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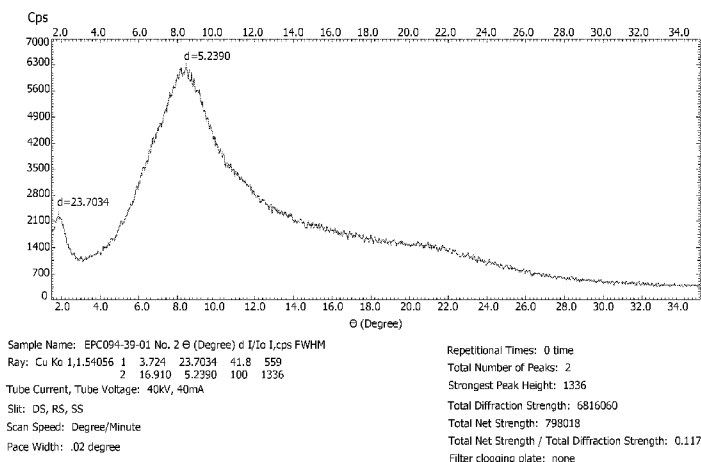
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(54) Title: STEVIA SWEETENER WITH IMPROVED SOLUBILITY

FIG. 1



(57) Abstract: Stevia sweetener with improved solubility in an aqueous solution is provided. The stevia sweetener may be used in food and beverage industry.

STEVIA SWEETENER WITH IMPROVED SOLUBILITY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[001] This application claims priority to U.S. Patent Application No. 14/714,644, filed May 18, 2015, which claims the priority dates of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/000,210, filed May 19, 2014, and U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/023,216, filed July 11, 2014. The disclosures of which are incorporated by reference herein in its their entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[002] The present invention generally relates to stevia sweetener with improved long term solubility.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[003] Stevia is a genus of about 240 species of herbs and shrubs in the sunflower family (Asteraceae), native to subtropical and tropical South America and Central America.

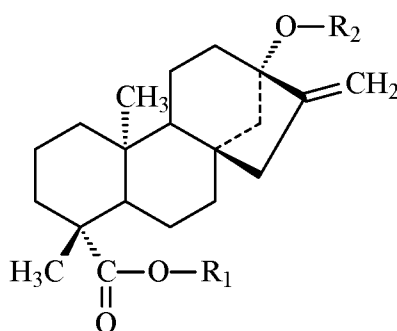
[004] The species *Stevia rebaudiana* Bertoni, commonly known as sweet leaf, sugarleaf, or simply stevia, is widely grown for its sweet leaves. The leaves have traditionally been used as a sweetener. Steviosides and rebaudiosides are the major constituents of glycosides found in the leaves of the stevia plant.

[005] Over 100 phytochemicals have been discovered in stevia. It is rich in terpenes and flavonoids. Of these eight glycosides, stevioside is considered the sweetest and has been tested to be approximately 300 times sweeter than sugar. Stevioside, comprising 6-18% of the stevia leaf, is also the most prevalent glycoside in the leaf. Other sweet constituents include steviolbioside, rebaudiosides A-E, and dulcoside A.

[006] Stevia extracts generally contain a high percentage of the glycosides of the diterpene steviol. The leaves of *stevia rebaudiana* contain over 10 different steviol glycosides. Steviol glycosides are considered high intensity sweeteners (about 250-300 times that of sucrose) and have been used for several years in a number of countries as a

sweetener for a range of food products. Stevioside and rebaudioside A are the principal sweetening compounds and generally accompanied by smaller amounts of other steviol glycosides. The taste quality of rebaudioside A is better than stevioside, because of increased sweetness and decreased bitterness (Phytochemistry 68, 2007, 1855-1863).

[007] The structures and chemical abstract service registry numbers for steviol and its glycosides that are the main sweetening agents of the additive steviol glycosides are shown below:



	Compound name	C.A.S. No.	R ₁	R ₂
1	Steviol	471-80-7	H	H
2	Steviolbioside	41093-60-1	H	β -Glc- β -Glc(2→1)
3	Stevioside	57817-89-7	β -Glc	β -Glc- β -Glc(2→1)
4	Rebaudioside A	58543-16-1	β -Glc	β -Glc- β -Glc(2→1) β -Glc(3→1)
5	Rebaudioside B	58543-17-2	H	β -Glc- β -Glc(2→1) β -Glc(3→1)

6	Rebaudioside C	63550-99-2	β -Glc	β -Glc- β -Rha(2 $\rightarrow$ 1) β -Glc(3 $\rightarrow$ 1)
7	Rebaudioside D	63279-13-0	β -Glc- β -Glc(2 $\rightarrow$ 1)	β -Glc- β -Glc(2 $\rightarrow$ 1) β -Glc(3 $\rightarrow$ 1)
8	Rebaudioside E	63279-14-1	β -Glc- β -Glc(2 $\rightarrow$ 1)	β -Glc- β -Glc(2 $\rightarrow$ 1)
9	Rebaudioside F	438045-89-7	β -Glc	β -Glc- β -Xyl(2 $\rightarrow$ 1) β -Glc(3 $\rightarrow$ 1)
10	Rubusoside	63849-39-4	β -Glc	β -Glc
11	Dulcoside A	64432-06-0	β -Glc	β -Glc- α -Rha(2 $\rightarrow$ 1)
12	Rebaudioside M (also known as Rebaudioside X)	1220616-44-3	(β -Glc) ₂ - β -glc-	(β -Glc) ₂ - β -glc-

[008] As a sweetener and sugar substitute, rebaudioside A has a slower onset and longer duration than that of sugar, and be deemed very close to sucrose, although some of its extracts may have a bitter or licorice-like aftertaste at high concentrations. All steviol glycosides are bitter, some in less degree and some in greater degree.

[009] The relationship between steviol glycoside mixtures, solubility, and how solubility of these mixtures affects the overall taste profile of stevia sweeteners has not been studied in detail.

[010] Recrystallization of rebaudioside A may produce various polymorphs that can vary in of solubility. For example, U.S. Patent No. 8,367,138 discloses rebaudioside A solubility for various forms. Form 1: a rebaudioside A hydrate; Form 2: an anhydrous rebaudioside A; and Form 3: a rebaudioside A solvate. In addition to the three polymorph

forms of rebaudioside A, the purification of rebaudioside A may result in the formation of an amorphous form of rebaudioside A, Form 4.

	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4
Rate of dissolution in water at 25 °C	Very low (<0.2 %/60 min)	Intermediate (<30 %/5 minutes)	High (>30 %/5 minutes)	High (>35 %/5 minutes)
Alcohol content	<0.5 %	<1 %	1-3 %	<0.05 %
Moisture content	>5 %	<1 %	<3 %	6.74 %

[011] Therefore, a need for steviol glycosides or a stevia glycoside composition with superior solubility exists in the food and beverage industry.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[012] An embodiment is presented that surprisingly provides a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition and/or a stevia sweetener with significantly improved long term solubility in water over previously reported stevia compositions.

[013] Another embodiment of the present invention is directed to a process for preparing a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition and/or a stevia sweetener with significantly improved long term solubility in water over previously reported stevia compositions. The process provides a stevia extract, a stevia component, or mixtures of stevia components that are treated.

[014] Yet another embodiment of the present invention is directed to a concentrated aqueous stevia sweetener solution with high concentration of steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside compositions.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[015] FIG. 1 shows a Power XRD spectrum of sample 094-39-01.

[016] FIG. 2 shows a Power XRD spectrum of sample 094-39-02.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[017] In order to improve the taste of steviol glycosides, researchers have attempted to develop various compositions of steviol glycosides.

[018] For example, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2010-0316782 discloses a stevia composition comprising rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D. It is believed that rebaudioside D overcomes, decreases, eliminates or masks the aftertaste of rebaudioside A.

[019] Another example provided in U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013-0071537 discloses a stevia composition comprising rebaudioside B and/or its derivatives. It is believed that rebaudioside B provides the ability to mask, decrease or eliminate bitterness in stevia extract compositions.

[020] In still another example, U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012-0058247 discloses various stevia compositions that do not have the bitterness or aftertaste associated with purified RA or typical stevia extracts that are used as sweeteners.

[021] However, the application of the stevia compositions described above are limited by the physical properties, especially solubility, of one or more of the components. For example, at room temperature, rebaudioside D will only dissolve in water up to 0.05 % wt/wt. The solubility of rebaudioside D can reach 0.5 % wt/wt in aqueous solution with heating, but upon cooling to room temperature, rebaudioside D will quickly crystallize from solution (US 13/993,415).

[022] In order to extend the use of stevia glycosides, many efforts have been devoted to improve the solubility of stevia glycosides in water.

[023] U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2012-0058236 discloses a highly soluble crystal form of rebaudioside A, with a room temperature solubility ranging from about 30 % wt/wt rebaudioside A in water or greater. This highly soluble crystal form can be prepared by ripening (heating) a slurry of either the hydrate, anhydrous, or amorphous form of rebaudioside A at high temperature.

[024] U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2013-0274351 discloses a process to obtain highly soluble rebaudioside D. Rebaudioside D is dissolved in water or

aqueous alcohol to make a solution. The solution is then dried to produce a highly soluble Rebaudioside D. The method may additionally comprise the step of blending rebaudioside D with a polyol to form a blend, in order to further improve the solubility.

[025] WO2012/109506 discloses a process to obtain highly soluble stevia sweetener. This soluble stevia sweetener is prepared by mixing water and a stevia sweetener powder consisting of stevioside 0.2 %, rebaudioside C 0.3 %, rebaudioside F 0.3 %, rebaudioside A 97.7 %, rebaudioside D 1.0%, rebaudioside B 0.3 % to make a mixture, increasing the temperature of the mixture gradually to 118-125 °C make a solution, holding the solution at an elevated temperature, and decreasing the temperature of the solution gradually to ambient temperature to obtain a stable and concentrated stevia sweetener solution that can be spray dried to provide a soluble stevia sweetener.

[026] WO2013/036366 discloses a soluble stevia mixtures comprising rebaudioside D. The soluble stevia sweetener is prepared by mixing 25 % wt/wt rebaudioside D, rebaudioside D and A, and rebaudioside D and B with water to make a mixture, increasing the temperature of the mixture gradually to 118-125 °C and holding the solution at that elevated temperature to make a solution. The temperature was then decreased gradually to 80 °C to obtain concentrated solutions of rebaudioside D, rebaudioside D and A, or rebaudioside D and B where precipitation is observed. The solution then can be spray dried to provide a soluble stevia sweetener.

[027] An embodiment of the present disclosure surprisingly finds that the long term solubility of a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition can be significantly improved by solubilizing the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition at elevated temperature in water and then lowering to ambient temperature. The resultant solution can be spray dried wherein the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol for greater than 1 day at ambient temperature. The terms “stable” or “stability” throughout the specification refers to without limitation, the duration of solubility of the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition when dissolved in a solvent. The process provides a stevia extract, a stevia component, or mixtures of stevia components that are treated.

[028] The long term solubility of the current embodiments differentiate over initial or short term solubility. The solubility disclosed throughout the present disclosure is "long term solubility", not "initial solubility" as described in the field. In other words, the solutions of the present invention remain homogenous for a long period of time, without crystallization, precipitation, or solution heterogeneity. Generally long term solubility described herein is from at least 1 day to greater than 5 years, from about 5 days to about 2 years, and more particularly from about 30 days to about 1 year. The technology may also be applied to for improving the initial solubility of single steviol glycoside.

[029] Even though the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside compositions are directed to having long term solubility at ambient temperature, the current embodiments can cover temperatures that range from 0 °C to 25 °C. Even though the range of stability of the current embodiments is directed to stability between 0 °C to 25 °C, good stability outside this range can also be expected especially at temperatures above this range.

[030] Another embodiment further discloses that the solubility of a first steviol glycoside can be further improved by adding a second steviol glycoside, solubilizing the steviol glycosides as a composition at elevated temperature, and then lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution.

[031] Another embodiment further discloses that the solubility of a first and a second steviol glycoside can be further improved, by adding a third steviol glycoside, solubilizing the resulting steviol glycoside composition at elevated temperature and then lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution.

[032] In yet another embodiment further discloses that the solubility of a first and a second steviol glycoside (a steviol glycoside composition) can be further improved, by adding at least a third steviol glycoside, by solubilizing the steviol glycosides at elevated temperature and then lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution.

[033] A preferred embodiment discloses the mixture of rebaudiosides A and B, solubilizing the steviol glycosides at elevated temperature, and then lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution.

[034] Another preferred embodiment discloses the mixture of rebaudiosides A and D, solubilizing the steviol glycosides at elevated temperature, and then lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution.

[035] Another preferred embodiment discloses the mixture of rebaudiosides A, B, and D, solubilizing the steviol glycosides at elevated temperature, and then lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution.

[036] Another preferred embodiment further discloses the mixture of rebaudiosides A, B, and D, solubilizing the steviol glycosides at elevated temperature, lowering to ambient temperature in an aqueous solution, and then spray drying the solution to provide a highly soluble stevia based sweetener, e.g., a spray dried steviol glycoside composition.

[037] One aspect of the present embodiments provide a treated steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition, with improved solubility in an aqueous solution, in comparison with untreated steviol glycoside comprising rebaudioside A, B, and D individually, and mixtures thereof. For example, the solubility of the treated steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition in an aqueous solution is about ≥ 1 g/100 g water, preferably about ≥ 3 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 5 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 10 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 15 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 20 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 25 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 30 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 35 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 40 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 45 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 50 g/100 g water, more preferably about ≥ 55 g/100 g water, and most preferably ≥ 60 g/100 g water, and all ranges between 1 g/100 g water and 60 g/100 g water, for example, from about 1 g/100 g water to about 5 g/100 g water, from about 1 g/100 g water to about 10 g/100 g water, from about 2 g/100 g water to about 5 g/100 g water, from about 2 g/100 g water to about 10 g/100 g water, from about 3 g/100 g water to about 10 g/100 g water, from about 3 g/100 g water to about 15 g/100 g water, from about 5 g/100 g water to about 10 g/100 g water, from about 5 g/100 g water to about 15 g/100 g water, from about 5 g/100 g water to about 20 g/100 g water, from about 7 g/100

g water to about 10 g/100 g water, from about 7 g/100 g water to about 15 g/100 g water, from about 7 g/100 g water to about 20 g/100 g water, from about 10 g/100 g water to about 15 g/100 g water, from about 10 g/100 g water to about 20 g/100 g from about 10 g/100 g water to about 25 g/100 g water, from about 10 g/100 g water to about 30 g/100 g from about 12 g/100 g water to about 20 g/100 g from about 12 g/100 g water to about 25 g/100 g water, from about 12 g/100 g water to about 30 g/100 g water, from about 15 g/100 g water to about 20 g/100 g water, from about 15 g/100 g water to about 25 g/100 g water, from about 17 g/100 g water to about 20 g/100 g water, from about 17 g/100 g water to about 25 g/100 g, from about 17 g/100 g water to about 30 g/100 g water, from about 20 g/100 g water to about 25 g/100 g water, from about 20 g/100 g water to about 30 g/100 g water, from about 20 g/100 g water to about 40 g/100 g water, from about 20 g/100 g water to about 50 g/100 g water, from about 25 g/100 g water to about 30 g/100 g water, from about 25 g/100 g water to about 40 g/100 g water, from about 25 g/100 g water to about 50 g/100 g water at ambient temperature.

[038] The steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside compositions of the present embodiments may refer to their stability in a water or water/alcohol solutions. Stability of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside compositions of the present embodiments refers to the solubility of the material without precipitation or crystallization or very minimal precipitation or crystallization measured in the range of between 0 °C and 25 °C. This lower limit of the temperature range is not to be limiting and should be understood that the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition, once dissolved, can remain solubilized above 25°C

[039] The steviol glycoside or the steviol glycosides in the steviol glycoside composition can each individually be in an amorphous form, each individually in a polymorphic form, or mixtures thereof.

[040] Preferably, the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycosides in the steviol glycoside composition according to one embodiment is in an amorphous form, but it may also be in a polymorph form.

[041] In another aspect, an embodiment provides a sweetener composition, comprising one or more treated steviol glycosides, with improved solubility in an aqueous solution in comparison to untreated steviol glycosides comprising rebaudioside A, B, and D individually, and mixtures thereof, under identical conditions, and optionally, containing other sweeteners.

[042] In another aspect the other sweetener can be stevioside.

[043] In a further aspect, one embodiment provides a concentrated aqueous sweetener solution comprising treated steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition, wherein the total content of the steviol glycosides is improved in comparison with the maximum total content of untreated steviol glycosides wt/wt in water or water/alcohol under identical conditions. For example, the total content of the steviol glycosides in a concentrated aqueous sweetener solution comprising a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to the present invention is $\geq 1\%$ wt/wt in water, preferably $\geq 5\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 10\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 15\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 20\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 25\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 30\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 35\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 40\%$ wt/wt in water, more preferably $\geq 45\%$ wt/wt in water, and preferably $\geq 50\%$ wt/wt in water, and most preferably about 60 % wt/wt in water, and all ranges between 1 % wt/wt in water and 100 % wt/wt in water, for example from about 1 % wt/wt in water to about 99 % wt/wt in water, from about 5 % wt/wt in water to about 95 % wt/wt in water, from about 10 % wt/wt in water to about 90 % wt/wt in water, from about 15 % wt/wt in water to about 85 % wt/wt in water, from about 20 % wt/wt in water to about 80 % wt/wt in water, from about 25 % wt/wt in water to about 80 % wt/wt in water, from about 30 % wt/wt in water to about 80 % wt/wt in water, from about 35 % wt/wt in water to about 80 % wt/wt in water, from about 40 % wt/wt in water to about 80 % wt/wt in water, from about 45 % wt/wt in water to about 75 % wt/wt in water, from about 50 % wt/wt in water to about 75 % wt/wt in water, from about 55 % wt/wt in water to about 75 % wt/wt in water, from about 55 % wt/wt in water

to about 70 % wt/wt in water, and from about 55 % wt/wt in water to about 65 % wt/wt in water.

[044] In one aspect the components can have ratios of from 1:99, 2:98, 3:97, 4:96, 5:95, 6:94, 7:93, 8:92, 9:91, 10:90, 11:89, 12:88, 13:87, 14:86, 15:85, 16:84, 17:83, 18:82, 19:81, 20:80, 21:79, 22:78, 23:77, 24:76, 25:75, 26:74, 27:73, 28:72, 29:71, 30:70, 31:69, 32:68, 33:67, 34:66, 35:65, 36:64, 37:63, 38:62, 39:61, 40:60, 41:59, 42:58, 43:57, 44:56, 45:55, 46:54, 47:53, 48:52, 49:51 and 50:50, and all ranges therebetween wherein the ratios are from 1:99 and vice versa, e.g., a ratio of from 1:99 to 50:50, from 30:70 to 42:58, etc.

[045] In another aspect, the components can have ratios of from 1:1:98, 1:2:97, 1:3:96, 1:4:95, 1:5:94, 1:6:93, 1:7:92, 1:8:91, 1:9:90, 1:10:89, 1:11:88, 1:12:87, 1:13:86, 1:14:85, 1:15:84, 1:16:83, 1:17:82, 1:18:81, 1:19:80, 1:20:79, 1:21:78, 1:22:77, 1:23:76, 1:24:75, 1:25:74, 1:26:73, 1:27:72, 1:28:71, 1:29:70, 1:30:69, 1:31:68, 1:32:67, 2:3:95, 2:4:94, 2:5:93, 2:6:92, 2:7:91, 2:8:90, 2:9:89, 2:10:88, 2:11:87, 2:12:86, 2:13:85, 2:14:84, 2:15:83, 2:16:82, 2:17:81, 2:18:80, 2:19:79, 2:20:78, 2:21:77, 2:22:76, 2:23:75, 2:24:74, 2:25:73, 2:26:72, 2:27:71, 2:28:70, 2:29:69, 2:30:68, 2:31:67, 2:32:66, 2:3:95, 3:3:94, 3:4:93, 3:5:92, 3:6:91, 3:7:90, 3:8:89, 3:9:88, 3:10:87, 3:11:86, 3:12:85, 3:13:84, 3:14:83, 3:15:82, 3:16:81, 2:17:80, 3:18:79, 3:19:78, 3:20:77, 3:21:76, 3:22:75, 3:23:74, 3:24:73, 3:25:72, 3:26:71, 3:27:70, 3:28:69, 3:29:68, 3:30:67, 3:31:66, 3:32:65, 4:4:92, 4:5:91, 4:6:90, 4:7:89, 4:8:88, 4:9:87, 4:10:86, 4:11:85, 4:12:84, 4:13:83, 4:14:82, 4:15:81, 4:16:80, 4:17:79, 4:18:78, 4:19:77, 4:20:76, 4:21:75, 4:22:74, 4:23:73, 4:24:72, 4:25:71, 4:26:70, 4:27:69, 4:28:68, 4:29:67, 4:30:66, 4:31:65, 4:32:64, 5:5:90, 5:6:89, 5:7:88, 5:8:87, 5:9:86, 5:10:85, 5:11:84, 5:12:83, 5:13:82, 5:14:81, 5:15:80, 5:16:79, 5:17:78, 5:18:77, 5:19:76, 5:20:75, 5:21:74, 5:22:73, 5:23:72, 5:24:71, 5:25:70, 5:26:69, 5:27:68, 5:28:67, 5:29:66, 5:30:65, 5:31:64, 5:32:63, 6:6:88, 6:7:87, 6:8:86, 6:9:85, 6:10:84, 6:11:83, 6:12:82, 6:13:81, 6:14:80, 6:15:79, 6:16:78, 6:17:77, 6:18:76, 6:19:75, 6:20:74, 6:21:73, 6:22:72, 6:23:71, 6:24:70, 6:25:69, 6:26:68, 6:27:67, 6:28:66, 6:29:65, 6:30:64, 6:31:63, 6:32:62, 7:7:86, 7:8:85, 7:9:84, 7:10:83, 7:11:82, 7:12:81, 7:13:80, 7:14:79, 7:15:78, 7:16:77, 7:17:76, 7:18:75, 7:19:74, 7:20:73, 7:21:72, 7:22:71, 7:23:70, 7:24:69,

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[046] In another aspect, a process for the preparation of a treated steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in an aqueous solution, in comparison with untreated steviol glycosides comprising rebaudioside A, B, and D individually, and mixtures thereof, comprising the following steps: (1) mixing a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with water, (2) heating the mixture while stirring, until the mixture was completely dissolved to obtain a clear solution, (3) further stirring the solution at the elevated temperature, (4) cooling to ambient temperature, and (5) subjecting the solution to spray drying. In step (2), the mixture can be heated to 30-200 °C, preferably 40-120 °C, more preferably 50-90 °C, most preferably 60-70 °C. In an alternative process of the present invention, the step (5) can be replaced by crystallization of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition.

[047] In another embodiment the treated steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside composition may be solubilized in a water/alcohol solution. The alcohol can be methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, isobutanol, sec-butanol, tert-butanol, n-pentanol, isopentanol, neopentanol, or combinations thereof.

[048] The water alcohol solution can be less than 60 % alcohol, less than 50 % alcohol, less than 40 % alcohol, less than 30 % alcohol, less than 20 % alcohol, less than 10 % alcohol, less than 5 % alcohol, less than 2 % alcohol, or less than 1 % alcohol by volume.

[049] In the specification and in the claims, the terms "including" and "comprising" are open-ended terms and should be interpreted to mean "including, but not limited to". These terms encompass the more restrictive terms "consisting essentially of" and "consisting of."

[050] It must be noted that as used herein and in the appended claims, the singular forms "a", "an", and "the" include plural reference unless the context clearly dictates otherwise. As well, the terms "a" (or "an"), "one or more" and "at least one" can be used interchangeably herein. It is also to be noted that the terms "comprising", "including", "characterized by" and "having" can be used interchangeably.

[051] Unless defined otherwise, all technical and scientific terms used herein have the same meanings as commonly understood by one of ordinary skill in the art to which this invention belongs. All publications and patents specifically mentioned herein are incorporated by reference in their entirety for all purposes including describing and disclosing the chemicals, instruments, statistical analyses and methodologies which are reported in the publications which might be used in connection with the invention. All references cited in this specification are to be taken as indicative of the level of skill in the art. Nothing herein is to be construed as an admission that the invention is not entitled to antedate such disclosure by virtue of prior invention.

[052] The phrase "steviol glycoside" is recognized in the art and is intended to include the major and minor constituents of stevia. These include, but are not limited to components of stevia such as Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A (RA), Rebaudioside B (RB), Rebaudioside C (RC), Rebaudioside D (RD), Rebaudioside E (RE), Rebaudioside F (RF), Rebaudioside M (RM, also referred to as Rebaudioside X, RX), Rubusoside and Ducoside A (DA).

[053] The phrase "stevia containing sweetener" is intended to include any composition that is prepared from a stevia plant, such as a stevia extract, or the individual components found in stevia. The sweetener can include one or more of the components associated with the stevia plant, such as those noted above. The sweetener can also include conventional artificial or natural sweeteners, such as sucrose, glucose, maltose, fructose, mannitol, sorbitol, aspartame, inulin, sucralose, acesulfame-K, sodium cyclamate, mogroside and its derivatives, etc.

[054] In one embodiment, rubusoside is also found in sweet tea, also known as *Rubus Suavissimus*. Although stevia contains a small amount of rubusoside, it can also be obtained from sweet tea containing rubusoside. The sweet tea extract can be extracted from sweet tea, for example, by a solvent extraction processes. The content of rubusoside in sweet tea extract can be from 5 % wt/wt to 100 % wt/wt, and the content of rubusoside containing sweet tea extract in the sweetener can be from 0 % wt/wt to 100 % wt/wt. Rubusoside can be 1 % wt/wt, 2 % wt/wt, 3 % wt/wt, 4 % wt/wt, 5 % wt/wt, 6 % wt/wt, 7 % wt/wt, 8 % wt/wt, 9 % wt/wt, 10 % wt/wt, 11 % wt/wt, 12 % wt/wt, 13 % wt/wt, 14 % wt/wt, 15 % wt/wt, 16 % wt/wt, 17 % wt/wt, 18 % wt/wt, 19 % wt/wt, 20 % wt/wt, 25 % wt/wt, 30 % wt/wt, 35 % wt/wt, 40 % wt/wt, 45 % wt/wt, 50 % wt/wt, 60 % wt/wt, 70 % wt/wt, 80 % wt/wt, 90 % wt/wt, or 100 % wt/wt and all ranges between 1 and 100 % wt/wt, for example from about 1 % wt/wt to about 99 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 98 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 97 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 95 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 90 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 80 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 70 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 60 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 50 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 40 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 30 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 20 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 10 % wt/wt, from about 1 % wt/wt to about 5 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 99 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 98 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 97 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 95 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 90 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 80 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 70 % wt/wt, from about 2 %

wt/wt to about 60 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 50 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 40 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 30 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 20 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 10 % wt/wt, from about 2 % wt/wt to about 5 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 99 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 98 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 97 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 95 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 90 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 80 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 70 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 60 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 50 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 40 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 30 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 20 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 10 % wt/wt, from about 3 % wt/wt to about 5 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 99 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 98 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 97 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 95 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 90 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 80 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 70 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 60 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 50 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 40 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 30 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 20 % wt/wt, from about 5 % wt/wt to about 10 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 99 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 98 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 97 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 95 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 90 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 80 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 70 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 60 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 50 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 40 % wt/wt, from about 10 % wt/wt to about 30 % wt/wt, and from about 10 % wt/wt to about 20 % wt/wt of the sweetening composition.

[055] A "steviol glycoside composition" as referred to herein, pertains to a material that includes one or two or more previously purified steviol glycosides found in the stevia plant or sweet tea plant or a stevia extract or a sweet tea extract. It should be understood that the spray dried composition described herein can be prepared as a mixture first and then spray dried or as individual components that are spray dried first

and then combined. It should also be understood that when two or more components are in a mixture that the amount can be varied amongst the components from 1 % wt/wt to 99 % wt/wt, and that a total of 100 % wt/wt is achieved.

[056] The steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used as a sugar substitute alone or in combination with a food product.

[057] The steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used in beverages, broths, and beverage preparations selected from the group comprising carbonated, non-carbonated, frozen, semi-frozen ("slush"), non-frozen, ready-to-drink, concentrated (powdered, frozen, or syrup), dairy, non-dairy, herbal, non-herbal, caffeinated, non-caffeinated, alcoholic, non-alcoholic, flavored, non-flavored, vegetable-based, fruit-based, root/tuber/corm-based, nut-based, other plant-based, cola-based, chocolate-based, meat-based, seafood-based, other animal-based, algae-based, calorie enhanced, calorie-reduced, and calorie-free products, optionally dispensed in open containers, cans, bottles or other packaging. Such beverages and beverage preparations can be in ready-to-drink, ready-to-cook, ready-to-mix, raw, or ingredient form and can use the stevia composition as a sole sweetener or as a co-sweetener.

[058] The steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used in foods and food preparations (e.g. sweeteners, soups, sauces, flavorings, spices, oils, fats, and condiments) from dairy-based, cereal-based, baked, vegetable-based, fruit-based, root/tuber/corm-based, nut-based, other plant-based, egg-based, meat-based, seafood-based, other animal-based, algae-based, processed (e.g. spreads), preserved (e.g. meals-ready-to-eat rations), and synthesized (e.g. gels) products.

[059] Such foods and food preparations can be in ready-to-eat, ready-to-cook, ready-to-mix, raw, or ingredient form and can use the stevia compositions as a sole sweetener or as a co-sweetener.

[060] The steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used in candies, confections, desserts, and snacks selected from the group comprising dairy-based, cereal-based, baked, vegetable-based, fruit-based, root/tuber/corm-based, nut-based, gum-based, other plant-based, egg-based, meat-based, seafood-based, other

animal-based, algae-based, processed (e.g. spreads), preserved (e.g. meals-ready-to-eat rations), and synthesized (e.g. gels) products. Such candies, confections, desserts, and snacks can be in ready-to-eat, ready-to-cook, ready-to-mix, raw, or ingredient form, and can use the stevia based compositions as a sole sweetener or as a co-sweetener.

[061] The steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used in prescription and over-the-counter pharmaceuticals, assays, diagnostic kits, and therapies selected from the group comprising weight control, nutritional supplement, vitamins, infant diet, diabetic diet, athlete diet, geriatric diet, low carbohydrate diet, low fat diet, low protein diet, high carbohydrate diet, high fat diet, high protein diet, low calorie diet, non-caloric diet, oral hygiene products (e.g. toothpaste, mouthwash, rinses, floss, toothbrushes, other implements), personal care products (e.g. soaps, shampoos, rinses, lotions, balms, salves, ointments, paper goods, perfumes, lipstick, other cosmetics), professional dentistry products in which taste or smell is a factor (e.g. liquids, chewables, inhalables, injectables, salves, resins, rinses, pads, floss, implements), medical, veterinarian, and surgical products in which taste or smell is a factor (e.g. liquids, chewables, inhalables, injectables, salves, resins, rinses, pads, floss, implements), and pharmaceutical compounding fillers, syrups, capsules, gels, and coating products.

[062] The steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used in consumer goods packaging materials and containers selected from the group comprising plastic film, thermoset and thermoplastic resin, gum, foil, paper, bottle, box, ink, paint, adhesive, and packaging coating products.

[063] The steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can be used in goods including sweeteners, co-sweeteners, coated sweetener sticks, frozen confection sticks, medicine spoons (human and veterinary uses), dental instruments, presweetened disposable tableware and utensils, sachets, edible sachets, potpourris, edible potpourris, artificial flowers, edible artificial flowers, clothing, edible clothing, massage oils, and edible massage oils.

[064] The steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein can also be used with "artificial sweeteners". Artificial sweeteners are those, other than

sucrose, such as cyclamates and salts thereof, sucralose, aspartame, saccharin and salts thereof, stevia (Truvia™), rebaudioside A, xylitol, acesulfame-K, neotame, N--[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)propyl]-alpha-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester (hereinafter abbreviated as "ANS9801 "), glycyrrhizin, thaumatin, monellin and the like. The steviol glycoside(s) or steviol glycoside compositions noted herein masks, reduces or eliminates the aftertaste associated with the artificial sweetener, (e.g., stevia) such that the composition has a taste profile like sugar.

[065] The following paragraphs enumerated consecutively from 1 through 98 provide for various aspects of the present invention. In one embodiment, in a first paragraph (1), the present invention provides:

[066] A steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in a water or water/alcohol solution wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in the water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 1 day.

[067] 2. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 2 days.

[068] 3. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 2, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 5 days.

[069] 4. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 3, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 10 days.

[070] 5. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 4, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 15 days.

[071] 6. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 5, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 20 days.

- [072]** 7. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 6, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 25 days.
- [073]** 8. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 7, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 30 days.
- [074]** 9. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 8, wherein the solubility is ≥ 1 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [075]** 10. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 9, wherein the solubility is ≥ 2 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [076]** 11. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 10, wherein the solubility is ≥ 3 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [077]** 12. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 11, wherein the solubility is ≥ 5 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [078]** 13. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 12, wherein the solubility is ≥ 10 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [079]** 14. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 13, wherein the solubility is ≥ 15 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [080]** 15. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 14, wherein the solubility is ≥ 20 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

- [081]** 16. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 15, wherein the solubility is ≥ 25 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [082]** 17. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 16, wherein the solubility is ≥ 30 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [083]** 18. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 17, wherein the solubility is ≥ 35 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [084]** 19. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 18, wherein the solubility is ≥ 40 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [085]** 20. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 19, wherein the solubility is ≥ 45 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [086]** 21. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1 through 20, wherein the solubility is ≥ 50 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [087]** 22. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 21, wherein the solubility is ≥ 55 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [088]** 23. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 22, wherein the solubility is ≥ 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
- [089]** 24. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 23, wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, sec-butanol, isobutanol, tert-butanol, n-pentanol, sec-pentanol, isopentanol, and neopentanol.

[090] 25. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1 through 24, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 60 % alcohol by volume.

[091] 26. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 25, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 50 % alcohol by volume.

[092] 27. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 26, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 40 % alcohol by volume.

[093] 28. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 27, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 30 % alcohol by volume.

[094] 29. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 28, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 20 % alcohol by volume.

[095] 30. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 29, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 10 % alcohol by volume.

[096] 31. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 30, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 5 % alcohol by volume.

[097] 32. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 31, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 2 % alcohol by volume.

[098] 33. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 32, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 1 % alcohol by volume.

[099] 34. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 33, wherein the steviol glycoside is selected from the group

consisting of Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A.

[0100] 35. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A.

[0101] 36. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside B.

[0102] 37. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside D.

[0103] 38. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A and Stevioside.

[0104] 39. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D.

[0105] 40. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D.

[0106] 41. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 34, wherein the steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside D, and Stevioside.

[0107] 42. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 36, 37, 38, 40, and 41 wherein rebaudioside A is the main component.

[0108] 43. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 40 and 41, wherein the weight percent rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D in water or water/alcohol solution is between 1 % to about 20 % rebaudioside B and

between 1 % to about 15 % rebaudioside D, wherein the combined weight percent of rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D does not exceed 30%.

[0109] 44. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 43, wherein the weight percent of rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B, and rebaudioside D in water or water/alcohol solution is between 70 % to about 85 % rebaudioside A, between 10 % to about 15 % rebaudioside B, and between 5 % to about 10 % rebaudioside D.

[0110] 45. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 44, wherein the weight percent of rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B, and rebaudioside D in water or water/alcohol solution has a ratio of about 78:15:7.

[0111] 46. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 44, wherein the weight percent of rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B, and rebaudioside D in water or water/alcohol solution has a ratio of about 80:10:6.

[0112] 47. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 46, wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 0 °C and 25 °C.

[0113] 48. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 47, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 5 °C and 24 °C.

[0114] 49. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 48, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 10 °C and 23 °C.

[0115] 50. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 49, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 15 °C and 22 °C.

[0116] 51. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 50, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution at room or ambient temperature.

[0117] 52. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 51, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is in an amorphous form, a crystal form, or mixtures thereof.

[0118] 53. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 52, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is in an amorphous form.

[0119] 54. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 52, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is in a crystal form.

[0120] 55. A sweetener composition comprising the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraphs 1 through 54.

[0121] 56. The sweetener composition according to paragraph 55, further comprising one or more sweeteners selected from the group consisting of cyclamates and salts thereof, sucralose, aspartame, saccharin and salts thereof, stevia (Truvia™), rebaudioside A, xylitol, acesulfame-K, neotame, N--[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)propyl]-alpha-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester (hereinafter abbreviated as "ANS9801 "), glycyrrhizin, thaumatin, monellin, and combinations thereof.

[0122] 57. A concentrated aqueous sweetener solution comprising steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or a water/alcohol solution for greater than 1 day.

[0123] 58. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 57, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 2 days.

[0124] 59. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 58, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 5 days.

[0125] 60. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 59, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 10 days.

[0126] 61. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 60, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 15 days.

[0127] 62. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 61, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 20 days.

[0128] 63. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 62, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 25 days.

[0129] 64. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraph 63, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution for greater than 30 days.

[0130] 65. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 64, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 1 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0131] 66. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 65, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 2 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0132] 67. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 66, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 3 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0133] 68. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 67, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 5 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0134] 69. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 68, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 10 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0135] 70. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 69, wherein the solubility is of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition ≥ 15 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0136] 71. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 70, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 20 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0137] 72. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 71, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 25 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0138] 73. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 72, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 30 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0139] 74. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 73, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 35 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0140] 75. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 74, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 40 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0141] 76. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 75, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 45 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0142] 77. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 76, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 50 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0143] 78. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 77, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 55 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0144] 79. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 78, wherein the solubility of the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is ≥ 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0145] 80. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 79, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 60 % alcohol by volume.

[0146] 81. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 80, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 50 % alcohol by volume.

[0147] 82. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 81, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 40 % alcohol by volume.

[0148] 83. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 82, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 30 % alcohol by volume.

[0149] 84. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 83, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 20 % alcohol by volume.

[0150] 85. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 84, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 10 % alcohol by volume.

[0151] 86. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 85, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 5 % alcohol by volume.

[0152] 87. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 86, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 2 % alcohol by volume.

[0153] 88. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 87, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is less than 1 % alcohol by volume.

[0154] 89. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 88, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition are stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 0 °C and 25 °C.

[0155] 90. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 89, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 5 °C and 24 °C.

[0156] 91. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 90, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 10 °C and 23 °C.

[0157] 92. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 91, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution between 15 °C and 22 °C.

[0158] 93. A process for the preparation of steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in an aqueous solution comprising the following steps: (1) mixing a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with water, (2) heating the mixture while stirring, until the mixture was completely dissolved to obtain a clear solution, (3) further stirring the solution at the temperature, and then cooling to ambient temperature, and (4) subject the solution to spray drying.

[0159] 94. The process according to paragraph 93, wherein step (4) is replaced with subjecting the solution to crystallization.

[0160] 95. The process according to paragraph 93 or 94, wherein the mixture is heated to 40-100°C in step (2).

[0161] 96. The process according to paragraph 95, wherein the mixture is heated to 50-90°C in step (2).

[0162] 97. The process according to paragraph 96, wherein the mixture is heated to 60-70°C in step (2).

[0163] 98. The concentrated aqueous sweetener solution according to paragraphs 57 through 92, wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, sec-butanol, isobutanol, tert-butanol, n-pentanol, sec-pentanol, isopentanol, and neopentanol.

[0164] 99. Steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in a water or water/alcohol solution wherein the steviol glycosides or steviol glycoside composition contain sweet tea extract.

[0165] 100. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 99, wherein the sweet tea extract contains rubusoside.

[0166] In another aspect, the present embodiments relate to the following paragraphs numbered consecutively from 1 to 22. For example in one embodiment, the first (1) paragraph, a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in a water or water/alcohol solution wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in the water or water/alcohol solution for at least 1 day to greater than 30 days at a temperature from 0 °C to about 25 °C.

[0167] 2. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the solubility is from greater than or equal to 1 g/100 g water to greater than or equal to 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0168] 3. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, sec-butanol, isobutanol, tert-butanol, n-pentanol, sec-pentanol, isopentanol, and neopentanol.

[0169] 4. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is from about 60 % to about 1% alcohol by volume.

[0170] 5. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprises Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

[0171] 6. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 5, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A, or Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside B, or Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside D, or Rebaudioside A and Stevioside, or Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D, or Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D or Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside D, and Stevioside.

[0172] 7. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 6, wherein rebaudioside A is the main component.

[0173] 8. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution at room or ambient temperature.

[0174] 9. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is in an amorphous form, a crystal form, or mixtures thereof.

[0175] 10. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition is dissolved in solution.

[0176] 11. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the solution is not turbid.

[0177] 12. A sweetener composition comprising the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to claim 1 and a sweetener.

[0178] 13. The sweetener composition according to paragraph 12, wherein the sweetener comprises cyclamates and salts thereof, sucralose, aspartame, saccharin and salts thereof, stevia (Truvia™), rebaudioside A, xylitol, acesulfame-K, neotame, N--[N-

[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)propyl]-alpha-aspartyl-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester (hereinafter abbreviated as "ANS9801"), glycyrrhizin, thaumatin, monellin, and combinations thereof.

[0179] 14. A process for the preparation of steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with increased solubility in an aqueous solution, compared to a nontreated steviol glycoside or a nontreated steviol glycoside composition comprising the steps: mixing a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with water to form a mixture; heating the mixture until the mixture provides a solution; cooling the solution to ambient temperature; and subjecting the solution to spray drying.

[0180] 15. The process according to paragraph 14, wherein the mixture is heated to 40-100°C.

[0181] 16. The process according to paragraph 14, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprises Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

[0182] 17. A spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprising Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

[0183] 18. The spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition of paragraph 17, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is stable in a water or a water/alcohol solution for at least 1 day to greater than 30 days at a temperature from 0 °C to about 25 °C.

[0184] 19. The spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition of paragraph 18, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is soluble from greater than or equal to 1 g/100 g water to greater than or equal to 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0185] 20. A spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside B composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside B composition has a melting point of from about 221 °C to about 227 °C.

[0186] 21. A spray dried rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D composition has a melting point of from about 224 °C to about 227 °C.

[0187] 22. A spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D composition has a melting point of from about 224 °C to about 226 °C.

[0188] In another aspect, the present embodiments relate to the following paragraphs numbered consecutively from 1 to 22. For example in one embodiment, the first (1) paragraph, a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in a water or water/alcohol solution wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in the water or water/alcohol solution for at least 1 day to greater than 30 days at a temperature from 0 °C to about 25 °C.

[0189] 2. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 1, wherein the solubility is from greater than or equal to 1 g/100 g water to greater than or equal to 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0190] 3. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to either of paragraphs 1 or 2, wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, sec-butanol, isobutanol, tert-butanol, n-pentanol, sec-pentanol, isopentanol, and neopentanol.

[0191] 4. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to either of paragraphs 1 or 2, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is from about 60 % to about 1% alcohol by volume.

[0192] 5. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 4, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprises Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B,

Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

[0193] 6. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 5, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A, or Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside B, or Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside D, or Rebaudioside A and Stevioside, or Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D, or Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D or Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside D, and Stevioside.

[0194] 7. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to paragraph 6, wherein rebaudioside A is the main component.

[0195] 8. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to either paragraph 1 or 2, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution at room or ambient temperature.

[0196] 9. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either paragraph 1 or 2, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is in an amorphous form, a crystal form, or mixtures thereof.

[0197] 10. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either paragraph 1 or 2, wherein the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition is dissolved in solution.

[0198] 11. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either paragraph 1 or 2, wherein the solution is not turbid.

[0199] 12. A sweetener composition comprising the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either paragraph 1 or 2 and a sweetener.

[0200] 13. The sweetener composition according to paragraph 12, wherein the sweetener comprises cyclamates and salts thereof, sucralose, aspartame, saccharin and salts thereof, stevia (Truvia™), rebaudioside A, xylitol, acesulfame-K, neotame, N--[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)propyl]-alpha-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester (hereinafter abbreviated as "ANS9801 "), glycyrrhizin, thaumatin, monellin, and combinations thereof.

[0201] 14. A process for the preparation of steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with increased solubility in an aqueous solution, compared to a nontreated steviol glycoside or a nontreated steviol glycoside composition comprising the steps: mixing a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with water to form a mixture; heating the mixture until the mixture provides a solution; cooling the solution to ambient temperature; and subjecting the solution to spray drying.

[0202] 15. The process according to paragraph 14, wherein the mixture is heated to 40-100°C.

[0203] 16. The process according to either paragraph 14 or 15, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprises Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

[0204] 17. A spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprising Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

[0205] 18. The spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition of paragraph 17, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is stable in a water or a water/alcohol solution for at least 1 day to greater than 30 days at a temperature from 0 °C to about 25 °C.

[0206] 19. The spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition of paragraph 18, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is soluble from greater than or equal to 1 g/100 g water to greater than or equal to 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

[0207] 20. A spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside B composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside B composition has a melting point of from about 221 °C to about 227 °C.

[0208] 21. A spray dried rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D composition has a melting point of from about 224 °C to about 227 °C.

[0209] 22. A spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D composition has a melting point of from about 224 °C to about 226 °C.

[0210] The invention will be further described with reference to the following non-limiting Examples. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that many changes can be made in the embodiments described without departing from the scope of the present invention. Thus the scope of the present invention should not be limited to the embodiments described in this application, but only by embodiments described by the language of the claims and the equivalents of those embodiments. Unless otherwise indicated, all percentages are by weight.

[0211] Examples:

[0212] Table 1. Raw materials

Component	Lot	RA (%)	RB (%)	RD (%)	Total stevia glycosides (%)
RA	EPC094-17-03	99.56	-	-	-
RB	EPC006-30-03	-	99.3	-	-
RD	EPC094-28-11	-	-	95.10	-
RA + RD	CT001-131105	90.1	-	7.0	98.4
RA + RB + RD	CT001-131108	79.8	10.3	6.3	96.8
RA60	CT001-120301	66.52	-	1.40	97.34
RA80	CT001-140203	80.2	1.22	0.88	95.8
RA97	CT001-130602	98.0	-	-	-

[0213] Example 1: General process for preparing steviol glycosides with improved solubility.

[0214] A steviol glycoside or steviol glycosides were mixed with water. The mixture was then heated to 60-70 °C with stirring, until the mixture was completely dissolved to obtain a clear solution. The solution was then stirred for an additional 30 min at 60-70 °C, and then was then cooled to ambient temperature. The solution was then spray dried using a L-117 (Beijing Laiheng Scientific Co., Ltd) with inlet temperature: 135 °C; outlet temperature: 90 °C; feeding speed: 200 mL/h; pressure: 1.8 KPa; to obtain the product, in the form of white powders (yield = 95 wt %).

[0215] Various steviol glycosides and steviol glycoside compositions with improved solubility were prepared by using raw materials listed in Table 1. These raw materials are used in the following Examples 2-6 as indicated.

[0216] Example 2: Evaluation of solubility of the steviol glycosides and steviol glycoside compositions with improved solubility.

[0217] The solubilities of steviol glycosides and steviol glycoside compositions listed in Table 1 were evaluated according to the following procedure. Raw materials listed in Table 1 were treated and spray dried according to Example 1 and then dissolved in water at a weight ratio of 1:10 and the mixture was heated to 70 °C until the solid was completely dissolved, to obtain an aqueous solution. The solution was cooled to ambient temperature, and the stability (i.e. the period until precipitation) of the solution was observed. The solubility results of the treated steviol glycosides and steviol glycoside compositions are shown in Table 2.

[0218] Table 2.

Sample No.	RA (%)	RB (%)	RD(%)	Soluble at 70 °C	Stability at RT
1	70	18	12	yes	20 h
2	90	6	4	yes	> 5 days
3	88	5	7	yes	> 5 days
4	78	15	7	yes	> 5 days
5	87	11	2	yes	> 5 days
6	76	9	15	yes	> 5 days
7	90	10	0	yes	> 15 days
8	78*	15	7	yes	> 5 days
9	78**	15	7	yes	> 5 days
10	78***	15	7	yes	> 5 days
11	0	50	50	no	-
12	0	100	0	no	-
13	0	0	100	no	-
14	100	0	0	yes	1 hour

* RA97, **RA80, ***RA60

[0219] The results of Example 2 show specific pairings of treated steviol glycosides (Samples 1-10) that had improved solubility in an aqueous solution in comparison with steviol glycosides comprising rebaudioside B and D, and rebaudioside A, B, and D individually (Samples 11-14). RA, RB, RD, and 50:50 RB/RD have poor solubility whereas the steviol glycosides mixtures comprising RA, RB, and RD wherein RB is 0-20 %, RD is 0-15 %, and RB+RD <30 % have the most improved solubility.

[0220] Example 3: Evaluation of solubility of steviol glycosides with improved solubility.

[0221] The mixture in Table 2, wherein RA:RB:RD = 78/15/7 (Sample 4) that was first heat treated and spray dried according to Example 1 was formulated into

aqueous solutions at various concentrations, and the maximum solubility, temperature, and stability were determined and summarized in the Table 3.

[0222] Table 3.

Content (g/100 ml water)	Soluble temperature	Stability
15	soluble at 80 °C	> 2.5 days
20	soluble at 85 °C	> 2 days
25	soluble at 90 °C	> 2 days
30	soluble at 90 °C	> 2 days
35	soluble at 90 °C (slightly cloudy)	> 1.5 days

[0223] The results show that the solubility of the mixture has an upper limit of 30 g/100 ml, and the stability of the obtained 30 % wt/wt solution is more than 2 days at ambient temperature.

[0224] Example 4: Evaluation of solubility of steviol glycoside compositions with improved solubility.

[0225] Steviol glycosides with further improved solubility that were first heat treated and spray dried according to Example 1 were evaluated for stability in various aqueous concentrations shown in Table 4.

[0226] Table 4.

Lot	20 g/100 g water	30 g/100 g water	50 g/100 g water	60 g/100 g water
CT001-131108	-	> 30 days	> 30 days	> 30 days
CT001-131105	6 days	3 days	3 days	-

[0227] The results demonstrate that Lot CT001-131108, a steviol glycoside composition comprising RA:RB:RD = 80/10/6 is stable in aqueous solution for greater than 30 days at a concentration of 60 g/100 g water.

[0228] Example 5: Powder XRD of the steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility.

[0229] Steviol glycoside compositions with improved solubility that were first heat treated and spray dried according to Example 1 were subjected to Powder XRD. The HPLC results are shown in Table 5. HPLC was conducted using a Supelcosil LC-NH₂ column at 40 °C with 80:20 ACN/water mobile phase adjusted to pH 3 with 85 % phosphoric acid. The flow rate was adjusted so that the retention time of standard RA (Wako Ltd.) was 21 min.

[0230] Table 5.

Lot	RA (% by HPLC)	RB (% by HPLC)	RD (% by HPLC)
094-39-01	79.83	12.66	5.36
094-39-02	80.34	12.82	5.32

[0231] It can be seen from the Powder XRD (FIG. 1 and FIG. 2) that the spectrum of the Stevia glycoside compositions with improved solubility show an amorphous product, not a crystalline polymorph, and thus are different from the soluble forms described in the disclosed references.

[0232] Example 6: Several steviol glycosides were mixed using high purity RA, RB, RD, and stevioside (SS).

[0233] Steviol glycosides that have not been heat treated and spray dried according to Example 1 were mixed with water and heated to 70 °C to give the following mixtures, respectively. The composition of each steviol glycoside, mixture concentration, solubility, and stability are shown in Table 6.

[0234] Table 6.

Composition	Ratio	Concentration (g / 100mL water)	Soluble at 70 °C	Stability at RT
RA/RD	85/15	10	Yes	> 6 days
RA/RD	90/10	10	Yes	5 days
RA/SS	90/10	10	Yes	17 hours
RA/SS	95/5	10	Yes	9 hours
RA/RB	85/15	10	Yes	> 6 days
RA/RB	95/5	10	Yes	45 hours
RA/RB/RD	90/6/4	20	Yes	43 hours
RB/RD	70/30	5	No	-
RB/SS	90/10	5	No	-

[0235] SS showed some improvement to the solubility of RA. For the RA/RB system, the solubility of RA was minimized until the ratio of RB reached 10 % or greater. For the RA/RD system, the solubility of was minimized until the ratio of RD reached 15 % or greater.

[0236] Example 7: Additional RA/RB stability data.

[0237] RA-RB-1 and RA-RB-3 were prepared according to the current spray drying process and tested for concentration dependent solubility.

[0238] Table 7.

Sample	Lot#	RA	RB
RA-RB-1	EPC116-44-02	89.95 %	6.61 %
RA-RB-3	EPC137-08-01	78.12 %	19.35 %

[0239] Table 8

RA-RB-1	Solid/liquid ratio	Dissolved at room temperature	Stability (days)
Spray dried	5 %		> 30 days
	1 %		> 30 days
	0.50 %		> 30 days
	10 %		> 30 days
RA-RB-3	Solid/liquid ratio	Dissolved at room temperature	Stability
Spray dried	1 %		2 hours
	5 %		2 hours
	10 %		1.5 hours
	20 %		1 hours
	30 %		Slightly turbid

[0240] As shown above, as the concentration of RA-RB-1 reaches 10 %, the solution remains stable for over 30 days. The initial solubility of RA-RB-3 reaches 20 %, but is less stable.

[0241] Example 8: Melting point determinations.

[0242] Melting points of untreated and treated steviol glycosides and steviol glycoside compositions were taken and disclosed in Table 9. Melting points were determined using a X-4 (Beijing Tech Instrument Co., Ltd.) with heating speed of 1 °C/min.

[0243] Table 9.

Sample	Lot#	RA	RB	RD	Melting point
Untreated					
RA	EPC094-17-03	99.6%			235-237 °C
RB	EPC082-31-03		92.74%		224-226 °C
RD	EPC094-28-11			95.10%	285-287 °C
RA/RB/RD		79%	10%	6%	233-236 °C
RA/RB		90%	6.6%		234-236 °C
Treated					
RA-RB-1	EPC116-44-02	89.95%	6.61%		224-227 °C
RA-RB-2	EPC116-32-01	93.05%	5.00%		223-226 °C
RA/RB/RD	EPC130-36-03	79.08%	10.28%	6.25%	224-227 °C
RA-RB-3	EPC137-08-01	78.12%	19.35%		221-223 °C
RA/RD	CT001-130511	90.0%		6.1%	224-226 °C

[0244] The melting point of treated samples are lower than RA and untreated samples, demonstrating an affirmative change in structure of the treated compositions.

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with improved solubility in a water or water/alcohol solution wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in the water or water/alcohol solution for at least 1 day to greater than 30 days at a temperature from 0 °C to about 25 °C.
2. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to claim 1, wherein the solubility is from greater than or equal to 1 g/100 g water to greater than or equal to 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.
3. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to either of claims 1 or 2, wherein the alcohol is selected from the group consisting of methanol, ethanol, propanol, isopropanol, n-butanol, sec-butanol, isobutanol, tert-butanol, n-pentanol, sec-pentanol, isopentanol, and neopentanol.
4. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to either of claims 1 or 2, wherein the water or water/alcohol solution is from about 60 % to about 1% alcohol by volume.
5. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to claim 4, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprises Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.
6. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to claim 5, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition comprises Rebaudioside A, or Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside B, or Rebaudioside A and Rebaudioside D, or Rebaudioside A and Stevioside, or Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D, or Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B and Rebaudioside D or Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside D, and Stevioside.

7. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to claim 6, wherein rebaudioside A is the main component.

8. The steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition according to either claim 1 or 2, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is stable in water or water/alcohol solution at room or ambient temperature.

9. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either claim 1 or 2, wherein the steviol glycoside or steviol glycoside composition is in an amorphous form, a crystal form, or mixtures thereof.

10. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either claim 1 or 2, wherein the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition is dissolved in solution.

11. The steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either claim 1 or 2, wherein the solution is not turbid.

12. A sweetener composition comprising the steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition according to either claim 1 or 2 and a sweetener.

13. The sweetener composition according to claim 12, wherein the sweetener comprises cyclamates and salts thereof, sucralose, aspartame, saccharin and salts thereof, stevia (Truvia™), rebaudioside A, xylitol, acesulfame-K, neotame, N--[N-[3-(3-hydroxy-4-methoxyphenyl)propyl]-alpha-aspartyl]-L-phenylalanine 1-methyl ester (hereinafter abbreviated as "ANS9801 "), glycyrrhizin, thaumatin, monellin, and combinations thereof.

14. A process for the preparation of steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with increased solubility in an aqueous solution, compared to a nontreated steviol glycoside or a nontreated steviol glycoside composition comprising the steps:

mixing a steviol glycoside or a steviol glycoside composition with water to form a mixture;

heating the mixture until the mixture provides a solution;

cooling the solution to ambient temperature; and
subjecting the solution to spray drying.

15. The process according to claim 14, wherein the mixture is heated to 40-100°C.

16. The process according to either claim 14 or 15, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprises Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

17. A spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition comprising Steviol, Steviolbioside, Stevioside, Rebaudioside A, Rebaudioside B, Rebaudioside C, Rebaudioside D, Rebaudioside E, Rebaudioside F, Rebaudioside M, Rubusoside and Ducoside A, stevia extract or sweet tea extract.

18. The spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition of claim 17, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is stable in a water or a water/alcohol solution for at least 1 day to greater than 30 days at a temperature from 0 °C to about 25 °C.

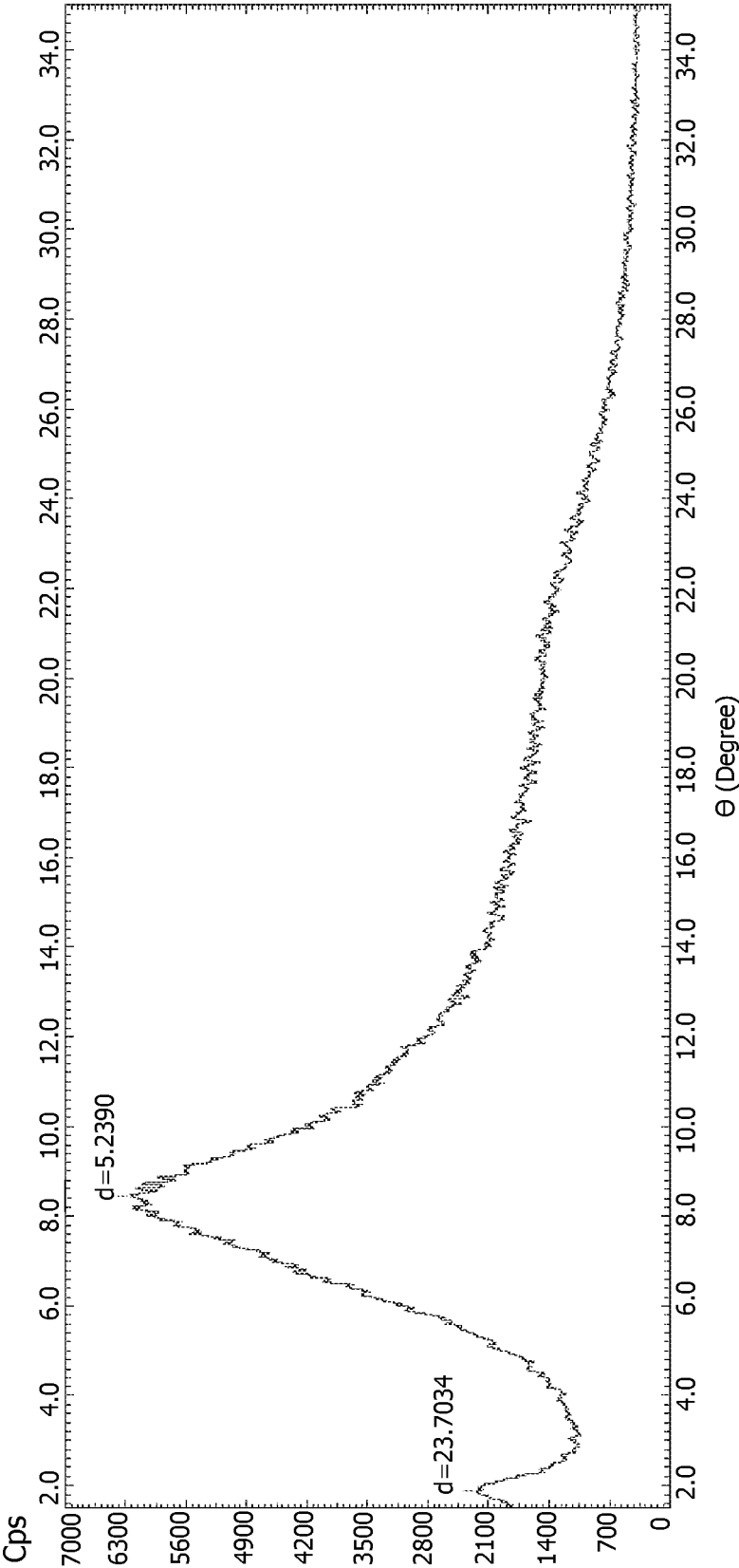
19. The spray dried steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition of claim 18, wherein the steviol glycoside or the steviol glycoside composition is soluble from greater than or equal to 1 g/100 g water to greater than or equal to 60 g/100 g water or water/alcohol solution.

20. A spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside B composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside B composition has a melting point of from about 221 °C to about 227 °C.

21. A spray dried rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A, rebaudioside B and rebaudioside D composition has a melting point of from about 224 °C to about 227 °C.

22. A spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D composition wherein the spray dried rebaudioside A and rebaudioside D composition has a melting point of from about 224°C to about 226°C.

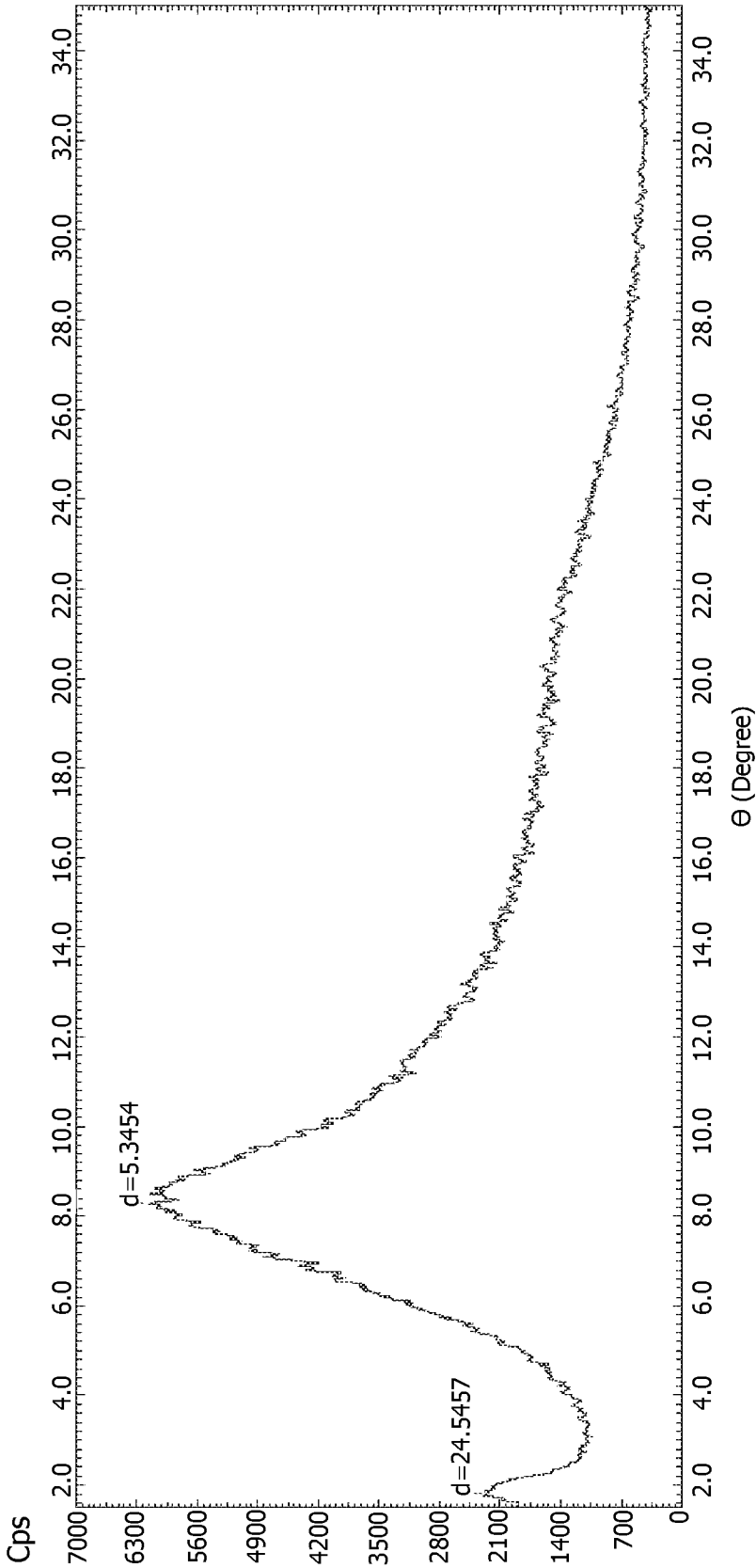
FIG. 1



Sample Name: EPC094-39-01 No. 2 Θ (Degree) d I/I₀ I, cps FWHM
Ray: Cu Kα 1, 1.54056 1 3.724 23.7034 41.8 559
2 16.910 5.2390 100 1336
Tube Current, Tube Voltage: 40kV, 40mA
Slit: DS, RS, SS
Scan Speed: Degree/Minute
Pace Width: .02 degree

Repetitional Times: 0 time
Total Number of Peaks: 2
Strongest Peak Height: 1336
Total Diffraction Strength: 6816060
Total Net Strength: 798018
Total Net Strength / Total Diffraction Strength: 0.117
Filter clogging plate: none

FIG. 2



Sample Name: EPC094-39-02 No. 2	θ (Degree)	d I/I ₀	cps FWHM
Ray: Cu Kα 1, 1.54056	1	3.597	24.5457 39.0 521
	2	16.571	5.3454 100 1337
Tube Current, Tube Voltage: 40kV, 40mA			
Silt: DS, RS, SS			
Scan Speed: Degree/Minute			
Pace Width: .02 degree			
Repetitional Times: 0 time			
Total Number of Peaks: 2			
Strongest Peak Height: 1337			
Total Diffraction Strength: 6816060			
Total Net Strength: 798018			
Total Net Strength / Total Diffraction Strength: 0.117			
Filter clogging plate: none			

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/IB2015/053685

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

A23L 1/236(2006.01)i

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

A23L

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practicable, search terms used)

EPODOC;WPI;CNTXT;USTXT;Web of science;Registry(STN);Caplus(STN):stabl+, stevia, sweeten+, steviol, glycoside

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 2013123281 A1 (KRAFT FOODS GROUP BRANDS LLC) 22 August 2013 (2013-08-22) claims 1-4, 14, page 2, lines 11-12, page 6, paragraphs [0025]-[0026]	1-13, 17-22
A	WO 2013123281 A1 (KRAFT FOODS GROUP BRANDS LLC) 22 August 2013 (2013-08-22) claims 1-4, 14, page 2, lines 11-12, page 6, paragraphs [0025]-[0026]	14-16
X	WO 2012153339 A2 (STEVINOL LTD.ET AL.) 15 November 2012 (2012-11-15) claims 1-11	1-13, 17-22
A	WO 2012153339 A2 (STEVINOL LTD.ET AL.) 15 November 2012 (2012-11-15) claims 1-11	14-16
X	WO 2008147725 A1 (THE COCA-COLA COMPANY ET AL.) 04 December 2008 (2008-12-04) claim 1, page 10	1-13, 17-22
A	WO 2008147725 A1 (THE COCA-COLA COMPANY ET AL.) 04 December 2008 (2008-12-04) claim 1, page 10	14-16



Further documents are listed in the continuation of Box C.



See patent family annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

06 September 2015

Date of mailing of the international search report

24 September 2015

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International application No.

PCT/IB2015/053685**C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT**

Category*	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	WO 2011082288 A1 (THE COCA-COLA COMPANY ET AL.) 07 July 2011 (2011-07-07) page 5	20, 22
PX	WO 2015014958 A1 (DSM IP ASSETS B.V.) 05 February 2015 (2015-02-05) claims 1-15	1-22

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Information on patent family members

International application No.

PCT/IB2015/053685

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				KR	20120116460	A	22 October 2012
				US	2010137569	A1	03 June 2010
				CA	2784810	A1	07 July 2011
				CN	102770436	A	07 November 2012
WO	2015014958	A1	05 February 2015	None			