Isoflavones and Rotenoids from the Leaves of Millettia brandisiana

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A new isoflavone, $4'-\gamma,\gamma$ -dimethylallyloxy-5,7,2',5'-tetramethoxyisoflavone, brandisianin A (1), was isolated from the leaves of *Millettia brandisiana*, along with one synthetically known isoflavone, 7,4'-di-O-prenylgenistein (2) and twelve known compounds. The structures were elucidated on the basis of extensive spectroscopic analysis. Two isolated compounds were tested for anti-inflammatory activity; 12a-hydroxy- α -toxicarol (11) showed significant anti-inflammatory activity.

Key words Millettia brandisiana; isoflavone; rotenoid; anti-inflammatory activity

Millettia brandisiana Kurz, a member of the Leguminosae, is a medium-sized tree growing throughout Thailand;¹⁾ however, its medicinal use is unknown. Chemical investigations of a few species of genus Millettia in Thailand resulted in the isolation of several flavonoids, some of which showed antiviral and anti-inflammatory activities.²⁾ There have been no previous studies on the chemical composition of the leaves of M. brandisiana. In an earlier report, we described the isolation of four rotenoids from the hexane extract of the flowers of *M. brandisiana*.³⁾ In the present investigation, the ethyl acetate extract of the leaves yielded a new isoflavone, $4'-\gamma,\gamma$ -dimethylallyloxy-5,7,2',5'-tetramethoxyisoflavone (1), as well as a synthetically known isoflavone, 7,4'-di-O-prenylgenistein (2),⁴⁾ three known isoflavones, eight known rotenoids, and a sterol. The structures of the known compounds were determined to be robustigenin (3),⁵⁾ toxicarol isoflavone (4),⁶⁾ viridiflorin (5),⁷⁾ sermundone (6),⁸⁾ 6-deoxyclitoriacetal (7),⁹⁾ 6a,12a-dehydrosermundone (8),^{10,11)} stemonal (9),¹²⁾ α -toxicarol (10),¹³⁾ 12a-hydroxy- α toxicarol (11),¹⁴⁾ 6a,12a-dehydro- α -toxicarol (12),¹⁵⁾ 6-hydroxy-6a, 12a-dehydro- α -toxicarol (13),¹⁶⁾ and β -sitosterol $(14)^{17}$ by analysis of physical and spectroscopic evidence. In addition, the anti-inflammatory activity using ethyl phenylpropiolate-induced ear edema in rats of two pure compounds isolated was also studied. TLC screening assay of free radical scavenging activity of the isolated flavonoids is also described.

Results and Discussion

Purification of the ethyl acetate extract of the leaves of *M.* brandisiana gave a new isoflavone, $4' \cdot \gamma, \gamma$ -dimethylallyloxy-5,7,2',5'-tetramethoxyisoflavone (1). The molecular formula of 1 was determined to be C₂₄H₂₆O₇ by HR-ESI-MS (*m*/*z* 427.1818 [M+H]⁺, Calcd 427.1757). The UV spectrum showed maxima absorptions at λ 290 and 256 nm. It showed a strong IR absorption band at 1651 cm⁻¹. The ¹H-NMR spectrum (Table 1) exhibited a signal of a characteristic isoflavone proton at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 7.79 (s, H-2). The ¹³C, Distortionless Enhancement by Polarization Transfer (DEPT), and HMQC spectra showed 24 carbon signals, corresponding to four methoxyls, two methyls, one methylene, six methines, and eleven quarternary carbons. Two methoxyls were attached to ring A, as indicated by signals at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.90 and 3.94 (3H each, s) which were confirmed by ³J correlations between 5-OMe

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 $(\delta_{\rm H} 3.90)$ to C-5 ($\delta_{\rm C} 163.7$) and 7-OMe ($\delta_{\rm H} 3.94$) to C-7 ($\delta_{\rm C} 161.4$) in the HMBC spectrum (Table 1). This was supported by an AM spin system at $\delta_{\rm H} 6.38$ (d, J=2.1 Hz, H-6) and $\delta_{\rm H} 6.47$ (d, J=2.1 Hz, H-8). In addition, the signals for a γ,γ -dimethylallyloxy group [$\delta_{\rm H} 1.78$, 1.80 (6H, 2×Me), $\delta_{\rm H} 4.64$ (2H, d, J=6.6 Hz, H₂-1"), and $\delta_{\rm H} 5.54$ (1H, t, J=6.6 Hz, H-2")], as well as two methoxyls at $\delta_{\rm H} 3.84$ and 3.74 (3H each, s) were observed. For ring B, the appearance of two aromatic proton singlets at $\delta_{\rm H} 6.62$ and 6.95 indicated that the *para*-correlation of two protons was deduced. The HMBC spec-

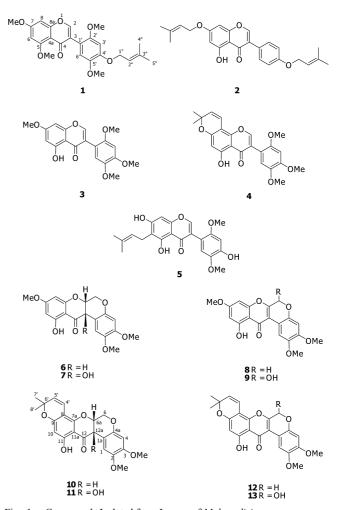


Fig. 1. Compounds Isolated from Leaves of M. brandisiana

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trum of 1 exhibited ³J correlations of the singlets at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.62 to C-1' ($\delta_{\rm C}$ 112.6) and $\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.95 to C-3 ($\delta_{\rm C}$ 122.6) suggesting that the two protons were H-3' and H-6', respectively. From the NOE difference experiment, irradiation of H-6' ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.95) enhanced the signal of the methoxyl at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.84 (2.6%) indicating that this methoxyl group was located at C-5' which was confirmed by the HMBC correlation of the signal at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.84 to C-5' ($\delta_{\rm C}$ 143.4). Irradiation of H-3' ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 6.62) enhanced the signals of the methoxyl at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.74 (3.8%) and the methylene (H₂-1") at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 4.64 (5.8%); while irradiation of 5'-OMe ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.84) enhanced the signal of H-6' (11.6%) and irradiation of H₂-1" ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 4.64) enhanced the signal of H-3' (14.4%). Irradiation of the methoxyl at $\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.74 enhanced the signal of H-3' (12.1%) but no NOE effect to the signal of 5'-OMe was observed. The placement of the second methoxyl group at C-4' was unlikely; the γ,γ -dimethylallyloxy unit was therefore placed at C-4'. This was supported by ${}^{3}J$ correlations of H₂-1" ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 4.64) to C-4' ($\delta_{\rm C}$ 148.8) and 2'-OMe ($\delta_{\rm H}$ 3.74) to C-2' ($\delta_{\rm C}$ 151.7) in the HMBC spectrum. Structure 1 was thus concluded to be $4' - \gamma, \gamma$ -dimethylallyloxy-5,7,2',5'-

Table 1. The ¹H- (300 MHz) and ¹³C-NMR (75 MHz) Data of **1** (CDCl₃)

| Position | S | c | HMBC | | |
|----------|------------------------|----------------------------|---------|-----------|--|
| | $\delta_{ m H}$ | $\delta_{ m C}$ | ^{2}J | ^{3}J | |
| 2 | 7.79 (1H, s) | 152.3 | 3 | 4, 8a, 1' | |
| 3 | | 122.6 | | | |
| 4 | | 175.3 | | | |
| 4a | | 110.1 | | | |
| 5 | | 163.7 | | | |
| 6 | 6.38 (1H, d, J=2.1 Hz) | 96.1 | 5 | 8, 4a | |
| 7 | | 161.4 | | | |
| 8 | 6.47 (1H, d, J=2.1 Hz) | 92.6 | 8a | 6, 4a | |
| 8a | | 159.9 | | | |
| 1' | | 112.6 | | | |
| 2' | | 151.7 | | | |
| 3' | 6.62 (1H, s) | 100.1 | 2', 4' | 1', 5' | |
| 4' | | 148.8 | | | |
| 5' | | 143.4 | | | |
| 6' | 6.95 (1H, s) | 115.9 | 1', 5' | 3, 2', 4' | |
| 1″ | 4.64 (2H, d, J=6.6 Hz) | 66.1 | 2″ | 4', 3" | |
| 2″ | 5.54 (1H, t, J=6.6 Hz) | 120.1 | | | |
| 3″ | | 137.6 | | | |
| 4″ | $1.80 (3H, s)^{a}$ | $25.9^{a)}$ | 3″ | 2", 5" | |
| 5″ | $1.78 (3H, s)^{a}$ | 18.3 ^{<i>a</i>}) | 3″ | 2", 4" | |
| 5-OMe | 3.90 (3H, s) | 55.7 | | 5 | |
| 7-OMe | 3.94 (3H, s) | 56.4 | | 7 | |
| 2'-OMe | 3.74 (3H, s) | 56.9 | | 2' | |
| 5'-OMe | 3.84 (3H, s) | 56.6 | | 5' | |

a) Interchangeable values.

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tetramethoxyisoflavone, now named brandisianin A.

 α -Toxicarol (10), 12a-hydroxy- α -toxicarol (11), and 6a,12a-dehydro- α -toxicarol (12) were previously evaluated for their potential chemopreventive properties in a mouse mammary organ culture (MMOC) model; only α -toxicarol (10) was found to exhibit inhibition of 7,12-dimethylbenz[*a*]anthracene (DMBA)-induced pre-neoplastic lesions (80% at a dose of 10 μ g/ml).¹³⁾ 6-Deoxyclitoriacetal (7) was reported to possess strong cytotoxic activity against culture P-338 lymphocytic leukemia cells.⁹⁾ Compound 7 also showed smooth muscle relaxant activity through a non-specific mechanism by interference with intracellular calcium metabolism.¹⁸⁾

Two rotenoids, 6-deoxyclitoriacetal (7) and stemonal (9), were studied for anti-inflammatory activity. Compound 7 was shown to possess higher anti-inflammatory activity than 9 using a capillary permeability assay, a typical model of first-stage inflammatory reactions.¹⁹⁾

In our earlier report, 6-deoxyclitoriacetal (7) and 12ahydroxy- α -toxicarol (11) showed no activity against the tested bacteria and yeasts at the highest concentration (128 μ g/ml).³⁾ Since several compounds were isolated in the present investigation in only low yields, the compound quantities available did not permit any biological assays.

In our present study, compounds 7 and 11, which were isolated as the major components, were tested for anti-inflammatory activity; the results are shown in Table 2. Application of ethyl phenylpropiolate (EPP) topically on rat ears produced marked edema formation. At all assessment times compounds 7 and 11 at the dose of 1 mg per ear significantly inhibited the ear edema formation. When the intensity of the inhibitory effect of the two test compounds was compared, compound 11 showed highest intensity. Phenylbutazone at the dose of 1 mg per ear, used as positive control, significantly reduced the edema formation at all assessment times. The results of the present study revealed the anti-inflammatory activity of compounds 7 and 11 on acute phase of inflammation. Edema caused by topically applied EPP is due to vasodilatation and increased vascular permeability. This event is caused by the release of various inflammatory mediators such as histamine, 5-HT, and PGs.²⁰⁾ Our test compounds markedly inhibited ear edema formation induced by EPP. It is suggested that compounds 7 and 11 probably exerted anti-inflammatory activity through the inhibition of the above inflammatory mediators of acute inflammation.

All isolated flavonoids were also evaluated for free radical scavenging activity using TLC screening assay. Only three compounds, robustigenin (3), viridiflorin (5), and 12a-hy-

| Table 2. | Inhibitory Effect of | of $7, 11$ and Phen | ylbutazone on Ethy | I Phenylpropiolate | (EPP)-Induced Ear Edema in Rats |
|----------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
|----------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|

| Group | Dose _ mg/ear _ | Time after topical application of EPP | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------|--------|-----------|--------|-----------------|--------|-----------|--------|
| | | 15 min | | 30 min | | 1 h | | 2 h | |
| | | ED (µm) | ED (%) | ED (µm) | ED (%) | ED (μm) | ED (%) | ED (µm) | ED (%) |
| Control acetone | _ | 80±29.4 | _ | 205±9.6 | _ | 285±9.6 | | 225±9.6 | _ |
| Phenylbutazone | 1 | 15 ± 5.0 | 81.3 | 65±15.0** | 65.9 | $135 \pm 20.7*$ | 52.6 | 135±20.6* | 47.1 |
| 7 | 1 | 10 ± 5.8 | 87.5 | 95±5.0** | 53.7 | 125±9.6** | 56.1 | 135±5.0** | 47.1 |
| 11 | 1 | 10 ± 5.8 | 87.5 | 75±5.0** | 63.4 | 95±5.1** | 66.7 | 80±8.2** | 68.6 |

Values are expressed as mean \pm S.E.M. (*n*=4). Statistically significant from control group: **p*<0.05, ***p*<0.001.

droxy- α -toxicarol (11), revealed DPPH radical scavenging activity and appeared as yellow spots against a purple back-ground.

Two isoflavones, robustigenin (3) and toxicarol isoflavone (4), were isolated in small amounts from the hexane-soluble part of the EtOAc extract. From both the hexane-soluble and hexane-insoluble parts of the extract a number of corresponding rotenoids and dehydrorotenoids were obtained with 6-deoxyclitoriacetal (7) and 12a-hydroxy- α -toxicarol (11) as the main components. The isolation of these metabolites is in accordance with the biosynthetic pathway of these compounds. Although 7,4'-di-O-prenylgenistein (2) was earlier synthesized, this is the first time it has been found as a naturally occurring compound. It is interesting to note that M. brandisiana is the first Thai Millettia species to produce isoflavones and rotenoids; other species of Millettia in Thailand have yielded only flavones and chalcones.^{2,22)} In addition, 12a-hydroxy- α -toxicarol (11) seems worthy of additional testing further to evaluate its potential as an anti-inflammatory agent.

Experimental

General Experimental Procedures Melting points were determined by a Kofler hot stage apparatus. UV spectra were obtained on a Hewlett Packard 8453 UV–VIS spectrophotometer. IR spectra were recorded on a Perkin-Elmer GX FT-IR spectrophotometer. ¹H- and ¹³C-NMR spectra were recorded in CDCl₃ solutions on a Bruker AVANCE (300 MHz) spectrometer using TMS as internal standard. HMQC and HMBC spectra were acquired using the standard Bruker software. Optical rotations were measured on a JASCO P1010 digital polarimeter. Mass spectra were obtained from a Bruker MicroTOF spectrometer. Vacuum liquid chromatography (VLC) and column chromatography (CC) were performed on silica gel 60 (70–230 mesh, Merck). TLC and preparative TLC (PLC) were conducted on silica gel plates (60F₂₅₄, Merck).

Plant Material The leaves of *M. brandisiana* were collected at Silpakorn University, Nakorn Pathom in June 2003. A voucher specimen (SUMB603) was identified by Assoc. Prof. Nijsiri Ruangrungsi and deposited at the Department of Pharmacognosy, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand.

Extraction and Isolation The dried leaves of *M. brandisiana* (1.27 kg) were extracted with EtOH (51×3) at room temperature. The combined extract was concentrated to dryness to give 186.7 g of residue. The EtOH extract was sequentially partitioned between organic solvents and water to yield EtOAc extract (79.4g), n-butanol extract (30.6g), and water extract (76.5 g). The EtOAc extract was further dissolved in hexane to afford a hexane-soluble fraction (22.3 g) and a hexane-insoluble fraction (57.1 g). Separation of the hexane-soluble fraction by VLC using gradient hexane-EtOAc gave 12 fractions (A1-A12). The combined A3 and A4 (5.06 g) was subjected to CC with gradient hexane-acetone (9:1, 8:2, 7:3) to give 4 fractions (B1-B4). B1 (284.5 mg) was purified by PLC (hexane-CH2Cl2, 1:9) to afford 11 (117.1 mg). B2 (177.1 mg) was purified by PLC (hexane-CH₂Cl₂-EtOAc, 4:1:1) to yield 13 (10.1 mg). B3 (143.4 mg) and B4 (46.6 mg) were purified by PLC (CH₂Cl₂-MeOH, 30:1) to give 7 (34.3 mg) and 9 (3.9 mg). The combined A5 and A6 (1.79 g) was purified by CC with gradient hexane-acetone (9:1, 8:2, 7:3) to afford 2 fractions (C1, C2) that were further purified by PLC (hexane-acetone, 3:1) to yield 10 (21 mg) and 11 (178.8 mg). A7 (1.70 g) was purified by CC with gradient hexane-acetone (8:2, 7:3) to give 7 (373.6 mg). Repetitive PLC of A8 (1.54 g) with hexane-acetone (3:1) afforded 4 (2.6 mg), 3 (7.2 mg), 11 (309.2 mg), and 7 (186.8 mg). The combined A9 and A10 (1.86 g) was subjected to CC with gradient CH₂Cl₂-MeOH (40:1, 30:1, 20:1, 10:1) to give 5 fractions (D1-D5). D3 (86.1 mg) was purified by PLC (hexane-acetone-MeOH, 3:1:0.4) to afford 9 (3.4 mg). Purification of D4 (303.5 mg) by repeated PLC (hexane-acetone-MeOH, 3:1:0.8) gave 1 (7 mg).

Separation of the hexane-insoluble fraction (57.1 g) by VLC using gradient hexane–EtOAc gave 17 fractions (E1—E17). The combined E1, E2, and E3 (1.96 g) was subjected to CC with gradient hexane–EtOAc and further purified by PLC (hexane–acetone, 3:1) to yield **12** (18.3 mg) and **10** (7.2 mg). E6 (10.09 g) was separated on CC with gradient hexane–EtOAc to afford 11 fractions (F1—F11). F3 (311.3 mg) was purified by CC with

CH₂Cl₂ and further crystallized from acetone to give 14 (50.2 mg). F6 (3.36 g) was purified by CC with gradient hexane–EtOAc to yield 6 fractions (G1-G6). G3 (874 mg) was purified by PLC (hexane-CH2Cl2-EtOAc, 6:1:1) to afford 10 (31.5 mg). Repetitive PLC of G4 (411 mg) using hexane– CH_2Cl_2 –EtOAc (6:1:1) and hexane–acetone (3:1) gave 6 (2.7 mg). F9 (1.15 g) was purified by CC using CH₂Cl₂ to yield 7 (890.4 mg). Purification of F10 (617 mg) by CC with CH₂Cl₂ afforded 11 (49.1 mg), 7 (251.6 mg), and 5 (10 mg). The combined E4, E5, and E7 (10.9 g) was separated on CC using gradient hexane-acetone (8:2, 7:3) to give 10 fractions (H1-H10). Repeated PLC of H1 (590.5 mg) with hexane-acetone (3:1) yielded 2 (17.4 mg). H2 (292.5 mg) was purified by CC with CH₂Cl₂ and PLC (hexane-acetone, 3:1) to afford 12 (49.2 mg) and 10 (125.6 mg). Repetitive PLC of H3 (741.3 mg) using CH_2Cl_2 gave 6 (2.3 mg), 8 (23.7 mg), and 9 (3 mg). Purification of H5 (345.3 mg) by CC with CH₂Cl₂ yielded a mixture that afforded 6 (41.6 mg) and 11 (273 mg) after crystallization from acetone. The combined H6 and H7 (2.24 g) was purified by CC using CH_2Cl_2 to give 11 (1.92 g). Purification of H8 (1.97 g) by CC with CH₂Cl₂ yielded 7 (1.94 g). The combine E11 and E12 (3.74 g) was purified by CC using gradient hexane-acetone (8:2, 7:3) to give 5 fractions (II-15). Addition of acetone to I2 (107.6 mg) gave 12 (77.5 mg). Purification of I4 (406.7 mg) by CC with CH₂Cl₂ and further crystallization from acetone vielded 1 (119 mg).

4'-γ,γ-Dimethylallyloxy-5,7,2',5'-tetramethoxyisoflavone, Brandisianin A (1): White needles; mp 152—154 °C. UV λ_{max} (EtOH) nm (log ε) 226 (5.00), 256 (5.50), 290 (4.85). IR (acetone film) cm⁻¹ 2936, 2852, 1651, 1571, 1511, 1463, 1285, 1214, 1154, 1042. ¹H-NMR (300 MHz) and ¹³C-NMR (75 MHz) data: see Table 1. EI-MS *m/z* (%): 426 [M]⁺ (3), 358 (29), 343 (9), 327 (23), 181 (8), 149 (11), 69 (100). HR-ESI-MS *m/z*: 427.1818 [M+H]⁺ (Calcd for C₂₄H₂₆O₇+H 427.1757).

Anti-inflammatory Assay. Animals Male Sprague-Dawley rats weighing 40—60 g purchased from National Laboratory Center, Nakorn Pathom, Thailand, were used. The experiment was conducted according to the Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Use of Animals prepared by the National Research Council of Thailand. The young rats were used in this study as described by Brattsand *et al.*²⁰ because of the thin skin of the ear and being easy to induce edema by irritant.

Ethyl Phenylpropiolate (EPP)-Induced Ear Edema in Rats Topical anti-inflammatory activity of compounds 7 and 11 was assessed by the method described by Brattsand *et al.*²⁰⁾ Male rats of 40—60 g body weight were used.

The inflammogen EPP was dissolved in acetone and ear edema was induced by topical application of EPP at a dose of $1 \text{ mg}/20 \mu \text{l/ear}$ to the inner and outer surfaces of both ears using an automatic microliter pipette. Test substances also dissolved in acetone ($20 \mu \text{l/ear}$) were administered topically just before the inflammogen. The thickness of ear was measured with vernier calipers before and at 15, 30, 60, and 120 min after edema induction. The effect of the test substances on the ear edema was compared with that of the vehicle-control group, and the percent inhibition was calculated.

Statistical Analysis The data from the experiment were expressed as mean \pm S.E.M. Statistical comparison between groups was analyzed by one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and *post hoc* least-significant difference (LSD) test. *p* values, <0.05 were considered significant.

Evaluation of Free Radical Scavenging Activity TLC Screening Assay Test samples were spotted on a TLC plate, and development was performed with a suitable solvent. After drying, the TLC plate was sprayed with 0.3% solution of 1,1-diphenyl-2-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) in MeOH and left 30 min before visual examination.²¹ Constituents possessing free radical scavenging activity appeared as yellow spots against a purple background.

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