness and astringency of the catechin compound(s) while maintaining the tea-like flavor observed with RebD was hardly observed with RebA.

[0029] Moreover, sample beverages (Examples 13 to 17, Comparative Examples 11 to 15) were prepared in the same way as described above except that RebM was used instead of RebD. It was also demonstrated that if the catechin compound(s) content, the RebM content, and weight ratio of RebM content/catechin compound(s) content (M/A) were adjusted within the ranges according to the present invention, then the bitterness and astringency of the catechin compound(s) could be masked while maintaining the tea-like flavor, similar to the case with RebD (Figure 3).

[0030] Stating for clarification, the numerical range expressed herein with a lower limit value to an upper limit value, namely, "lower limit value to upper limit value" includes the lower limit value and the upper limit level value. For example, the range expressed as "1 to 2" includes 1 and 2.

CLAIMS

1. A beverage comprising:
catechin compound(s) at a content of 1 to 600 ppm; and
RebD and/or RebM at a total content of 20 to 300 ppm;
wherein a weight ratio of a total content (B) of RebD and RebM to a content (A) of the catechin compound(s) is 0.43 to 3.00, wherein said weight ratio refers to as B/A.
2. The beverage according to claim 1, wherein the weight ratio of the total content (B) of RebD and RebM to the content (A) of the catechin compound(s) is 0.60 to 0.80, wherein said weight ratio refers to as B/A.
3. The beverage according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the catechin compound(s) are derived from a tea extract.
4. The beverage according to claim 3, wherein the tea extract is derived from *Camellia sinensis*.