

## The Synthesis of ( $\pm$ )-Coronafacic Acid by a Tandem Wessely Oxidation–Diels–Alder Reaction Sequence

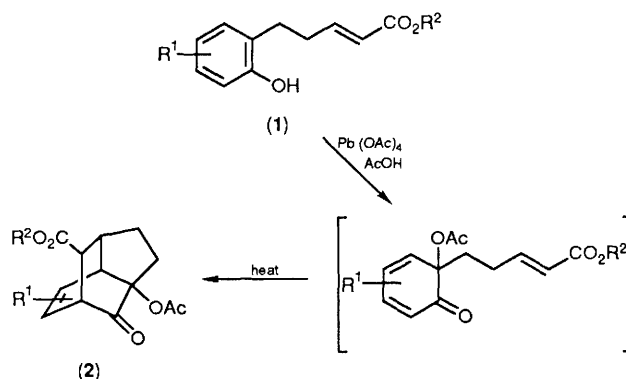
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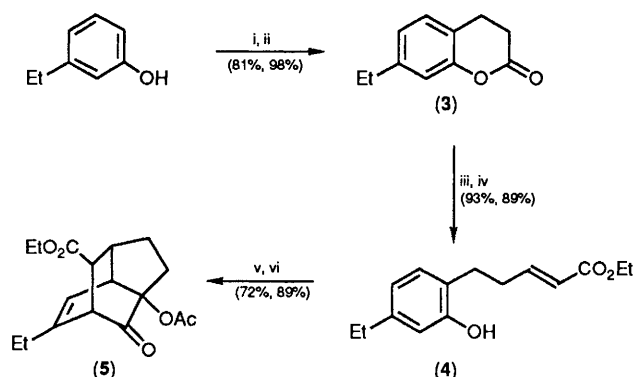
( $\pm$ )-Coronafacic acid (**9**) has been synthesized from ethyl 5-(4-ethyl-2-hydroxyphenyl)pent-2-enoate (**4**) via a tandem Wessely oxidation–Diels–Alder reaction sequence.

It was reported earlier from these laboratories that isotwistanone derivatives of type (**2**) could be synthesized from 5-(2-hydroxyphenyl)pent-2-enoic acid derivatives of type (**1**) by a tandem Wessely oxidation–intramolecular Diels–Alder reaction sequence (Scheme 1).<sup>1</sup> This approach differs from other syntheses of related tricyclic ketones via intramolecular Diels–Alder reactions<sup>2</sup> in that an  $\alpha$ -acetoxy ketone function is present in the product. This serves to broaden the scope of these reactions by introducing an oxygen substituent and by providing a facile route for oxidative bond cleavage under mild conditions.

We now report the application of the latter to the synthesis of ( $\pm$ )-coronafacic acid (**9**), whose (+)-enantiomer constitutes the acid component of the naturally occurring phytotoxic amide, coronatine (**10**) (Scheme 3).<sup>3</sup>



Scheme 1

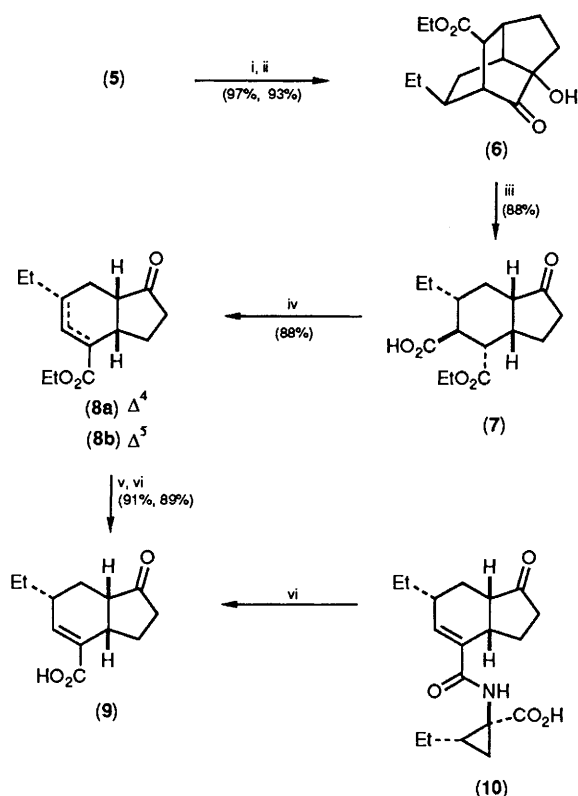


**Scheme 2.** Reagents and conditions: i, HO<sub>2</sub>CCH(OH)CH<sub>2</sub>CO<sub>2</sub>H, H<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>; ii, H<sub>2</sub>, Pd/C; iii, Bu<sub>2</sub>AlH; iv, Ph<sub>3</sub>P=CHCO<sub>2</sub>Et; v, Pb(OAc)<sub>4</sub>, AcOH; vi, 140 °C.

7-Ethyl-3,4-dihydrocoumarin (3),<sup>†</sup> prepared from condensation of *m*-ethylphenol with malic acid, followed by hydrogenation of the resulting coumarin, was converted to the phenol (4) of type (1) by Bu<sub>2</sub>AlH (Dibal) reduction followed by a Wittig reaction. This was subjected to Wessely oxidation with lead tetra-acetate followed by an intramolecular Diels–Alder reaction in boiling xylenes to give the isotwistanone derivative (5) of type (2) (Scheme 2), which was obtained as a colourless oil after purification; b.p. 94–98 °C (0.3 Torr); λ<sub>max</sub> 5.70 and 5.77 μm, δ<sub>H</sub> 1.01 (t, *J* 8 Hz, 3H), 1.25 (t, *J* 7 Hz, 3H), 1.7–2.7 (m, 8H), 2.02 (s, 3H), 3.40 (m, 2H), 4.09 (q, *J* 7 Hz, 2H), and 5.78 (m, 1H). The Wittig product was largely the (*E*)-isomer (4); this was accompanied by a small amount of the corresponding (*Z*)-isomer, which gave a Diels–Alder product epimeric with (5) at C-4.

Hydrogenation of (5) followed by mild alkaline hydrolysis gave the α-ketol (6), m.p. 71–72 °C. This was oxidized with sodium periodate to give the keto acid (7), m.p. 151–152 °C, λ<sub>max</sub> 2.90, 5.78, and 5.88 μm, δ<sub>H</sub> 0.93 (m, 3H), 1.26 (t, *J* 7 Hz, 3H), 0.9–3.0 (m, 13H), 4.22 (q, *J* 7 Hz, 2H), and 8.44 (br s, 1H, absent after D<sub>2</sub>O treatment). Oxidative decarboxylation of the acid (7) gave a mixture of the Δ<sup>4</sup> and Δ<sup>5</sup> esters (8a) and (8b), respectively (Scheme 3), which gave a mixture rich in isomer (8a) on treatment with ethanolic sodium ethoxide. Hydrolysis of this with hydrochloric acid<sup>3</sup> gave coronafacic acid (9), which after recrystallization from di-isopropyl ether had m.p. 122–123 °C, undepressed on admixture with an authentic sample. Its spectra were identical with those of the authentic sample.

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**Scheme 3.** Reagents and conditions: i, H<sub>2</sub>, Pd/C; ii, Ba(OH)<sub>2</sub>·8H<sub>2</sub>O/EtOH; iii, NaIO<sub>4</sub>/H<sub>2</sub>O; iv, Pb(OAc)<sub>4</sub>, Cu(OAc)<sub>2</sub>, C<sub>5</sub>H<sub>5</sub>N; v, EtONa/EtOH; vi, HCl/H<sub>2</sub>O.

(Hokkaido University) for authentic samples and/or spectra of (±)-coronafacic acid.

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## References

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- 3 For previous syntheses of coronafacic acid, see: A. Ichihara, R. Kimura, K. Moriyasu, and S. Sakamura, *Tetrahedron Lett.*, 1977, 4331; M. E. Jung and J. P. Hudspeth, *J. Am. Chem. Soc.*, 1980, **102**, 2463; A. Ichihara, R. Kimura, S. Yamada, and S. Sakamura, *ibid.*, 1980, **102**, 6353; M. E. Jung and K. M. Halweg, *Tetrahedron Lett.*, 1981, **22**, 2735; M. Nakayama, S. Ohira, Y. Okamura, and S. Soga, *Chem. Lett.*, 1981, 731; J. Tsuji, *Pure Appl. Chem.*, 1981, **53**, 2371; H.-J. Liu and M. Llinas-Brunet, *Can. J. Chem.*, 1984, **62**, 1747; S. Ohira, *Bull. Chem. Soc. Jpn.*, 1984, **57**, 1902.

<sup>†</sup> The elemental composition of all new compounds was established by combustion or mass spectrometric analysis.