

## GALACTANS AND GALACTAN-CONTAINING POLYSACCHARIDES OF HIGHER PLANTS

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*Research on the chemical structure and physiological activity of galactan and galactan-containing polysaccharides of higher plants is reviewed. The principal chain in galactan-containing polysaccharides consists of 1-3, 1-4, 1-6, and  $\alpha$ - and  $\beta$ -bonded D-galactopyranoses. The side chains contain separate or bonded chains of galactose, arabinose, glucose, rhamnose, and uronic acids. The relationship of chemical structure and physiological activity of the polysaccharides of higher plants is discussed.*

**Key words:** polysaccharides, arabino-4-galactans, arabino-3,6-galactans, galactans, immunomodulators, mutagenic activity.

Extensive investigations of polysaccharides from higher plants have demonstrated that they possess valuable properties and physiological activity. Thus, they are widely used in commerce. Their immunomodulating activity, including anticomplementary, has been experimentally documented. It was shown that the physiological activity of polysaccharides is mainly due to their chemical structure [1-17].

Galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides (galactans consist only of galactose units whereas other monosaccharides are bonded to them in galactan-containing polysaccharides) in addition to other carbohydrates are widely distributed in plants. They have been found in plants belonging to 30 families [18-93], mainly in gum, pectinic substances, hemicellulose, and other complicated polymers. They are encountered in almost all plant organs in the free state (Table 1). Arabinogalactans are common galactan-containing polysaccharides. Aspinall [94] separated arabinogalactans by the structure of the main polysaccharide chain into two types: arabino-4-galactans (I) and arabino-3,6-galactans (II). The structures of these compounds are discussed below. Polysaccharides with arabinogalactan side chains are also known.

Table 1 gives the properties of galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides of higher plants. These polysaccharides contain both neutral and acidic sugars.

### ISOLATION, PURIFICATION, AND STRUCTURAL METHODS

Polysaccharides are isolated from plants by traditional methods of extraction by cold [22, 24, 39, 43, 47, 48, 49, 58, 63] and hot water [27, 30, 37, 50, 59], phosphate buffers [44], ammonium oxalate [64], and aqueous alkali. Polysaccharides from gum are also isolated by extraction with cold [34, 36, 53, 54, 62] and hot water [23]. They are precipitated from the extract by alcohol [19, 25, 27, 34, 40, 41, 51, 54, 58, 68]. Because the isolated polysaccharides are a heterogeneous mixture, homogeneous compounds are purified and prepared by various methods: purification on ion-exchange resins [44, 46], treatment with Fehling solution [25], dialysis [64], separation on DEAE cellulose [19, 20, 22, 40, 43, 48, 59], fractional precipitation with alcohol [24, 44, 63] and  $\text{CaCl}_2$  solution [20], and gel chromatography on Sephadex [23, 27, 38, 41, 49, 50, 56, 59, 68], Sepharose [46], and Sephacryl [46, 50].

In certain instances degraded polysaccharides are prepared using boiling water [23], autohydrolysis [34, 54, 56, 70], gentle hydrolysis [33, 34, 62, 66, 67], basic degradation [48], Smith degradation [53, 55], and enzymic hydrolysis [44, 71]. The homogeneity of the polysaccharides is monitored by gel filtration, electrophoresis [95, 96], and ultracentrifugation [44, 53].

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TABLE 1. Properties of Galactans and Galactan-containing Polysaccharides of Higher Plants

| Family, species, and plant organ                                   | Monosaccharide composition, ratio, %           | Mol. mass, arb. units | $[\alpha]_D$ , deg | Bond type           | Reference |
|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| <b>Galactans</b>   |  |                       |                    |                     |           |
| Alliaceae,<br><i>Allium cepa</i> ,<br>onion                        | Gal<br>(91)                                    | -                     | -                  | (1-4), (1-6)        | [18]      |
| <i>Allium sativum</i> ,<br>garlic                                  | Gal:Ara<br>(97.3:1.6)                          | -                     | +70                | (1-4), (1-6)        | [19]      |
| Leguminosae,<br><i>Dolichos lablab</i> ,<br>seed casing            | Gal:GalUA<br>(95.6:tr.)                        | 120000                | +51.3              | (1-2), (1-4), (1-6) | [20]      |
| Solanaceae,<br><i>Nicotiana tabacum</i> ,<br>leaf fiber            | Gal<br>(100)                                   | 80000                 | +66                | (1-4)               | [21]      |
|  | Gal<br>(100)                                   | 60000                 | +55                | (1-4)               |           |
| Salicaceae,<br><i>Salix alba</i> L., bark                          | Gal<br>(100)                                   | 5350                  | +49.5              | (1-4), (1-6)        | [22]      |
| <b>Arabino-4-galactans</b>   |  |                       |                    |                     |           |
| Araucoriaceae,<br><i>Araucaria cookii</i> ,<br>gum,<br>degrad. gum | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(66.2:8.9:7.6:11.5)       | -                     |                    | (1-2), (1-3)        | [23]      |
|  | Gal:Ara:GlcUA<br>(66.2:12.2:21.0)              | -                     | -26                | (1-4), (1-6)        |           |
| Cactaceae,<br><i>Opuntia dillanii</i> ,<br>rind                    | Gal:Ara<br>(75:25)                             | -                     | +266.8             | (1-3), (1-4)        | [24]      |
| Leguminosae,<br><i>Centrosema plumari</i> ,<br>seeds               | Gal:Ara<br>(92.5:7.0)                          | -                     | +13                | (1-4)-(1-6)*        | [25]      |
| Loganiaceae,<br><i>Strychnos nux-vomica</i> ,<br>seeds             | Gal:Man:Xyl:Ara<br>(55:22:11:11)               |                       | +69                | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6) | [26]      |
| Rutaceae,<br><i>Aegle marmelos</i> ,<br>cambium wood layer         | Gal:Ara:Rha:Xyl:Glc<br>(43.0:36.0:5.0:7.0:4.5) | -                     | +33.8              | (1-2)-(1-5)*        | [27]      |
| Solanaceae,<br><i>Lycopersicon esculentum</i> , fruit              | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA<br>(58.0:14.5:3.5:22.0)      |                       |                    | (1-4), (1-5)        | [28]      |
| <i>Solanum tuberosum</i> ,<br>tuber                                | Gal:Ara<br>(96:4)                              | -                     | +87                | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6) | [29]      |
| Symplocaceae,<br><i>Symplocos spicata</i> ,<br>leaves              | Gal:Ara<br>(37.5:62.5)                         | -                     | +71                | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6) | [30]      |

TABLE 1. (continued)

| Family, species, and plant organ  | Monosaccharide composition, ratio. %  | Mol. mass, arb. units   | $[\alpha]_D$ , deg     | Bond type                                    | Reference |
|---|---|-------------------------|------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Arabino-3,6-galactans</b>  |   |                         |                        |  |           |
| Aceraceae.<br><i>Acer saccharum</i> ,<br>maple sap                                    | Gal:Ara:Rha<br>(51:44:5)<br>Gal:Ara:GalUA<br>(85.5:2.3:8.1)                         | -                       | -41                    | (1-3), (1-6)                                 | [31]      |
| Anacardiaceae.<br><i>Anacardium occidentale</i> ,<br>nut shell                        | Gal:Ara:Rha<br>(85:10:5)<br>(70.5:25.3:4.3)   | -                       | -                      | (1-3), (1-6)                                 | [32, 33]  |
| Anacardiaceae.<br><i>Odina wodier</i> ,<br>gum  | Gal:Ara<br>(67.3:19.5)<br>Gal:Ara:Rha:UA<br>(28.6:50.0:1.4:20.0)                    | -                       | -44                    | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6)                          | [34, 35]  |
| Anacardiaceae.<br><i>Rhus vernicifera</i> ,<br>gum                                    | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(65.1:4.8:2.0:27.8)<br>(67.0:5.2:4.1:26.7)                     | 84000<br>2700           | -0.8<br>+8.7           | (1-3), (1-6)<br>(1-3), (1-6)                 | [36]      |
| Araliaceae.<br><i>Panax notoginseng</i> ,<br>roots                                    | Gal:Ara<br>(85.7:13.6)  | 1500000                 | -20.7                  | (1-3), (1-6)                                 | [37]      |
| Asteraceae.<br><i>Calendula officinalis</i> ,<br>flowers                              | Gal:Ara:Rha<br>(41.0:34.2:24.8)<br>Gal:Ara<br>(72.4:27.6)<br>Gal:Ara<br>(51.4:48.7) | 15000<br>25000<br>35000 | +1.3<br>-22.7<br>-38.6 | (1-3), (1-6)<br>(1-3), (1-6)<br>(1-3), (1-6) | [38]      |
| Caryophyllaceae.<br><i>Allochrusa gypsophiloides</i> ,<br>underground parts,<br>roots | Ara:Glc:Gal<br>(65.8:21.0:13.2)<br>Glc:Gal<br>(16.6:83.4)                           | 2000                    | +176                   | (1-2), (1-6)                                 | [39-42]   |
| Cruciferae.<br><i>Brassica campestris</i> ,<br>seeds                                  | Gal:Ara:GalUA<br>(48.0:46.0:6.0)  | -                       | -49.2                  | (1-2)-(1-6)*                                 | [43]      |
| <i>Raphanus sativus</i> ,<br>seeds  | Gal:Ara<br>(16:83)  | 40000                   | -109                   | (1-3), (1-6)                                 | [44]      |
| Fabaceae.<br><i>Acacia senegal</i> ,<br>gum   | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(32:57:0.4:10)   | $2.3 \cdot 10^6$        | +112                   | (1-2)-(1-6)*                                 | [45]      |
| Gramineae.<br><i>Saccharum spontaneum</i> ,<br>cane                                   | Gal:Ara   | 70000                   | -56                    | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6)                          | [46]      |
| <i>Triticum aestivum</i> ,<br>seeds   | Gal:Ara<br>(58.3:41.6)  | -                       | -43.5                  | (1-3), (1-6)                                 | [47]      |

TABLE I. (continued)

| Family, species, and plant organ         | Monosaccharide composition, ratio, %         | Mol. mass, arb. units | $[\alpha]_D$ , deg | Bond type                     | Reference |
|--|--|-----------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| Gymnospermae.                            |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Larix sibirica</i> , wood             | Gal:Ara<br>(88:12)                           | 40000                 | +10                | (1-3), (1-6)                  | [48]      |
|  | Gal:Ara<br>(90.9:9.1)                        | 29000                 | +10                | (1-3), (1-6)                  | [49]      |
| Leguminosae.                             |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Glycyrrhiza uralensis</i> , roots     | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA<br>(37.8:54.0:2.7:5.1)     | 69000                 | -56.3              | (1-3), (1-5), (1-6)           | [50]      |
|  | Gal:Glc:Ara:Rha:GalUA<br>(19:1.9:22.8:19:38) | 10700                 | +61                | (1-2)-(1-6)                   |           |
|  | Gal:Glc:Ara:Rha<br>(43.5:39.2:14.5:14.5)     | 69000                 | +9.5               | (1-2)-(1-6)                   | [51]      |
| <i>Lannea coromandelica</i> , gum        | Gal:Ara<br>(75:25)                           | -                     | +45                | (1-4)-(1-6)                   | [52]      |
|  | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA(GlcUA)<br>(70:11:2:17)     | 257000                | +27                | (1-3)-(1-6)                   | [53]      |
| <i>Lannea grandis</i> , gum              | Gal:Ara:GalUA<br>(63.9:21.3:14.2)            | 980000                | -37                | (1-3)-(1-6)                   | [54]      |
| <i>Lannea humilis</i> , gum              | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA(GlcUA)<br>(75:11:2:12)     | 25700                 | +43                | (1-3)-(1-6)                   | [55]      |
| <i>Pongamia glabra</i> , gum             | Gal:Ara:GlcUA<br>(23.1:43.9:23.5)            | -                     | +73                | (1-2), (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [56]      |
| Liliaceae.                               |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Aloe arborescens</i> , leaves         | Gal:Ara<br>(40:60)                           | 30000                 | -66.7              | (1-2), (1-6)                  | [57]      |
| <i>Chlorophytum arundinaceum</i> , fruit | Gal:Glc<br>(18.2:81.8)                       | -                     | +62.5              | (1-4), (1-6)                  | [58]      |
| Malvaceae.                               |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Malva verticillata</i> , seeds        | Gal:Glc:Ara<br>(37.5:43.75:18.75)            | 77000                 | -13.9              | (1-3)-(1-6)                   | [59, 60]  |
| <i>Azadirachta indica</i> , fruit        | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(33.5:51.5:6.1:8.9)     | 220000                | 20.2               | (1-2), (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [61]      |
| Meliaceae.                               |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Swietenia mahogany</i> , gum          | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA<br>(66.6:9:7.2:18)         | -                     | +10                | (1-2), (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [62]      |
| Pinaceae.                                |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Pinus banksiana</i> , wood            | Gal:Ara<br>(92.3:7.1)                        | 8500                  |                    | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6)           | [63]      |
| Rubiaceae.                               |  |                       |                    |                               |           |
| <i>Coffea arabica</i> , beans            | Gal:Ara<br>(71.0:29.0)                       | -                     | +27                | (1-3), (1-6)                  | [64]      |

TABLE 1. (continued)

| Family, species, and plant organ          | Monosaccharide composition, ratio, %              | Mol. mass, arb. units                      | $[\alpha]_D$ , deg | Bond type                     | Reference        |
|---|---|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| Rutaceae.                                 |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Aegle marmelos</i> , gum,              | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA<br>(71.0:12.5:6.5:7.0)          | -  | +84                | (1-2)-(1-6)                   | [65, 66]         |
| degrad. gum                               | (79.5:3.5:4.2:8.6)                                | -  | +44                | (1-2)-(1-6)                   | [67]             |
| Sapotaceae.                               |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Madhuca indica</i> , flowers           | Gal:Ara:Rha:Xyl:GlcUA<br>(71.7:21.3:3.8:2.5:20.0) | -  | -9.3               | (1-2), (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [68, 69]<br>[70] |
|   | Gal:Glc:Ara:GlcUA<br>(44.9:26.5:15.0:11.5)        | -  | -19.5              | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6)           |                  |
| Umbelliferae.                             |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Angelica acutiloba</i> Kitagawa, roots | Gal:Ara:Rha:GalUA<br>(25:55:7.5:10)               | 128000                                     | -57.3              | (1-2)-(1-6)                   |                  |
|   | Gal:Ara:GalUA:GlcUA<br>(34.5:34.5:27.6:3.4)       | 7700                                       | -14.8              | (1-3)-(1-6)                   | [71- 73]         |
|   | Gal:Ara:Rha<br>(43.5:52.1:4.35)                   | 2.5·10 <sup>4</sup><br>3.2·10 <sup>3</sup> | -                  | (1-3), (1-5), (1-6)           |                  |
| <b>Nondetermined polysaccharides</b>      |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| Araliaceae.                               |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Cussonia spicata</i> , gum             | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(23:58:7:12)                 | 125000                                     | -18                | -                             |                  |
|   | Gal:Ara   | 102000<br>92000                            | -                  | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6)           | [74]             |
| Araucoriaceae.                            |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Araucoria bidwilli</i> , gum           | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(65.5:15.0:5.0:15.0)         | -  | -                  | (1-3), (1-4), (1-6)           | [75]             |
| Bombacaceae.                              |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Salmania malabarica</i> , seeds        | Gal:Ara<br>(70:30)                                | -  | +18                | (1-2), (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [76]             |
| Bambuseae.                                |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Phyllostachys edulis</i> , runners     | Gal:Ara:Xyl<br>(50:50:3.4)                        | -  | -26.5              | (1-3), (1-6)                  | [77, 78]         |
| Cactaceae.                                |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Opuntia ficus</i> , berries            | Gal:Ara:Rha:Xyl<br>(35.7:37.5:11.5:15.5)          | -  | -170               | (1-2), (1-4)                  | [79]             |
| Cruciferae.                               |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Brassica napis</i> , seeds             | Gal:Ara<br>(10:90)                                | 7·10 <sup>6</sup>                          | -111               | -                             | [80]             |
| Iridaceae.                                |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Gladiolis gandavensis</i> , stigma     | Gal:Ara:Glc<br>(64.3:23.8:11.9)                   | -  | -                  | (1-3), (1-6)                  | [81]             |
| Leguminosae.                              |   |  |                    |                               |                  |
| <i>Glycin max.</i>                        | Gal:Ara<br>(66:34)                                | 330000                                     | -                  | (1-3)-(1-6)                   | [82, 83]         |
| <i>Lupinus albus</i> , seeds              | Gal:UA  | -  | 38                 | (1-4)                         | [84]             |
| <i>Lupinus luteus</i> , seeds             | Gal:Ara:Rha:Xyl:GalUA<br>(42.7:28.5:5.7:5.7:17.1) | 480000<br>210000                           | +38<br>+56         | -<br>-                        | [85]             |
|   | (40.0:26.6:6.6:6.6:20.0)                          |  |                    |                               |                  |

TABLE 1. (continued)

| Family, species, and plant organ                      | Monosaccharide composition, ratio, %    | Mol. mass, arb. units | $[\alpha]_D$ , deg | Bond type              | Reference |
|---|---|-----------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------|
| <i>Phaseolus atropurpureus</i> ,<br>leaves            | Gal:Ara:GlcUA<br>(53.0:33.2:13.8)       | -                     | +9                 | (1-3), (1-6)           | [86]      |
| <i>Phaseolus lunatus</i> ,<br>seeds                   | Gal:Ara:GlcUA<br>(50.0:39.6:8.1)        | -                     | -                  | -                      | [87]      |
| <i>Phaseolus vulgaris</i> ,<br>roots                  | Gal:Ara<br>(73.3:26.7)                  | 25000                 | -50                | (1-3), (1-6)           | [88]      |
| <i>Prosopis juliflora</i> ,<br>gum                    | Gal:Ara:Rha:4-OMe-GlcUA<br>(36:36:9:18) | -                     | +60                | (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [89]      |
| Liliaceae,<br><i>Asparagus officinalis</i> ,<br>seeds | Gal:Ara:Man:Rha<br>(53.1:38.4:2.2:6.3)  | -                     | -                  | -                      | [90]      |
| <i>Lilium longiflorum</i> ,<br>runners                | Gal:Ara:Rha:GlcUA<br>(57:26:6:11)       | -                     | -                  | (1-3), (1-4),<br>(1-6) | [91]      |
| Rubiaceae,<br><i>Coffea indica</i> ,<br>beans         | Gal:Ara<br>(20:80)                      | -                     | -103               | (1-3), (1-5),<br>(1-6) | [92]      |
| Theaceae,<br><i>Camellia sinensis</i> ,<br>leaves     | Gal:Ara<br>(66.0:34.0)                  | 19400                 | -38.2              | -                      | [93]      |

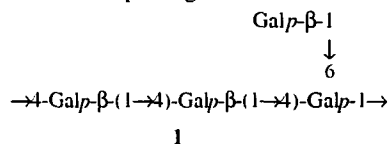
\* $(1-2)-(1-5) = (1-2), (1-3), (1-4), (1-5); (1-2)-(1-6) = (1-2), (1-3), (1-4), (1-5), (1-6)$ .

Structures of galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides are established by chemical and spectral methods. The use of these methods is illustrated below for several examples.

## GALACTANS

The properties of galactans found in plants and obtained from partial cleavage of galactan-containing polysaccharides are listed in Table 1.

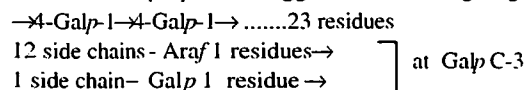
Indian scientists isolated galactan B<sub>6</sub> with  $[\alpha]_D +70$  from garlic (*Allium sativum*) [19]. The methylation products contained 2,3,4,6-tetra-OMe-, 2,3,6-tri-OMe-, and 2,3-di-OMe-D-Galp in the ratio 1:2:1, respectively. The products of periodate oxidation are erythritol and glycerine, the formation of which is consistent with 1-4 and 1-6 bonds. Chemical transformations of galactan suggested the following structure for the repeating unit (1):



The galactan polysaccharide Ps-N1 with molecular weight 17,500 and  $[\alpha]_D +51.3$  was isolated from the seed casing of *Dolichos lablab* Linn. [20]. The methylation products of Ps-N1 include 2,3,4,6-tetra-OMe-, 2,3,6-tri-OMe-, and 2,3-di-OMe-D-Galp in the molar ratio 1:28:0.88. Periodate oxidation, Smith degradation, enzymatic hydrolysis, and spectroscopy suggest structure 2 for the repeating unit of Ps-N1:

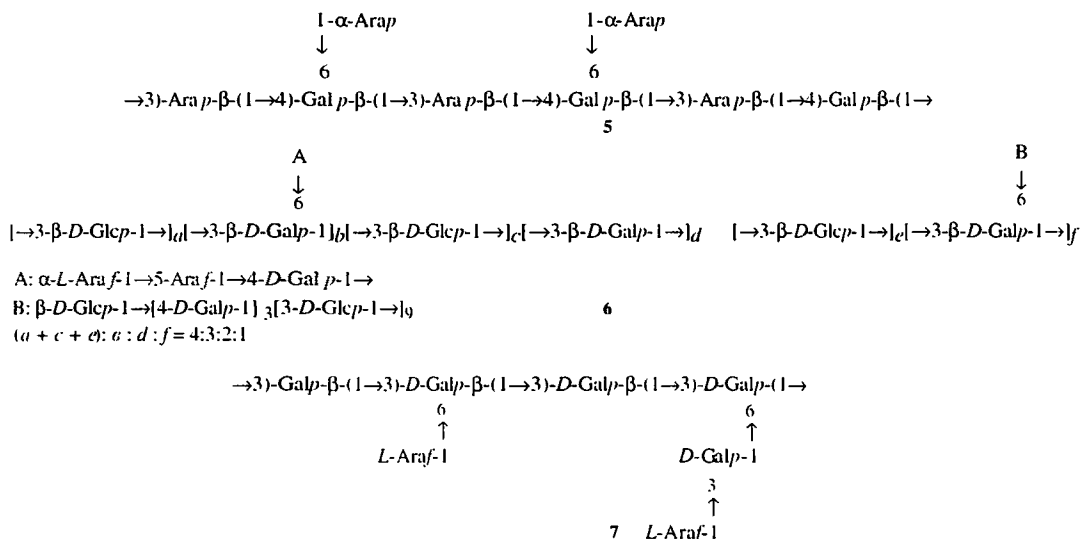


The rind of *Opuntia dillenii* yielded an arabinogalactan consisting of arabinose and galactose in the ratio 1:3. The methylation products contained 2,6-di-OMe-D-Galp, 2,3,6-tri-OMe-D-Galp, 2,3,4,6-tetra-OMe-D-Galp, and 2,3,5-tri-OMe-L-Araf in the ratio 13:10:1:12. Oxidation and other properties suggest the following fragments:



An arabinogalactan from potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) consists mainly of  $\beta$ -(1-4)-bonded Galp residues with branching at C-3 and C-6. This was established by methylation, periodate oxidation, and IR spectroscopy [29]. A polysaccharide from seeds of *Strychnos nux-vomica* has an analogous structure [26].

Structures in which the principal chain consists of (1-4)-bonded Galp and (1-3)-bonded Araf residues are also known. The polysaccharide isolated from leaves of *Symplocos spicata* is one of these (5) [30].



The examined examples indicate that arabino-4-galactans consist of  $\beta$ -(1-4)-bonded Galp residues in the principal chain with branching at C-2, C-3, and C-6 of the Galp. The arabinose residues are situated mainly in the polysaccharide side chains.

### ARABINO-3,6-GALACTANS

Arabino-3,6-galactans belong to type II [45]. These widely distributed polysaccharides were found in plants of various families (Table 1). Their structures are rather complicated. We include polysaccharides for which the structures were most studied.

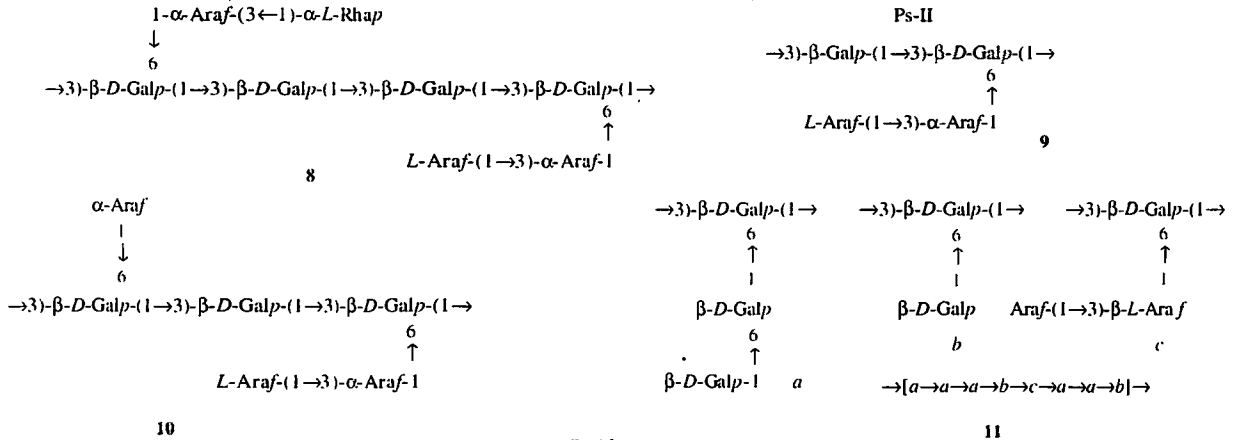
Japanese researchers isolated from seeds of *Malva verticillata* the neutral polysaccharide MVS-I, which consists of L-arabinose, D-galactose, and D-glucose in the ratio 3:6:7 and has  $[\alpha]_D^{24} -13.9$  [60]. The structure of MVS-I was established by periodate oxidation, Smith degradation, methylation, partial acidic and enzymatic hydrolysis, and chromatography-mass spectrometry (6).

The coffee beans (*Coffea arabica*) yielded an arabinogalactan consisting of Araf (28.6%) and Galp (71.4%) with  $[\alpha]_D +27$  [64]. The hydrolysis products of the permethylate contained 2,3,5-tri-OMe-L-Araf, 2,4-di-OMe-D-Galp, and 2,4,6-tri-OMe-D-Galp. The ratio of 2,4,6-tri-OMe-D-Galp and 2,4-di-OMe-D-Galp was 3:2. The structure of the repeating unit is shown (7).

Three polysaccharides were isolated from flowers of *Calendula officinalis* [38]. The monosaccharide composition and analysis of the methylation products demonstrated that they all consist mainly of  $\beta$ -(1-3)-bonded D-galactose with branching at C-6. The side chains consist of disaccharide chains  $\alpha$ -L-Araf-(1-3)-Araf and  $\alpha$ -L-Rhap-(1-3)-Araf or  $\alpha$ -L-Araf units. The structural characteristics of the polysaccharides were supported by periodate oxidation, Smith degradation, acid hydrolysis, and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopy.



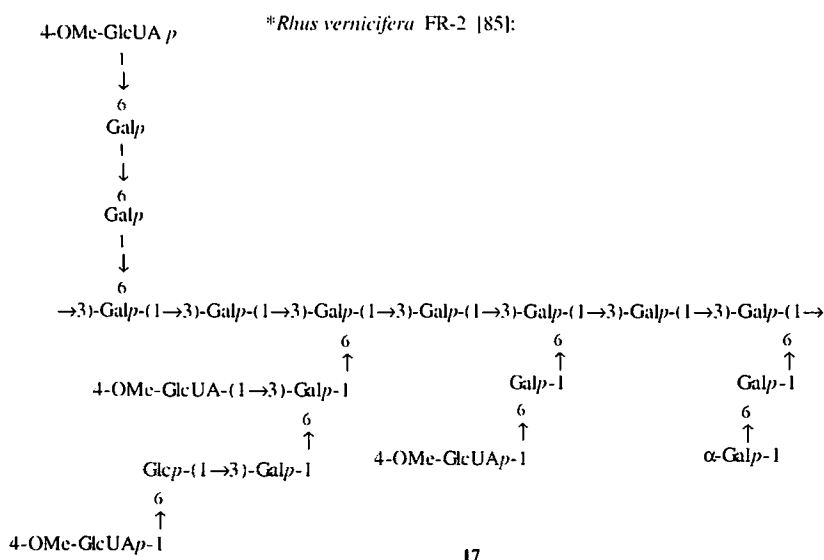
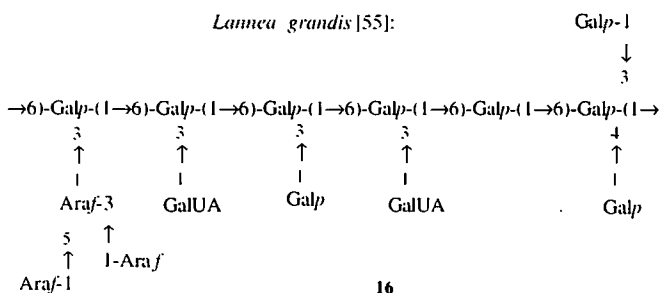
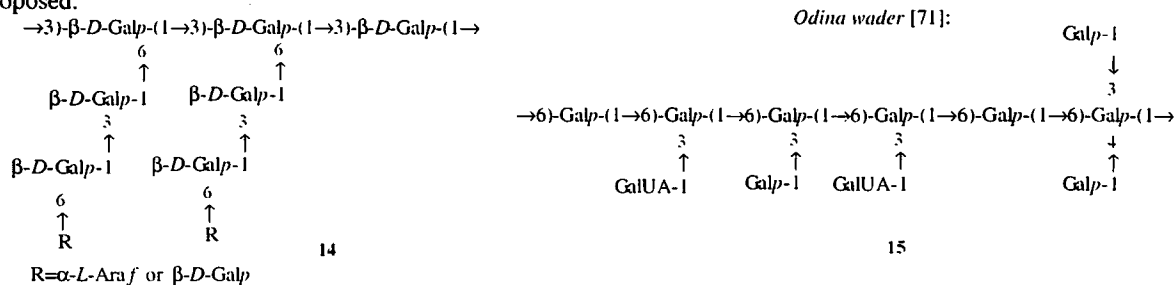
The following repeating unit in these polysaccharides (8-10) was proposed:



Wood of *Larix sibirica* yielded an arabinogalactan of molecular weight 29,000 that contained 9.1% *Araf* and 90.9% *Galp* and had  $[\alpha]_D^{+10}$  [49]. Methylation, enzymatic hydrolysis, structural studies of the oligosaccharides from partial hydrolysis, and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopy suggested that the repeating unit of the polysaccharide and its fragments had structure **11**.

Two polysaccharides were isolated from flowers of *Madhuca indica* (Mahya). Their structures were studied by methylation, periodate oxidation, Smith degradation, chromic oxidation, autohydrolysis, and structural investigations of the oligosaccharides and degraded polysaccharides. Structures **12** and **13** were proposed for the repeating unit.

An arabinogalactan named sanchinan A of molecular weight 1,500,000 was isolated from roots of Sanchi-Ginseng (*Panax notoginseng*) [37]. Its structure was proved by the methods mentioned above. Repeating unit of structure **14** was proposed.



\*All the monosaccharides are bonded between themselves through a  $\beta$ -linkage.

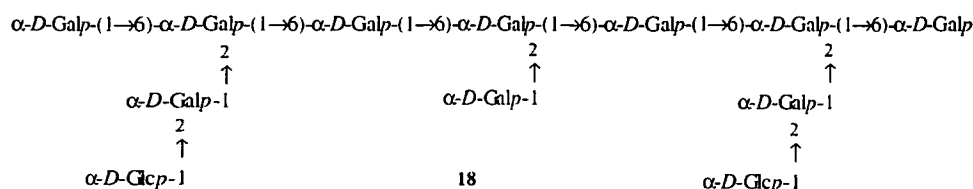
The same methods were used to establish the structure of complicated polysaccharides from plant gum (**15-17**).

In contrast with the above polysaccharides, those isolated from the subterranean organs of *Allochrysa gypsophiloides* Rgl [39, 40] have *Glc p* residues bonded to the principal *Galp* chain. A glucogalactan isolated from roots of *A. gypsophiloides*

[41] has molecular weight 2,000,  $[\alpha]_D +176^\circ$ , and contains 16.6% Glcp and 83.4% Galp. Only glycerine was observed after periodate oxidation and subsequent Smith degradation. This is consistent with the presence of 1-2 and 1-6 bonds between the hexose units.

Methylation of the glucogalactan by the method of Hakomori produced 2,3,4,6-tetra-OMe-Galp; 2,3,4,6-tetra-OMe-Glcp, 3,4,6-tri-OMe-Galp, 2,3,4-tri-OMe-Galp, and 3,4-di-OMe-Galp in the ratio 2:2:2:3:3, respectively. Methylation indicated that the principal chain consists of 1-6-bonded D-Galp residues. The presence of 3,4-di-OMe-Galp is consistent with branching at C-2 of the Galp.

Structure **18** was assigned to the glucogalactan and the oligosaccharides resulting from partial hydrolysis on the basis of chemical and spectral methods (chromatography-mass spectrometry,  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR, and IR) [42].



Thus, the principal chains of arabino-3,6-galactans consist mainly of  $\beta$ -(1-3)- and  $\beta$ -(1-6)-bonded galactopyranose units. Side chains are bonded to the principal one at C-2, C-3, C-4 and C-6 of the galactopyranose.

## SPECTRAL METHODS

Spectral methods in addition to chemical ones are commonly used to study the structure of galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides. The main spectral methods of the modern chemistry of carbohydrates are mass spectrometry and  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR spectroscopy. Their application can be illustrated using several examples.

**Mass Spectrometry.** Much information can be gained by using this technique to study the structure of galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides. Like for other polysaccharides, mass spectrometric studies of galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides are performed on their various derivatives [97-99]. Toman et al. [22] used this method to study the structure of the galactan from white willow bark (*Salix alba* L.). They characterized the relative intensities of 1,5,6-tri-OAc-2,3,4-tri-OMe-Gal, 1,4,5-tri-OAc-2,3,6-tri-OMe-Gal, and 1,3,4,5-tetra-OAc-2,6-di-OMe-Gal in the  $m/z$  range 45-205. The strongest signals for the first compound are  $m/z$  (%): 88 (100), 101 (67.9), 75 (52.4), 73 (22.7), and 45 (32.0); for the second, 101 (100), 88 (33.3), 75 (45.8), 71 (21.9), 45 (80.1); for the third, 87 (100), 88 (17.8), 74 (63.2), 71 (17.8), 45 (57.2).

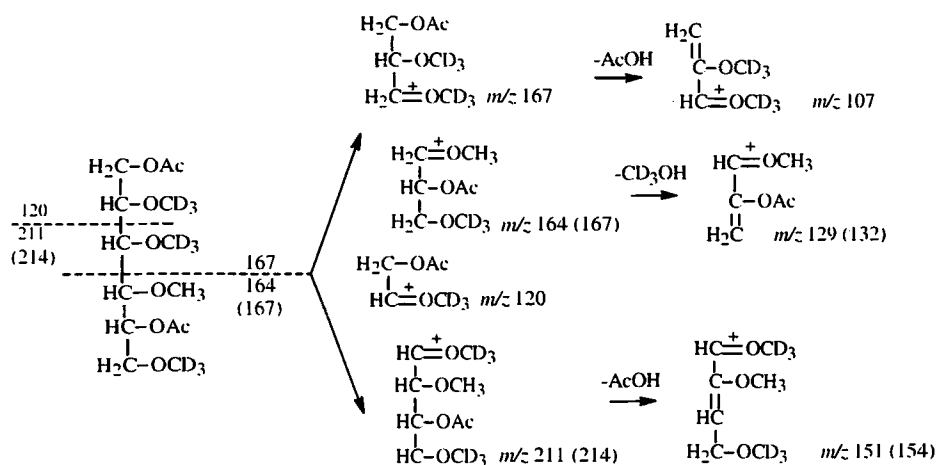


TABLE 2. Relative GLC Retention Times and Principal Fragments in Mass Spectra of Partially Methylated Polyol Acetates

| Components                   | Relative retention time | Principal fragments                          | Bonds            |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|------------------|
| 1,4-Ac-2,3,5-Me-L-arabite    | 0.69                    | 43, 45, 71, 87, 101, 117, 129, 161           | L-Araf-(1-       |
| 1,5-Ac-2,3,4-Me-L-arabite    | 0.79                    | 43, 101, 117, 161                            | L-Arap-(1-       |
| 1,3,5-Ac-2,4-Me-L-arabite    | 1.04                    | 43, 87, 113, 117, 233                        | -3,5)-L-Araf-(1- |
| 1,4,4-Ac-2,3-Me-L-arabite    | 1.13                    | 43, 87, 101, 117, 129, 189                   | -4,5)-L-Arap-(1- |
| 1,2,5-Ac-3,4-Me-L-rhamnite   | 0.95                    | 43, 89, 129, 131, 189                        | -2)-L-Rhap-(1-   |
| 1,2,4,5-Ac-3-Me-L-rhamnite   | 1.28                    | 43, 87, 101, 129, 143, 189, 203              | L-Rhap-(1-       |
| 1,5-Ac-2,3,4,6-Me-D-sorbito  | 1.00                    | 43, 45, 71, 87, 101, 117, 129, 145, 161, 205 | D-Glcp-(1-       |
| 1,5-Ac-2,3,4,6-Me-D-dulcitol | 1.09                    | 43, 45, 71, 87, 101, 117, 129, 145, 161, 205 | D-Galp-(1-       |
| 1,3,5-Ac-2,4,6-Me-D-dulcitol | 1.36                    | 43, 45, 87, 101, 117, 129, 161               | -3)-D-Galp-(1-   |
| 1,4,5-Ac-2,3,6-Me-D-dulcitol | 1.44                    | 43, 45, 87, 99, 101, 113, 117, 233           | -4)-D-Galp-(1-   |
| 1,5,6-Ac-2,3,4-Me-D-dulcitol | 1.58                    | 43, 87, 99, 101, 117, 129, 161, 189          | -6)-D-Galp-(1-   |
| 1,2,4,5-Ac-3,6-Me-D-dulcitol | 1.75                    | 43, 45, 87, 99, 113, 129, 189, 233           | -2,4)-D-Galp-(1- |
| 1,3,5,6-Ac-2,4-Me-D-dulcitol | 2.01                    | 43, 87, 117, 129, 189                        | -3,6)-D-Galp-(1- |

The arabinogalactan from the lac tree (*Rhus vernicifera*) contains 4-OMe-D-glucuronic acid on the unreducing end [36]. The deuteromethyl derivative was obtained from reduced 4-OMe-D-GlcUA and studied by mass spectrometry (Scheme 1). Strong peaks occurred at  $m/z$  214, 154, and 132 (8.0, 6.1, and 17.8%). Chromatography-mass spectrometry was used to study partially methylated acetates of the polyols from the galactan from *Dolichos lablab* [20], the arabinogalactan from *Malva verticillata* [59] and *Glycyrrhiza uralensis* [50], and the glucogalactan from *Allochrysa gypsophiloides* [41].

Table 2 presents certain chromatography-mass spectrometric data of partially methylated acetates of sugar polyols.

**<sup>13</sup>C NMR Spectroscopy.** This is one of the main methods for establishing the structure of natural compounds. It is successfully applied to the modern chemistry of carbohydrates. The structure of the arabinogalactan of *Larix sibirica* was studied by this method [49]. The structure of the polysaccharide was established by comparing spectra of six oligosaccharides obtained from this arabinogalactan by partial hydrolysis. The spectral data confirm the results from chemical studies (Table 3).

Signals of the methyl and acetyl groups in natural arabinogalactans are observed at 57.01 (methyl) and 21.75 and 178.26 ppm (acetyl). Anomeric C atoms in  $\beta$ -Galp,  $\alpha$ -Arap, and  $\alpha$ -Araf are observed near 105.31 (105.85), 110.13, and 111.94 ppm, respectively.

A study of  $\beta$ -(1-4)-bonded arabinogalactans by <sup>13</sup>C NMR showed that peaks at 105.6 and 78.9 ppm and at 108.9 and 68.3 ppm are due to C-1 and C-4 of  $\beta$ -(1-4)-bonded galactopyranose residues and C-1 and C-5 of  $\alpha$ -(1-5)-bonded arabinofuranose residues, respectively. The ratio of peak intensities at 105.6 (C-1 Galp) and 108.9 ppm (C-1 Araf) is 4:1 [28].

The spectrum of the *Allochrysa gypsophiloides* glucogalactan [41] contains strong signals at 100.2 (C-1), 69.4 (C-2), 70.4 (C-3), 70.5 (C-4), 72.2 (C-5), and 62.4 ppm (C-6) from C atoms of the galactopyranose residues and weaker resonances at 99.9 (C-1), 72.5 (C-2), 74.3 (C-3), 70.8 (C-4), 73.3 (C-5), and 61.8 ppm (C-6) that are typical of C atoms of the glucopyranose residues. Peaks at 62.4 and 63.2 ppm belong to C-6 of the unsubstituted hexapyranoses. Chemical shifts of 100.2 and 99.9 ppm indicate that the galactopyranose and glucopyranose residues have the  $\alpha$ -configuration. Substituted C-6 of galactopyranoses resonate at 66.7 and 68.2 ppm. A chemical shift of 92.1 ppm corresponds to the resonance of C-1 in the reducing part of an  $\alpha$ -galactopyranose. The resonance range from 102.3 to 103.0 ppm is typical of galactopyranose C-1 in a branching position. Signals of substituted galactopyranose C-2 appear at 81.9 and 86.6 ppm [41].

The galactan-containing polysaccharide of *Rhus vernicifera* was also studied by <sup>13</sup>C NMR [36]. The polysaccharide consists mainly of  $\beta$ -(1-3)-bonded Galp residues and has a side chain of C-6 of Galp residues. This was confirmed by strong signals for C-1 (104.1 and 103.2 ppm), C-3 (82.3 ppm), and C-6 (60.9, 61.5, and 62.0 ppm).

<sup>13</sup>C NMR was used to establish the structure of arabinogalactans from *Angelica acutiloba* [72], *Calendula officinalis* [38], *Panax notoginseng* [37], *Saccharum spontaneum* [46], and others.

TABLE 3. <sup>13</sup>C NMR Chemical Shifts of Arabinogalactan Oligosaccharides

| Compound                              | Residue     | C-1     | C-2  | C-3  | C-4  | C-5  | C-6  |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|---------|------|------|------|------|------|
| β                                     | A β         | 96.6    | 69.0 | 69.3 | 69.7 | 63.8 | -    |
| <i>L-Arap</i> -(1-3)- <i>L-Ara</i>    | <i>Bα</i>   | 97.4    | 71.0 | 78.0 | 69.7 | 66.7 | -    |
| A      B                              | <i>B β</i>  | 93.4    | 69.3 | 74.5 | 69.7 | 62.8 | -    |
| β                                     | A β         | 103.7   | 72.3 | 73.8 | 70.5 | 74.8 | 62.4 |
| <i>D-Galp</i> -(1-3)- <i>D-Galp</i>   | <i>Bα</i>   | 93.5    | 69.6 | 79.5 | 70.0 | 71.9 | 62.4 |
| A      B                              | <i>B β</i>  | 97.7    | 73.8 | 80.1 | 70.0 | 76.4 | 62.4 |
| <i>D-Galp</i> -(1-6)- <i>D-Galp</i>   | A β         | 104.0   | 72.6 | 73.4 | 70.1 | 76.0 | 61.8 |
| A      B                              | <i>Bα</i>   | 93.2    | 69.6 | 69.9 | 70.1 | 71.6 | 69.6 |
|                                       | <i>B β</i>  | 97.3    | 73.4 | 74.6 | 70.1 | 74.6 | 69.1 |
| <i>D-Galp</i> -(1→6)- <i>D-Galp</i> - | <i>A(D)</i> | 104.0   | 73.0 | 73.9 | 71.0 | 75.2 | 61.3 |
| A      B                              |             | (103.6) |      |      |      |      |      |
| C                                     |             |         |      |      |      |      |      |
| -(1→6)- <i>Galp</i> -(1-              | <i>B</i>    | 104.0   | 73.0 | 75.4 | 71.0 | 75.4 | 68.9 |
| 3                                     |             |         |      |      |      |      |      |
| ↑                                     | <i>C</i>    | 103.6   | 73.9 | 81.7 | 70.4 | 72.9 | 68.9 |
| <i>D-Galp</i> -1                      |             |         |      |      |      |      |      |
| D                                     |             |         |      |      |      |      |      |

Thus, <sup>13</sup>C NMR can not only determine the configuration, type of bonds, and size of the carbocycle but also establish the structure of galactans and galactan-containing polysaccharides, assign them to one or another type of polysaccharide, and locate the site of attachment of the sugars to the principal chain.

### PHYSIOLOGICAL ACTIVITY OF POLYSACCHARIDES

Physiologically active plant polysaccharides are widely used to cure ulcers and eliminate salts of heavy metals and radionuclides from the body. Furthermore, most galactan-containing polysaccharides of higher plants are immunomodulators that activate the reticulo-endothelial system (RES) and increase the phagocytotic index. Polysaccharides-glycyrrhizans UA, UB, and UC from *Glycyrrhiza uralensis* [50, 100] noticeably increase the phagocytotic index compared with a control, for which the known phagocytosis activator zymozan was used [100]. Glycyrrhizan UA possesses high anticomplementary activity.

Chemical modification of arabinogalactans noticeably decreases or destroys the activity. Mild acid hydrolysis of glycyrrhizan UA to remove the side chains containing arabinose noticeably decreases its activity. This indicates that the complicated side chains are important to the activity [100].

A study of the interdependence of structure and anticomplementary activity of the arabinogalactan from roots of *Angelica acutiloba* [71] showed that its activity decreases in cleaved polysaccharides and oligosaccharides compared with that of arabinogalactan AGIIb-1.

The main neutral polysaccharide MVS-I that is isolated from seeds of *Malva verticillata* exhibited high RES activity [60]. The effects of MVS-I and its periodate oxidation product (POP), the Smith degradation product (SDP), and the enzymatic degradation product (EDP) on RES activity were studied *in vivo* in a test of carbon clearance compared with the positive control zymozan. The cleavage products of the polysaccharide (POP, SDP, EDP) have a lower activity than for MVS-I itself. MVS-I exhibits high anticomplementary activity. In contrast with typical arabino-3,6-galactans, the principal chain of MVS-I consists of alternating β-(1-3)-bonded D-galactopyranose and D-glucopyranose residues and has no hexouronic acids. The side chain contains L-arabinofuranose residues α-(1-5)-bonded, β-(1-4)-bonded D-galactopyranoses, β-(1-4)-bonded D-glucopyranoses, and D-galactopyranoses, and β-(1-3)-bonded D-glucopyranoses attached to the principal chain through C-6 of D-galactopyranose. Removal of the side chains destroys the RES activity [60].

Glycyrrhizan UA exhibits significant mutagenic activity. It is interesting that removal of the side chains consisting of α-(1-5)-bonded L-arabinose residues significantly decreases the mutagenic activity. This indicates that the side chains of

arabinose carbohydrates and the 3,6-galactan chain are important to the appearance of this activity [100].

Arabinogalactans (Ps-I, Ps-II, and Ps-III) from *Calendula officinalis* possess immunostimulating activity in several tests of the immunological system *in vitro* [38]. The immunological specificity of the macromolecules is directly related to the size of the branched galactan core because the groups determining the immunological activity are located in the branched region and make an important contribution to the physiological activity.

It was established that 1,3- and 1,5-bonded L-arabinose residues in the side chain of arabinogalactan determine the RES-stimulating, phagocytotic, and mutagenic activity of these polysaccharides. Obviously the physiological activity depends mostly on structural details, i.e., on the structure of the side chains, their position along the principal chain, the macromolecular conformation, and the mechanism of forming dimers and aggregates. The localization of the polysaccharides in the plant cell, the biosynthesis and nature of the interaction of the polysaccharides with receptors of other cells, and their metabolic path in the organism play determining roles in the appearance of physiological activity.

A generalization of the above data suggests that the physiological activity is directly related to structural features of polysaccharides from higher plants.

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