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A New Hybrid Flower Pollination Algorithm for Solving Constrained Global Optimization Problems

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Abstract Global optimization methods play an important role to solve many real-world problems. Flower pollination algorithm (FP) is a new nature-inspired algorithm, based on the characteristics of flowering plants. In this paper, a new hybrid optimization method called hybrid flower pollination algorithm (FPPSO) is proposed. The method combines the standard flower pollination algorithm (FP) with the particle swarm optimization (PSO) algorithm to improve the searching accuracy. The FPPSO algorithm is used to solve constrained optimization problems. Experimental results showed that the accuracy of finding the best solution and convergence speed performance of the proposed algorithm is significantly better compared to those achieved by the existing algorithms.

Keywords Flower Pollination Algorithm, Hybrid Optimization, Global Optimization, Particle Swarm Optimization, Constrained Optimization.

1 Introduction

Optimization is a field of applied mathematics that deals with finding the external values of a function in a domain of definition, subject to various constraints on the variable values [1]. Global optimization refers to finding the extreme value of a given nonconvex function in a certain feasible region and such problems are classified in two classes; unconstrained and constrained problems. Solving global optimization problems has made great gain from the interest in the interface between computer science and operations research [1-5].

There are two categories of optimization techniques: exact and heuristic. Exact strategies guarantee the optimal solution will be found and work well for many problems. However for complex problems or ones with a very large number of parameters, exact strategies may require very high computational costs [3]. A large amount of real-world problems fall in this category of complex problems, and in order to solve them in a reasonable amount of time a different approach is needed [3,6]. For these problems, Meta-heuristic algorithms are considered as efficient tools to obtain optimal solutions [6-29]. Two important characteristics

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of meta-heuristics are intensification and diversification. Intensification, also called exploitation, intends to use the information from the current best solutions. This process searches around the neighborhood of the current best solutions and selects the best candidates. Diversification, also called exploration, guarantees that the algorithm can explore the search space more efficiently, often by randomization. This is the essential step that guarantees that the system can jump out of any local optima and can generate new solutions as diversely as possible [6-7].

These methods have received remarkable attentions as they are known to be derivative free, robust and often involve a small number of parameter tunings [6-29]. However, applying such single methods is sometimes too restrictive, especially for high dimensional and nonlinear problems. This is because these methods usually require a substantially huge amount of computational times and are frequently trapped in one of the local optima. Recently, different methods combining meta-heuristics with local search methods is a practical remedy to overcome the drawbacks of slow convergence and random constructions of meta-heuristics [30-38]. In these hybrid methods, local search strategies are inlaid inside meta-heuristics in order to guide them especially in the vicinity of local minima, and overcome their slow convergence especially in the final stage of the search.

Recently, Yang [39] developed a new Flower pollination algorithm (FP) that draws its inspiration from the flow pollination process of flowering plants. In this paper, a new hybrid optimization method is introduced. The proposed method, hybrid flower pollination algorithm with particle swarm optimization algorithm for solving constrained global optimization problems (FPPOS). The experimental results showed that the accuracy and speed performance of the FPPSO method had outperformed the other existing methods.

This paper is organized as follows: after introduction, the original Flower pollination algorithm is briefly introduced. Section 3 introduces the meaning of chaos. In section 4, the proposed algorithm is described, while the results are discussed in section 5. Finally, conclusions are presented in section 6.

2 The Flower pollination Algorithm

Flower Pollination Algorithm (FP) was founded by Yang in the year 2012. Inspired by the flow pollination process of flowering plants are the following rules:

> **Rule 1:** Biotic and cross-pollination can be considered as a process of global pollination process, and pollen-carrying pollinators move in a way that obeys Le'vy flights.
> **Rule 2:** For local pollination, a biotic and self-pollination are used.
> **Rule 3:** Pollinators such as insects can develop flower constancy, which is equivalent to a reproduction probability that is proportional to the similarity of two flowers involved.
> **Rule 4:** The interaction or switching of local pollination and global pollination can be controlled by a switch probability $p \in [0,1]$, with a slight bias toward local pollination .

In order to formulate updating formulas, we have to convert the aforementioned rules into updating equations. For example, in the global pollination step, flower pollen gametes are carried by pollinators such as insects, and pollen can travel over a long distance because

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insects can often fly and move in a much longer range [39].Therefore, Rule 1 and flower constancy can be represented mathematically as:

$$x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + \gamma L(\lambda)(x_i^t - B) \quad (1)$$

Where x_i^t is the pollen i or solution vector x_i at iteration t, and B is the current best solution found among all solutions at the current generation/iteration. Here γ is a scaling factor to control the step size. In addition, $L(\lambda)$ is the parameter that corresponds to the strength of the pollination, which essentially is also the step size. Since insects may move over a long distance with various distance steps, we can use a Le'vy flight to imitate this characteristic efficiently. That is, we draw $L > 0$ from a Levy distribution:

$$L \sim \frac{\lambda\Gamma(\lambda)\sin(\pi\lambda/2)}{\pi}\frac{1}{S^{1+\lambda}}, (S >> S_0 > 0) \quad (2)$$

Here, $\Gamma(\lambda)$ is the standard gamma function, and this distribution is valid for large steps $s > 0$. Then, to model the local pollination, both Rule 2 and Rule 3 can be represented as

$$x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + U(x_j^t - x_k^t) \quad (3)$$

Where x_j^t and x_k^t are pollen from different flowers of the same plant species. This essentially imitates the flower constancy in a limited neighborhood. Mathematically, if x_j^t and x_k^t comes from the same species or selected from the same population, this equivalently becomes a local random walk if we draw U from a uniform distribution in [0, 1].Though Flower pollination activities can occur at all scales, both local and global, adjacent flower patches or flowers in the not-so-far-away neighborhood are more likely to be pollinated by local flower pollen than those faraway. In order to imitate this, we can effectively use the switch probability like in Rule 4 or the proximity probability p to switch between common global pollination to intensive local pollination. To begin with, we can use a naive value of $p = 0.5$ as an initially value. A preliminary parametric showed that $p = 0.8$ might work better for most applications [39].

The basic steps of FP can be summarized as the pseudo-code shown in Fig. 1.

Flower pollination algorithm

Define Objective function f (*x*), $x = (x_1, x_2, ..., x_d)$
Initialize a population of n flowers/pollen gametes with random solutions
Find the best solution ***B*** *in the initial population*
Define a switch probability $p \in [0, 1]$
Define a stopping criterion (either a fixed number of generations/iterations or accuracy)
while *(t <MaxGeneration)*
for *i* = 1 : *n (all n flowers in the population)*
if *rand <p,*

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Draw a (d-dimensional) step vector L which obeys a L´evy distribution
Global pollination via $x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + L(B - x_i^t)$
else
Draw U from a uniform distribution in [0,1]
Do local pollination via $x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + U(x_j^t - x_k^t)$
end if
Evaluate new solutions
If new solutions are better, update them in the population
end for
Find the current best solution ***B***
end while
Output the best solution found

Fig. 1 Pseudo code of the Flower pollination algorithm

3 Particle Swarm Optimization

Particle swarm optimization (PSO) was developed by Kennedy and Eberhartin 1995 based on the swarm behavior such as fish and bird schooling in nature [40-41].Since then, PSO has generated much wider interests and forms an exciting, ever expanding research subject called swarm intelligence. This algorithm searches the space of an objective function by adjusting the trajectories of individual agents, called particles, as the piecewise paths formed by positional vectors in a quasistochastic manner. The movement of a swarming particle consists of two major components: a stochastic component and a deterministic component. Each particle is attracted toward the position of the current global best g and its own best location x_i^* in history, while at the same time it has a tendency to move randomly. Let x_i and v_i be the position vector and velocity of particle i, respectively. The new velocity vector is determined by the following formula:

$$v_i^{t+1} = v_v^t + c_1 r_1 (g - x_i^t) + c_2 r_2 (x_x^* - x_i^t) \tag{4}$$

Where r_1 and r_2 are two random vectors and each entry takes the values between 0 and 1. The parameters $c_1$and c_2 are the learning parameters or acceleration constants, which can typically be taken as, say, $c_1 \approx c_2 \approx 2$.The initial locations of all particles should be distributed relatively uniformly so that they can sample over most regions, which is especially important for multimodal problems. The initial velocity of a particle can be taken as zero, i.e. $v_i^{t=0} = 0$. The new positions can then be updated by:

$$x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + v_i^{t+1} \tag{5}$$

Although v_i can be any value, it is usually bounded in some range $[0, v_{max}]$.

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4 The Proposed Algorithm (IFPCH) for Solving Constrained Global Optimization Problems

In the proposed algorithm, we used chaotic maps to tune the Flower pollination algorithm parameter and improve the performance [42-43]. The steps of the proposed algorithm for solving constrained global optimization problems are as follows:

Step 1 Initialize the swarm by randomly assigning each particle to an arbitrarily initial velocity and a position in each dimension of the solution space.
Step 2 Evaluate the desired fitness function to be optimized for each particle‘s position.
Step 3 for each individual particle; update its historically best position so far, ***BestPi,*** if its current position is better than its historically best one.
Step 4 Identify/Update the swarm‘s globally best particle that has the swarm‘s best fitness value, and set/reset its index as ***g*** and its position at ***gbestP***.
Step 5 Update the velocities of all the particles using equation (4).
Step 6 Move each particle to its new position using equation (5).
Step 7 Repeat steps 2–6 until convergence or a stopping criterion is met.
Step 8 The best solution found by PSO is regarded as initial points for FP algorithm. ***B***
Step 9 Calculate ***p*** by the selected chaotic maps.
Step 10 If (rand <***p***) then global pollination via $x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + (f\gamma)L(\lambda)(x_i^t - B)$ // $(f\gamma)$ chaotic Le'vy flights

else do local pollination via $x_i^{t+1} = x_i^t + U(x_j^t - x_k^t)$.

Step 11 Evaluate new solutions if better, update them in the population.
Step 12 Find the current best solution ***B***.
Step 13 Output the best solution found.

4.1 Handling Constraints

One of the well-known techniques of handling constraints is using penalty function, which transforms constrained problem into unconstrained ones, consisting of a sum of the objective and the constraints weighted by penalties. By using penalty function methods, the objectives are inclined to guide the search toward the feasible solutions. Hence, in this paper the corresponding objective function used in is defined and described as:

$$Min \;\; F(x) = f(x) + \lambda \sum_{n=1}^{K} Max(0, g_n) \tag{6}$$

Where $f(x)$ is the objective function for assignment problem, λ is the penalty coefficient and it is set to a value of 10^{11} in this paper, K is the number of constraints and g_n the constraints of the problem.

5 Numerical Results

Most real-world engineering optimization problems are nonlinear with complex constraints. In some cases, the optimal solutions of interest do not even exist. In order to evaluate the performance of FPPSO, it is tested against the following well-known benchmark design problems.

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In this section, we will carry out numerical simulation based on some well-known constrained optimization problems to investigate the performances of the proposed algorithm. The best results obtained by FPPSO for test problems (1–7) are presented in Table 1. In these problems, the initial parameters are set at n= 50 and the number of iterations is set to t = 1000, inertial constant = 0.3, a cognitive constant = 1, and a social constant for swarm interaction = 1. The selected chaotic map for all problems is the logistic map, according to the following equation:

$$Y_{n+1} = \mu Y_n(1-Y_n) \tag{7}$$

Clearly, $Y_n \in [0,1]$ under the conditions that the initial $Y_0 \in [0,1]$, where n is the iteration number and μ=4.The results of FPPSO algorithm are conducted from 30 independent runs for each problem. The comparison between the results determined by the proposed approach and the compared algorithms are reported in Table 1. The results have demonstrated the superiority of the proposed approach to finding the global optimal solution.

5.1 Test problem 1

This problem, originally introduced by Bracken and McCormick [44], is a constrained minimization problem. Table 1 shows the best solution from the FPPSO algorithm and also provides the results obtained using the GA (Homaifar et al. [20]), the evolutionary programming (Fogel [45]) and harmony search (Lee and Geem [46]).The problem can be formulated as:

$$f(x) = (x_1 - 2)^2 + (x_2 - 1)^2$$
$$s.t.$$
$$g_1(x) = (x_1 - 2)^2 + (x_2 - 1)^2,$$
$$g_2(x) = \frac{-x_1^2}{4} - x_2^2 + 1 \geq 0,$$
$$-10 \leq x_1 \leq 10, -10 \leq x_2 \leq 10$$

5.2 Test problem 2

This function is a minimization problem with two design variables and two inequality constraints. The FPPOS best solutions were compared to the previous solutions reported by Deb [47] using GA and Lee and Geem [45] using harmony search in Table 1. The problem formulation is:

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$$f(x) = (x_1^2 + x_2 - 11)^2 + (x_1 + x_2^2 - 7)^2$$

s.t.

$$g_1(x) = 4.84 - (x_1 - 0.05)^2 - (x_2 - 2.5)^2 \geq 0,$$

$$g_2(x) = x_1^2 + (x_2 - 2.5)^2 - 4.84 \geq 0,$$

$$0 \leq x_1 \leq 6, 0 \leq x_2 \leq 6$$

5.3 Test problem 3

The welded beam structure is a practical design problem that has been often used as a benchmark for testing different optimization methods [5, 47-49]. The structure consists of beam A and the weld required to hold the beam to member B. A welded beam is designed for minimum cost *f(x)* subject to constraints: g_1 shear stress τ, g_2 bending stress in the beam σ , g_7 buckling load on the bar $\zeta(x)$, g_6 end deflection of the beam δ and g_3; g_4; g_5 side constraints[2,5]. And there are four design variables. The FPPOS best solutions were compared to the previous solutions reported by other method in Table 1. The problem can be stated as follows:

$$f(x) = 1.10471 x_1^2 x_2 + 0.04811 x_3 x_4 (14.0 + x_2),$$

s.t.

$$g_1(x) = \tau(x) - \tau_{\max} \leq 0,$$

$$g_2(x) = \sigma(x) - \sigma_{\max} \leq 0,$$

$$g_3(x) = x_1 - x_4 \leq 0,$$

$$g_4(x) = 0.10471 x_1^2 + 0.04811 x_3 x_4 (14.0 + x_2) - 5.0 \leq 0,$$

$$g_5(x) = 0.125 - x_1 \leq 0,$$

$$g_6(x) = \delta(x) - \delta_{\max} \leq 0,$$

$$g_7(x) = \zeta - \zeta(x) \leq 0$$

where

$$\tau(x) = \sqrt{(\tau')^2 + 2\tau'\tau'' \frac{x_2}{2R} + (\tau'')^2},$$

$$\tau' = \frac{P}{\sqrt{2} x_1 x_2} \; '\tau'' = \frac{MR}{J}, M = P(L + \frac{x_2}{2}),$$

$$R = \sqrt{\frac{x_2^2}{4} + (\frac{x_1 + x_3}{2})^2},$$

$$J = 2\left\{\sqrt{2} x_1 x_2 \left[\frac{x_2^2}{12} + (\frac{x_1 + x_3}{2})^2\right]\right\},$$

$$\sigma(x) = \frac{6PL}{x_4 x_3^2}, \delta(x) = \frac{4PL^3}{E x_3^3 x_4},$$

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$$\xi(x) = \frac{4.013E\sqrt{\frac{x_3^2 x_4^6}{36}}}{L^2}\left(1 - \frac{x_3}{2L}\sqrt{\frac{E}{4G}}\right),$$

$$P = 6000lb, L = 14in., E = 30\times10^6\ psi,$$

$$G = 12\times10^6\ psi, \tau_{\max} = 30600\,psi, \sigma_{\max} = 30000,$$

$$\delta_{\max} = 0.25in.$$

5.4 Test problem 4

Himmelblau's Nonlinear Optimization Problem, This problem is originally proposed by Himmelblau [50] and solved using Generalize Reduced Gradient method (GRG).Table 1 lists the optimal values of the function problem obtained by the FPPSO algorithm, and compares them with earlier results reported by other methods Has been solved by Deb [47], Lee and Geem [46].

$$f(x) = 5.357847x_3^2 + 0.8356891x_1x_5 + 37.293239x_1 - 40792.141,$$

s.t.

$$g_1(x) = 85.334407 + 0.0056858x_2x_5 + 0.00026x_1x_2 - 0.0022053x_3x_5,$$

$$g_2(x) = 80.51249 + 0.0071317x_2x_5 + 0.0029955x_1x_2 + 0.0021813x_3^2,$$

$$g_3(x) = 9.300961 + 0.0047026x_3x_5 + 0.0012547x_1x_3 + 0.0019085x_3x_4,$$

$$0 \le g_1(x) \le 92{,}90 \le g_2(x) \le 110{,}20 \le g_3(x) \le 25$$

$$78 \le x_1 \le 102{,}33 \le x_2 \le 45{,}27 \le x_j \le 45,\ j = 3{,}4{,}5.$$

5.5 Test problem 5

Tension/Compression String, This problem, is described by Arora [9], Coello [51] and Belegundu [52], and it consists of minimizing the weight of a tension/compression spring subject to constraints on minimum deflection, shear stress, surge frequency, limits on outside diameter and on design variables. The design variables are the wire diameter $d=x_1$, the mean coil diameter $D= x_2$, and the number of active coils $N=x_3$ .Formally, the problem can be expressed as:

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$$f(x) = (x_3 + 2)x_2 x_1^2,$$

s.t.

$$g_1(x) = 1 - \frac{x_2^3 x_3}{71785 x_1^4} \le 0,$$

$$g_2(x) = \frac{4x_2^2 - x_2 x_1}{2566(x_2 x_1^3 - x_1^4)} + \frac{1}{5108 x_1^2} - 1 \le 0,$$

$$g_3(x) = 1 - \frac{140.45 x_1}{x_2^2 x_3} \le 0,$$

$$g_4(x) = \frac{x_1 + x_2}{1.5} - 1 \le 0,$$

$$0.05 \le x_1 \le 2, 0.25 \le x_2 \le 1.3, 2 \le x_3 \le 15$$

Table 1 lists the best solution of Tension/Compression String problem obtained by the FPPSO algorithm, and compares them with previous best solutions reported by Belegundu [52], Arora [9], Coello [51], Mahdavi et al. [53], Shi and Eberhart[41].

5.6 Test problem 6

The pressure vessel design was previously analyzed by Sandgren [54] who first proposed this problem. The objective is to minimize the total cost *f(x)* including the cost of the material, forming and welding. There are four design variables: x_1 (T_s, shell thickness), x_2 (T_h, spherical head thickness), x_3 (R, radius of cylindrical shell) and x_4 (L, shell length). $T_s = x_1$ and $T_h = x_2$ are integer multipliers of 0.0625 in. in accordance with the available thickness of rolled steel plates, and $R = x_3$ and $L = x_4$ have Continuous values of $40 \le R \le 80$ in. and $20 \le L \le 60$ in., respectively. The mathematical formulation of the optimization problem can be stated as follows:

$$f(x) = 0.6224 x_1 x_3 x_4 + 1.7781 x_2 x_3^2 + 3.1661 x_1^2 x_4 + 19.84 x_1^2 x_3$$

s.t.

$$g_1(x) = -x_1 + 0.193 x_3 \le 0,$$

$$g_2(x) = -x_2 + 0.00954 x_3 \le 0,$$

$$g_3(x) = -\pi x_3^2 x_4 - \frac{4}{3}\pi x_3^3 + 1296000 \le 0,$$

$$g_4(x) = x_4 - 240 \le 0,$$

$$g_5(x) = 1.1 - x_1 \le 0,$$

$$g_6(x) = 0.6 - x_2 \le 0,$$

The FPPSO algorithm was applied to the pressure vessel optimization problem and the optimal results were compared to earlier solutions reported by Sandgren [54] and Wu and Chow [55], Geem [46] and Mahdavi et al. [53], as shown in Table 1.

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5.7 Test problem 7

Heat Exchanger Design is a benchmark minimization problem that is regarded as difficult test case due to all the constraints are binding. This constrained function has eight variables and six inequality constraints, and has been solved previously by Deb [47], Michalewicz [56], Joines et al. [57], Lee and Geem[46]. The results show in Table 1.The problem formulation is:

$$f(x) = x_1 + x_2 + x_3,$$

s.t.

$$g_1(x) = 0.0025(x_4 + x_6) - 1 \le 0,$$

$$g_2(x) = 0.0025(x_5 + x_7 - x_4) - 1 \le 0,$$

$$g_3(x) = -1 - 0.01(x_8 - x_5) \ge 0,$$

$$g_4(x) = x_1 x_6 - 833.33252 x_4 - 100 x_1 + 83333.333 \ge 0,$$

$$g_5(x) = x_2 x_7 - 1250 x_5 - x_2 x_4 + 1250 x_4 \ge 0,$$

$$g_6(x) = x_3 x_8 - x_3 x_5 + 2500 x_5 - 1250000 \ge 0,$$

$$100 \le x_1 \le 10000.1000 \le x_2, x_3 \le 10000,10 \le x_j \le 1000, (j = 4,...,8)$$

Table 1 the best solution of proposed algorithm and other algorithms for solving constrained optimization problems

Test problem	Optimum solution	The proposed algorithm		Other algorithms		
		The best solution	CPU time (s)	Name	The best solution	CPU time (s)
P1	1.3935	1.3935	0.07	Homaifar et al. [20]	1.4339	Unavailable
				Fogel [45]	2.3772	Unavailable
				Lee and Geem[46]	1.3770	Unavailable
P2	13.59085	13.59085	0.09	Lee and Geem [46]	13.590845	Unavailable
				Deb [47]	13.58958	Unavailable
				Mahdavi et al. [53]	13. 590841	Unavailable
P3	-	1.7248	0.48	Fesanghary et al. [30]	1.7248	4. 138
				Shi and Eberhart [41]	1.72485084	Unavailable
				Lee and Geem [46]	2.38	Unavailable
				Mahdaviet al. [53]	1.7248	Unavailable
				Coello [58]	1.7483	Unavailable
P4	-	-31025.56540	0.25	Fasanghary et al. [30]	-31024.316	1.306
				Shi and Eberhart [41]	-31025.56142	Unavailable
P5	-	0.012665798152	0.77	Arora [9]	0.0127302737	Unavailable
				Shi and Eberhart [41]	0.0126661409	Unavailable
				Coello [51]	0.012681	Unavailable
				Belegundu [52]	0.0128334378	Unavailable
P6	-	6059.7033340	0.98	Mahdavi et al.[53]	7197.730	Unavailable
				Lee and Geem[46]	7198.433	Unavailable
				Wu and Chow[55]	7207.494	Unavailable
				Sandgren [54]	7980.894	Unavailable
P7	7049.330923	7049.330923	1.00	Lee and Geem [46]	7057.274414	Unavailable
				Deb [47]	7060.221	Unavailable
				Michalewicz [56]	7377.976	Unavailable
				Joines [57]	7068.6880	Unavailable

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6 Conclusions

In the present study, the FPPOS algorithm has been employed to solve constrained optimization problems. FPPOS has been validated using several benchmark mathematical and engineering design problems. Several simulation examples have been completed to verify the weight of the planned algorithm. The comparison between the results determined by the proposed algorithm and the compared algorithms are reported in Table (1).

The results have demonstrated the superiority of the FPPOS algorithm to finding the global optimum solution. The results indicate that FPPOS is more accurate, reliable and efficient at finding global optimal solution than are other algorithms. Therefore, the solutions obtained by our approach represent great contribution for finding the optimum solutions of these problems.

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