

Cytotoxic Flavonoids from *Platymiscium floribundum*

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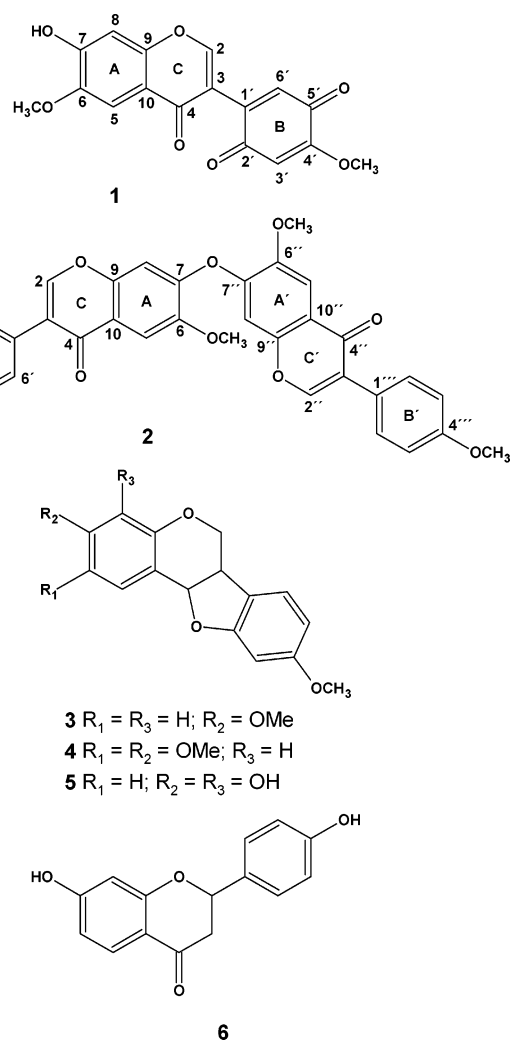
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Two new isoflavonoids, 7-hydroxy-6,4'-dimethoxy-isoflavonequinone (**1**) and 2'-hydroxy-6,4',6'',4'''-tetramethoxy-[7-O-7'']-bisisoflavone (**2**), and seven other known flavonoids, 3-hydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan (medicarpin), 3,10-dihydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan, 3,9-dimethoxypterocarpan (homopterocarpan) (**3**), 2,3,9-trimethoxypterocarpan (**4**), 3,4-dihydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan (vesticarpin) (**5**), 2',4,4'-trihydroxychalcone (isoliquiritigenin), and 7,4'-dihydroxyflavanone (liquiritigenin) (**6**), were isolated from the heartwood of *Platymiscium floribundum*. The structures of compounds **1** and **2** were established by spectroscopic methods. Compounds **3–6** showed cytotoxic activity when evaluated against five human cancer cell lines in vitro.

Platymiscium (Leguminosae-Papilionoideae) is a small genus containing 33 species with a restricted distribution in the Americas.¹ The chemistry of this genus is limited to the phytochemical investigation of only four species so far and has revealed flavonoids, isoflavonoids, and coumarins as principal constituents.^{2–5} *Platymiscium floribundum* Vog. is a tree that occurs in Northeast Brazil, where it is known as “sacambu” and “jacaranda-do-litoral”. This species is used by the local population as an antiinflammatory agent, and its wood has high commercial value in carpentry as a structural timber.¹

Previous studies of roots of *P. floribundum* led to the isolation of isoflavonoids, coumarins, and triterpenes.⁵ In our work from the heartwood, we have now isolated nine flavonoid derivatives: the new isoflavonoids, 7-hydroxy-6,4'-dimethoxy-isoflavonequinone (**1**) and 2'-hydroxy-6,4',6'',4'''-tetramethoxy-[7-O-7'']-bisisoflavone (**2**), and the previously known 3,9-dimethoxypterocarpan (homopterocarpan) (**3**),⁶ 2,3,9-trimethoxypterocarpan (**4**),⁸ 3-hydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan (medicarpin),⁶ 3,4-dihydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan (vesticarpin) (**5**),⁹ 2',4,4'-trihydroxychalcone (isoliquiritigenin),¹⁰ and 7,4'-dihydroxyflavanone (liquiritigenin) (**6**).¹¹ Although several isoflavonoids have been obtained from roots of *P. floribundum*,⁵ none of the above-mentioned compounds have been isolated previously from this species. The cytotoxicity of the isolates obtained herein from *P. floribundum* has been evaluated against a small panel of cancer cell lines.

Compound **1** was obtained as a yellow powder, mp > 300 °C, and was found to possess the molecular formula C₁₇H₁₂O₇ by HREIMS *m/z* 328.0466 (calcd for C₁₇H₁₂O₇, 328.0583 [M⁺]). The IR spectrum showed bands for two carbonyl groups at 1671 and 1625 cm⁻¹ and for hydroxy groups at 3500 cm⁻¹. The ¹³C NMR spectrum displayed signals for 17 carbon atoms, including three carbonyl groups (δ 185.3, 181.3, and 173.1) and two methoxyl groups (δ 56.5 and 55.9). The presence of an upfield oxymethine carbon at δ 156.2 (C-2), typical of the isoflavone skeleton,⁶



besides the three carbonyl groups, was indicative of the presence of a benzoquinone system, suggesting an isoflavonequinone structure for compound **1**. This was confirmed by analysis of the ¹H NMR spectrum, which showed a deshielded signal for a hydrogen at δ 8.33 (s, H-2), related

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Table 1. ^1H and ^{13}C NMR Data for Compounds **1** and **2** ($\text{DMSO-}d_6$)^a

carbon	1			2		
	δ_{H}	δ_{C}	HMBC	δ_{H}^b	δ_{C}	HMBC
2	8.33 s	156.2		8.33 s	155.0	
3		116.2	H-2, H-6'		123.2	H-2, H-6'
4		173.1	H-2, H-5		177.2	H-2, H-5
5	7.39 s	104.6		7.84 s	105.6	
6		147.3	H-5, H-8		148.2	H-5, H-8, OMe-6
7		153.3	H-5		155.2	H-5, H-8
8	6.99 s	103.0		7.19 s	104.0	
9		151.5	H-2, H-5, H-8		153.4	H-2, H-5, H-8
10		115.8			117.1	H-5, H-8
1'		139.4	H-2, H-3', H-6'		114.1	H-2, H-3', H-5'
2'		185.3			158.7	H-6'
3'	6.24 s	108.0		6.94 d (2.5)	104.0	H-5'
4'		158.4	H-3', H-6'		162.0	H-6', OMe-4'
5'		181.3		6.69 dd (2.5, 8.5)	106.2	H-3'
6'	7.07 s	132.8		7.49 d (8.5)	132.6	
2''				8.16 s	152.7	
3''					124.2	H-2'', H-2''', H-6'''
4''					175.5	H-2'', H-5''
5''				7.91 s	105.1	
6''					148.0	H-5'', H-8'', OMe-6''
7''					154.8	H-5'', H-8''
8''				7.21 s	104.2	
9''					153.3	H-2'', H-5'', H-8''
10''					117.7	H-5'', H-8''
1'''					125.6	H-2''', H-3''', H-5'''
2'''/6'''				7.80 d (8.7)	131.0	
3'''/5'''				7.07 d (8.7)	114.4	H-2''', H-6'''
4'''					160.1	OMe-4'''
OMe-4'	3.83 s	56.5		3.68 s	55.4	
OMe-4'''				3.68 s	55.4	
OMe-6	3.88 s	55.9		3.72 s	56.1	
OH-7	10.73 s					

^a The ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra were recorded at 400 and 100 MHz, respectively. ^b Coupling constants (in parentheses) are in Hz.

to an oxyolefinic proton characteristic of the 3-phenylchromone C-ring of isoflavones.¹² Also observed were one nonchelated, but conjugated, hydroxyl group at δ 10.73 (s, OH-7), two methoxyl groups at δ 3.89 and 3.83, and four singlets, one proton each, of aromatic-like protons at δ 6.24 (s, H-3'), 6.99 (s, H-8), 7.07 (s, H-6'), and 7.39 (s, H-5). This information supported a 6,7-disubstituted A-ring of an isoflavonoid moiety linked to a 2,5-disubstituted *para*-quinone unit.

Analysis of the HMQC and HMBC NMR spectra of **1** allowed the assignments of all carbons and hydrogens (Table 1). The long-range correlations in the HMBC spectrum confirmed the isoflavone skeleton by the three-bond coupling of the proton at δ 8.34 (H-2) with the carbonyl group at δ 173.1 (C-4), and also with the carbons at δ 151.5 (C-9) and 139.4 (C-1'). The absorptions of hydrogens and the methoxyl group at the *para*-benzoquinone system were defined by the 3J correlations of the hydrogen at δ 7.07 (H-6') with the deshielded carbonyl at δ 181.3 (C-2') and with the carbon at δ 116.3 (C-3). 3J correlations of the hydrogen at δ 6.24 (H-3') were observed with the most deshielded carbonyl group at δ 185.3 (C-5') and with the carbon at 139.4 (C-1'). The correlations of both protons (H-3' and H-6') and the methoxyl group at δ 3.83 with the carbon at δ 158.4 (C-4') were also diagnostic.

The substitution pattern of the aromatic ring A in **1** was established definitively by HMBC correlations between the proton at δ 6.99 (H-8) and the carbons at δ 151.5 (C-9, 2J), 153.3 (C-7, 2J), 147.3 (C-6, 3J), and 115.8 (C-10, 3J). The remaining proton at δ 7.39 (H-5), *peri* to the carbonyl, showed correlations with the signals at δ 173.1 (C-4, 3J), 153.3 (C-7), 151.5 (C-9, 3J), and 147.6 (C-6, 2J). Further, correlations observed of the methoxyl group at δ 3.88 and the hydroxyl group at δ 10.73 with the carbons at δ 147.6

(C-6) and 153.3 (C-7), respectively, allowed the positions of these groups to be determined at C-6 and C-7, respectively. Comparison with ^{13}C NMR data of 5-hydroxybowditchione, an isoflavonequinone isolated from *Dalbergia candanensis*,¹³ supported the determination of the structure of **1** as the new 7-hydroxy-6,4'-dimethoxy-isoflavonequinone, the third isoflavonequinone so far reported in the literature. EIMS fragments at m/z 166 (7.0%) and 162 (2.0%), arising by the retro-Diels–Alder rearrangement involving the B-ring, and an intense peak at m/z 69 (37.0%), characteristic of methoxybenzoquinones, also supported the proposed structure for **1**.

Compound **2** was isolated as a yellow powder, mp 213–215 °C. The IR spectrum showed absorption bands at 3443, 1622 (broad), 1571, and 1516 cm^{-1} , suggesting the presence of hydroxyl, carbonyl, and aromatic ring functionalities. Support for a biflavonoid structure for compound **2** came from the presence of two very close carbonyl groups (δ 177.2 and 175.5) in the ^{13}C NMR spectrum, in addition to two methoxyl groups (δ 55.4 and 56.1), and 25 signals for sp^2 carbons, of which nine were oxygen-bearing non-hydrogenated carbons. Analysis of the ^1H NMR spectrum established the presence of two intense signals at δ 3.72 and 3.68, integrating for six protons each, related to two sets of superimposable aromatic methoxyl groups, and 13 signals relative to aromatic or olefinic protons resonating between δ 6.67 and 8.33. A COSY experiment showed the presence of an AMX coupling system, through correlations of the hydrogen at δ 6.69 (dd, $J = 2.5, 8.5$ Hz, H-5') with the signals at δ 7.49 (d, $J = 8.5$ Hz, H-6') and 6.94 (d, $J = 2.5$ Hz, H-3'). In addition, an A_2B_2 aromatic system was established by the correlations of the signals at δ 7.80 (d, $J = 8.7$ Hz, H-2''' and H-6''') and at δ 7.07 (dd, $J = 8.7$ Hz, H-3''' and H-5'''), both integrating for two protons. Further,

Table 2. Cytotoxic Activity of Flavonoids **3–6** Isolated from *Platymiscium floribundum* for Tumor Cell Lines^a

compound	cell line (IC ₅₀ µg/mL)				
	CEM	HL-60	HCT-8	MCF-7	B16
doxorubicin	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.20	0.03
	0.01–0.02	0.01–0.02	0.03–0.05	0.17–0.24	0.02–0.04
3	5.5	3.9	6.4	18.5	5.2
	4.4–6.7	2.6–5.7	3.9–10.5	17.8–19.2	3.7–7.3
4	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.7	2.9
	0.5–0.7	0.1–0.2	0.2–1.6	0.4–1.4	1.6–5.3
5	7.3	6.9	12.4	10.	2.7
	6.9–7.8	4.4–10.8	9.7–15.8	8.0–13.1	2.0–3.7
6	>25.0	22.5	19.5	>25.0	5.0
		17.5–28.9	16.8–22.6		3.5–7.1

^a Data are presented as IC₅₀ values and 95% confidence interval obtained by nonlinear regression for leukemias (HL-60 and CEM), breast (MCF-7), colon (HCT-8), and skin (B16) cancer cells from three independent experiments. Doxorubicin was used as positive control. Only compounds with IC₅₀ values lower than 5 µg/mL at least for one cell line were considered active.

the remaining four aromatic singlets at δ 7.84 (H-5), 7.19 (H-8), 7.91 (H-5''), and 7.21 (H-8'') were ascribed as comprising two tetrasubstituted aromatic rings, with the protons situated *para* to one another, corresponding to two 6,7-disubstituted A aromatic rings.

The HMQC NMR spectrum of **2** allowed the assignments of all hydrogens and carbons (Table 1) and revealed correlations of the signals relative to two sets of superimposable methoxyl groups at δ 3.72 and 3.68 with the carbons at δ 56.1 and 55.4, respectively. Correlations of the monohydrogenated carbons at δ 155.0 and 152.7, with protons in the downfield region at δ 8.33 (1H, s) and 8.16 (1H, s), suggested that both flavonoid units were isoflavones. Correlations of the methoxyl group at δ 3.68 and the hydrogens of the A₂X₂ system at δ 7.80 (H-2'' and H-6''') and 7.05 (H-3''' and H-5'''), with the carbon at δ 160.1 (C-4''') in the HMBC spectrum, established the position of this methoxyl group at C-4''' on the B'-ring. On the other hand, correlations of the second methoxyl group at δ 3.68 and hydrogens of the AMX system at δ 6.69 (H-5'), 6.94 (H-3'), and 7.49 (H-6'), with the carbon at δ 162.0 (C-4'), supported the placement of this methoxyl group at the C-4' position of the B-ring. The relative positions of the two remaining methoxyls at δ 3.72 (C-6, C-6') were determined by their correlations with the oxygenated carbons at δ 148.0 (C-6') and 148.2 (C-6), of the two tetrasubstituted aromatic rings A and A', respectively.

All these observations allowed the establishment of the connection of the isoflavonoid moieties through a C-7–O–C-7'' ether linkage and permitted the final structure of compound **2** to be proposed as 2'-hydroxy-6,4',6'',4'''-tetramethoxy-[7-O-7'']-bisisoflavone. This structure was corroborated by its EIMS,¹⁴ from the presence of ions at *m/z* 298 and 314, indicating two isoflavone subunits generated through mass fragmentation.

Pterocarpanes are abundant in Leguminosae and are well represented in the genus *Platymiscium*, particularly *P. yucatanum*^{3,4} and *P. trinitatis*.³ On the other hand, biflavonoids in this family have been limited to the genus *Acacia*, chiefly proanthocyanidin C–C and C–O–C linked dimers.⁶ However, this is the first report of the occurrence of an ether-linked isoflavonoid from plants. Isoflavone-quinones such as **1** are rare and were previously isolated only from the legume species *Dalbergia candenatensis*¹³ and *Bowdichia nitida*.¹⁵

The isolated compounds were tested for their cytotoxicity using five tumor cell lines: two human leukemias (HL-60 and CEM), human breast adenocarcinoma (MCF-7), human colon adenocarcinoma (HCT-8), and murine melanoma (B16). The IC₅₀ values are shown in Table 2. The pterocarpanes were found to be the most active compounds among

the isolated flavonoids. Compound **4** displayed strong activity against the human cell lines and a moderate activity against murine melanoma.

Experimental Section

General Experimental Procedures. Melting points were determined with a Mettler micromelting apparatus and are uncorrected. UV spectra were obtained as methanol solution on a Varian Cary 50 Conc UV–visible spectrophotometer. IR spectra were recorded in KBr disks on a Perkin-Elmer 1000 FT-IR spectrometer. ¹H and ¹³C NMR data were obtained on a Bruker Avance DRX-500 spectrometer at room temperature in DMSO-*d*₆ and CDCl₃, observing ¹H at 500.13 and ¹³C at 125.77 MHz, respectively. HMQC and HMBC spectra were obtained using Bruker's standard pulse sequences.¹⁶ Chemical shifts are given on the δ scale and were referenced to residual DMSO or CHCl₃. HREIMS and EIMS were obtained on VG Autospec Fisons instruments. Silica gel 60 (Merck, 70–230 mesh) was used for column chromatography, and precoated silica gel plates (Merck, Kieselgel 60 F₂₅₄, 0.20 mm) were used for analytical chromatography. Centrifugal preparative TLC was performed using a Harrison Research Chromatotron 7429T. Thin-layer chromatography (TLC) was performed on Merck TLC plates (0.25 mm thickness), and the compounds were visualized by spraying with vanillin/perchloric acid/EtOH solution and then heating on a hot plate.

Plant Material. The heartwood of *Platymiscium floribundum* Vog. was collected in December 1999, in Acarape County, Ceará, Brazil. A voucher specimen (No. 31052) was identified by Dr. A. G. Fernandes (Universidade Federal do Ceará) and deposited at the Herbário Prisco Bezerra (EAC), Departamento de Biologia, Universidade Federal do Ceará, Ceará, Brazil.

Extraction and Isolation. The air-dried heartwood (1.7 kg) was pulverized and extracted with hexane (4000 mL) at room temperature. The solvent was removed under reduced pressure, yielding a viscous brown oil (7 g). The marc obtained after hexane extraction was extracted with CHCl₃ (4000 mL) to afford a dark brown resinous extract (76.0 g) and later extracted with EtOH (4000 mL) to give a dark brown resinous extract (35.0 g).

Part of the CHCl₃ extract (50 g) was adsorbed onto silica gel (5 g) and coarsely fractionated over an initial silica gel (150 g) column, by elution with hexane, CH₂Cl₂, EtOAc, and MeOH, as binary mixtures of increasing polarity, yielding 10 pooled fractions after TLC analysis. Fraction G (CH₂Cl₂–EtOAc 1:1, 3.0 g) yielded small crystals, which were collected by removal of the supernatant liquid and recrystallized from MeOH, yielding **1** (18 mg). Fraction H (CH₂Cl₂–EtOAc 1:1, 1.8 g) was rechromatographed on a silica gel (30.0 g) column, by elution with hexane followed by CH₂Cl₂, EtOAc, and MeOH, which were combined according to TLC analysis to give **2** (15 mg) as a pale yellow solid. Evaporation of the mother liquor of fraction G gave 3-hydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan⁶ (17 mg) as a white solid. Fraction C (hexane–CH₂Cl₂ 1:1, 3.1 g) yielded white

crystals, which were filtered to give 3,4-dihydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan⁹ (1.0 g) as a white solid. Fraction *E* (CH₂Cl₂, 0.39 g) was rechromatographed on silica gel (20.0 g) by elution with hexane, CH₂Cl₂, EtOAc, and MeOH. Six fractions of progressively increasing polarity were subsequently obtained and pooled according to TLC profiles. Fraction *E*₁ (hexane, 38 mg) was submitted to centrifugal chromatography using a mixture of hexane–EtOAc, 1:1, as eluent to yield 3,9-dimethoxypterocarpan⁶ (**3**, 20 mg) as a yellowish solid. Fraction *E*₃ (CH₂Cl₂–EtOAc 7:3, 0.19 g) was further purified over Sephadex LH-20 by elution with CHCl₃–MeOH, 1:1, to give 2,3,9-trimethoxypterocarpan⁸ (**4**, 30 mg) and 3,4-dihydroxy-9-methoxypterocarpan⁹ (**5**, 8 mg) as yellowish solids. Fraction *F* (CH₂Cl₂, 12.0 g) was rechromatographed on silica gel (120.0 g) and eluted with hexane, CHCl₃, EtOAc, and MeOH as binary mixtures with increasing polarity, to yield 2',4,4',-trihydroxychalcone¹⁰ (isoliquiritigenin) (14 mg) and 7,4'-dihydroxyflavanone¹¹ (liquiritigenin) (**6**, 12 mg) as colorless solids.

7-Hydroxy-6,4'-dimethoxy-isoflavonequinone (1): mp > 300 °C, UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε) 230 (4.43), 256 (4.14), 331 (3.96) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} 3431, 2925, 1671, 1625, 1514, 1477, 1442, 1292, 1028 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR, see Table 1; EIMS *m/z* 328 (62), 302 (2), 300 (3), 285 (100), 272 (2), 216 (3), 166 (5), 164 (20), 84 (5), 63 (27), 55 (15); HREIMS *m/z* 328.0466 (calcd for C₁₇H₁₂O₇, 328.0583).

2'-Hydroxy-6,4',6'',4'''-tetramethoxy-[7-O-7'']-bisoflavone (2): mp 213–215 °C; UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε) 215 (4.55), 231 (4.30), 257 (4.19), 325 (3.87) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} 3443, 1622, 1570, 1476, 1410, 1282, 1247, 1207, 1159, 1023 cm⁻¹; ¹H and ¹³C NMR, see Table 1; EIMS *m/z* 314 (49), 298 (100), 296 (37), 259 (7), 227 (2), 166 (21), 148 (43), 132 (7), 58 (9).

Determination of Cytotoxicity. All compounds (0.39 to 25 μg/mL) were tested for cytotoxic activity against five tumor cell lines (National Cancer Institute, Bethesda, MD): B16 (murine melanoma), HCT-8 (human colon), MCF-7 (human breast), CEM and HL-60 (leukemia) after 72 h of incubation. Doxorubicin (0.01 to 0.58 μg/mL) was used as a positive control.

The general viability of cultured cells was determined by reduction of the yellow dye 3-(4,5-dimethyl-2-thiazolyl)-2,5-diphenyl-2*H*-tetrazolium bromide (MTT) to a blue formazan product as described by Mosmann.¹⁷

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