

# Heterocycle formation using $[\text{PhP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$ . The crystal structures of $[\text{PhP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$ , $\text{PhP}(\text{Se})\text{Se}_2(\text{C}_7\text{H}_{10})$ and $\text{PhP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})(\mu\text{-NPh})\text{P}(\text{Se})\text{Ph}$

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An X-ray crystallographic study of  $[\text{PhP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$  **1**, the oxidation product of the homocycle  $(\text{PhP})_5$  with ten equivalents of selenium, revealed that the molecule is centrosymmetric with a planar central  $\text{P}_2(\mu\text{-Se})_2$  core and *trans* disposition of exocyclic  $\text{P}=\text{Se}$  bonds. In the reaction of **1** with norbornene (bicyclo[2.2.1]hept-2-ene), crystallographic analysis of the product **2** revealed *exo* addition of a  $\text{PhP}(\text{Se})\text{Se}_2$  unit across the  $\text{C}=\text{C}$  bond, giving a 1,2-diselena-3-phospholane ( $\text{C}_2\text{PSe}_2$ ) ring. Norbornadiene (bicyclo[2.2.1]hepta-2,5-diene) reacts more slowly with **1**, allowing the isolation of a 1,2-selenaphosphetane ( $\text{C}_2\text{PSe}$  ring) in addition to a diselenaphospholane. The reaction of **1** with azobenzene proceeds with cleavage of the  $\text{N}=\text{N}$  bond and substitution of a bridging selenium atom in **1** by an NPh unit, giving the first crystallographically characterised selenazadiphosphetane ( $\text{P}_2\text{SeN}$ ) ring.

## Introduction

There have been few investigations into the chemistry of 2,4-bis(phenyl)-1,3-diselenadiphosphetane 2,4-diselenide  $[\text{PhP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$  **1**, the terminal oxidation product of  $(\text{PhP})_5$  with elemental selenium.<sup>1,2</sup> Treatment of *cis*- $[\text{PtCl}_2(\text{PR}_3)_2]$  ( $\text{PR}_3 = \frac{1}{2}$  dppe,  $\text{PEt}_3$ ,  $\text{PMe}_2\text{Ph}$  or  $\text{PPh}_2\text{Me}$ ) with **1** in thf affords *cis*- $[\text{Pt}(\text{Se}_3\text{PPh-Se,Se}')(\text{PR}_3)_2]$  while Hill and co-workers have used **1**, prepared *in situ* from  $(\text{PhP})_5/\text{Se}$ , to convert molybdenum and tungsten ketenyl complexes into their selenoketenyl analogues.<sup>3,4</sup> Also, Karaghiosoff and co-workers have reported that the reaction between **1** and 2-phosphaindolizines proceeds with fission of the  $\text{P}_2(\mu\text{-Se})_2$  ring to give diselenophosphinates.<sup>5</sup> We have recently described the reaction of **1** with dialkyl cyanamides  $\text{R}_2\text{N-CN}$  [ $\text{R}_2 = \text{Me}_2$ ,  $(\text{CH}_2)_5$  or  $\text{CH}_2\text{CH}_2\text{OCH}_2\text{-CH}_2$ ], which leads to 1,6,6a $\lambda^4$ -triseleno-3,4-diaza-3a-phosphapentalenes  $[\text{R}_2\text{NC}(\text{Se})=\text{N}]_2\text{P}(\text{Se})\text{Ph}$ , containing two fused  $\text{PSe}_2\text{CN}$  rings in which the  $\text{P}^{\text{V}}=\text{Se}$  bond is abnormally long.<sup>6</sup> Thus the preliminary indications are that a rich and varied chemistry exists for **1**, and indeed for organophosphorus-selenium heterocycles in general.

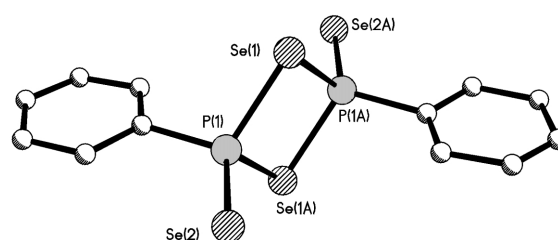
We report here the crystal structures of compound **1** and the unusual heterocycles derived from its reactions with norbornene (bicyclo[2.2.1]hept-2-ene), norbornadiene and azobenzene, which contain saturated  $\text{PC}_2\text{Se}_2$  and  $\text{P}_2\text{SeN}$  rings respectively.

## Results and discussion

Oxidation of pentaphenylcyclopentaphosphane,  $(\text{PhP})_5$ , with ten equivalents of elemental selenium gives a sparingly soluble red solid formulated on the basis of infrared and mass spectrometric data as a 1,3-diselenadiphosphetane 2,4-diselenide,  $[\text{PhP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$  **1**.<sup>1,2</sup> In order to obtain crystallographic corroboration of this we grew crystals of **1** by recrystallisation from hot toluene. Compound **1** does indeed possess the structure proposed (Fig. 1, Table 1), with a planar  $\text{P}_2(\mu\text{-Se})_2$  ring and a *trans* orientation of the exocyclic  $\text{P}=\text{Se}$  bonds. The internal  $\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(1)$ ,  $\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$  (single bond) and exocyclic  $\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(2)$  (double bond) distances [2.276(2), 2.284(2) and 2.102(3) Å] are similar to those of  $[\text{BuP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$  [ $\text{P}-\text{Se}$  2.269(2),  $\text{P}=\text{Se}$  2.097(4) Å]<sup>7</sup> which contains the same  $\text{P}_2(\mu\text{-Se})_2$  unit. The

**Table 1** Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) for compound **1** (e.s.d.s in parentheses)

$\text{Se}(1)\text{-P}(1)$	2.276(2)	$\text{Se}(1)\text{-P}(1\text{A})$	2.284(2)
$\text{Se}(2)\text{-P}(1)$	2.102(3)	$\text{P}(1)\text{-C}(1)$	1.822(10)
$\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$	2.284(2)		
$\text{C}(1)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(2)$	115.2(3)	$\text{C}(1)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1)$	108.1(3)
$\text{Se}(2)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1)$	115.61(11)	$\text{C}(1)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$	107.1(3)
$\text{Se}(2)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$	114.08(11)	$\text{Se}(1)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$	94.55(9)
$\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(1)\text{-P}(1\text{A})$	85.45(9)		



**Fig. 1** Molecular structure of compound **1** (C-H bonds omitted for clarity, as in all cases shown).

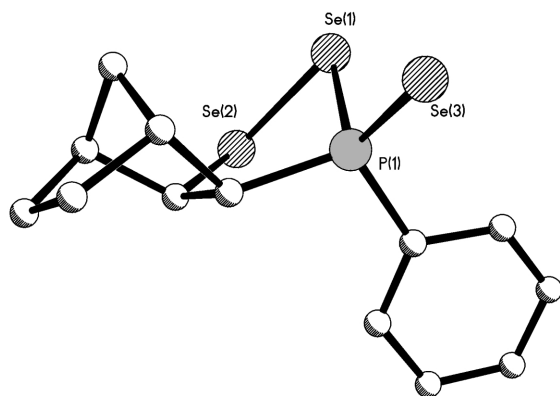
internal angles of the  $\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(1)\text{-P}(1\text{A})\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$  ring in **1** show some distortion from a true square, with  $\text{P}(1)\text{-Se}(1)\text{-P}(1\text{A})$  85.45(9)° and  $\text{Se}(1)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$  94.55(9)°, *cf.* 83.5(1) and 96.5(1)° in  $[\text{BuP}(\text{Se})(\mu\text{-Se})]_2$ , the transannular  $\text{P}(1)\cdots\text{P}(1\text{A})$  and  $\text{Se}(1)\cdots\text{Se}(1\text{A})$  distances being 3.1 and 3.4 Å respectively. The angles at  $\text{P}(1)$  are between 94.55(9) and 115.61(11)°, with (internal)  $\text{Se}(1)\text{-P}(1)\text{-Se}(1\text{A})$  being the smallest of these, the exocyclic  $\text{Se}(2)\text{-P}(1)\text{-X}$  angles [ $\text{X} = \text{C}(1)$ ,  $\text{Se}(1)$  or  $\text{Se}(1\text{A})$ ] all exceeding 114°. The closest intermolecular separation seen within the structure is  $\text{Se}(1)\cdots\text{Se}(2')$  between adjacent molecules, 3.3 Å.

## Reaction of compound **1** with norbornene and norbornadiene

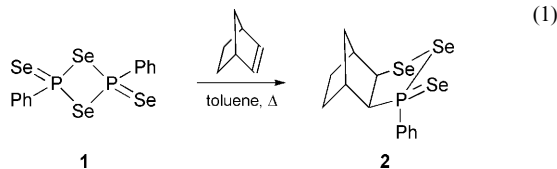
The reaction between compound **1** and norbornene in hot toluene for 24 hours proceeds with cleavage of the  $\text{P}_2(\mu\text{-Se})_2$  ring to give a 1,2-diselena-3-phospholane **2** in 20% isolated yield based on **1** following chromatographic work-up (eqn. 1). The formation of **2** is in marked contrast to that of the

**Table 2** Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) for compound **2** (e.s.d.s in parentheses)

P(1)–C(8)	1.806(7)	P(1)–C(1)	1.843(6)
P(1)–Se(3)	2.117(2)	P(1)–Se(1)	2.232(2)
Se(1)–Se(2)	2.352(1)	Se(2)–C(2)	2.002(6)
C(8)–P(1)–C(1)	106.8(3)	C(8)–P(1)–Se(3)	113.7(2)
C(1)–P(1)–Se(3)	116.4(2)	C(8)–P(1)–Se(1)	106.7(2)
C(1)–P(1)–Se(1)	102.0(2)	Se(3)–P(1)–Se(1)	110.22(7)
P(1)–Se(1)–Se(2)	89.60(5)	C(2)–Se(2)–Se(1)	96.5(2)



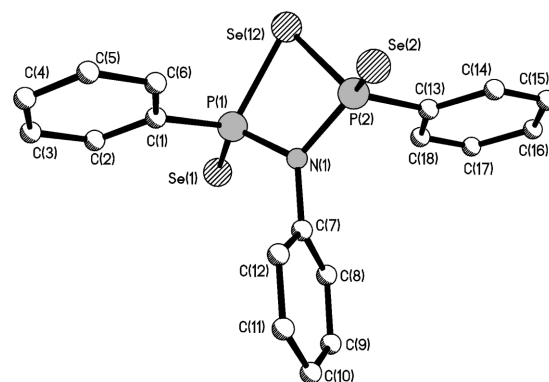
**Fig. 2** Molecular structure of compound **2**.



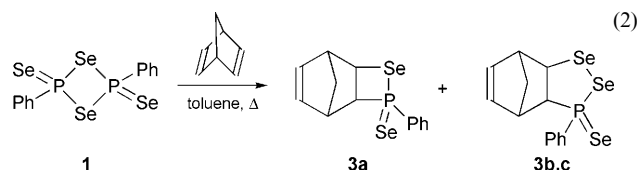
1,2-thiaphosphetane ( $C_2PS$  ring) obtained in the reaction of  $[RP(S)(\mu-S)]_2$  ( $R$  = ferrocenyl) with norbornene, arising from a  $[2 + 2]$  cycloaddition between the alkene and a  $P=S$  bond.<sup>8</sup> Notably the  $PhPSe_3$  moiety, albeit in different geometries, is also found in the products from the reactions of *cis*- $[PtCl_2(PR_3)_2]$  or dialkyl cyanamides with **1**,<sup>4,6</sup> suggesting a particular stability for this unit. The tricyclic compound **2** is an air- and moisture-stable orange solid, soluble in most organic solvents excluding aliphatic hydrocarbons. The  $^{31}P\{-^1H\}$  NMR spectrum comprises a singlet at  $\delta_p$  81.4 flanked by  $^{77}Se$  satellites,  $^1J(P-Se)$  353 and 773 Hz, values which confirm the presence of both phosphorus–selenium single and double bonds, with a molecular ion in the  $FAB^+$  mass spectrum at  $m/z$  440.

The molecular structure of compound **2** (Fig. 2, Table 2) contains a 1,2-diselena-3-phospholane ( $C_2PSe_2$ ) ring, which has an *exo* geometry to the norbornane moiety; although **2** is chiral, crystallisation as a racemate occurs. The internal  $P(1)–Se(1)$  length [2.232(2) Å] is *ca.* 0.05 Å shorter than that of **1**, the exocyclic  $P(1)–Se(3)$  distance [2.117(2) Å] being only 0.01 Å longer. The  $Se(1)–Se(2)$  distance of 2.352(1) Å is similar to the value of 2.319(2) Å in the eight-membered heterocycle  $[P(pox)_3]Se_3$  [ $pox = C_6H_2(^iBu)_2(O^iPr)-2,4,6$ ] and in the acyclic molecule  $[Et_2P(S)Se]_2$  [2.334(12) Å].<sup>9,10</sup> In comparison with **1** the angles at  $P(1)$  of **2** fall within the narrower range of 102.0(2)–116.4(2)°, the exocyclic  $P=Se$  bond once more imposing the greatest influence on the geometry of  $P(1)$ . Within the phospholane ring, the  $P(1)–C(1)–C(2)–Se(2)$  chain is approximately coplanar (mean deviation from plane 0.03 Å) with  $Se(1)$  displaced by 1.1 Å from this plane.

The reaction of compound **1** with norbornadiene proceeds somewhat more slowly than with norbornene. Three  $P-Se$  compounds are present in  $^{31}P\{-^1H\}$  NMR spectra of crude mixtures obtained from these reactions after 24 h, characterised by singlets at  $\delta$  29.0 [**3a**,  $^1J(P-Se)$  794 and 202], 70.9 [**3b**,  $^1J(P-Se)$  751 and 394] and 71.4 [**3c**,  $^1J(P-Se)$  759 and 359 Hz] in the approxi-



**Fig. 3** Molecular structure of compound **4**.

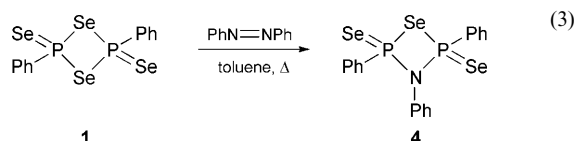


mate ratio 10:1:4 (eqn. 2). Column chromatography (1:1 v/v dichloromethane–hexane) separates **3a** ( $R_f$  1.0) from **3b,c** ( $R_f$  0.5), which are themselves separable by collecting small (1 cm<sup>3</sup>) fractions as **3b** elutes marginally ahead of **3c**. Compound **3a** is a highly soluble off-white oily material, preventing any satisfactory elemental analysis, however  $FAB^+$  mass spectrometry ( $M^+$  at  $m/z$  360) indicates a molecule of composition  $C_{13}H_{13}PSe_2$ . Hence **3a** is formulated as a 1,2-selenaphosphetane, the small  $^1J(P-Se)$  single bond coupling of 202 Hz being attributed to the strained  $C_2PSe$  ring. Compounds **3b,c** are isolable as orange solids from dichloromethane–hexane; their  $FAB^+$  mass spectra each contain a molecular ion peak at  $m/z$  438, corresponding to  $C_{13}H_{13}PSe_3$ , suggesting that both *endo* and *exo* isomers are generated; however, we have been unable to assign by  $^1H$  NMR spectroscopy which isomers the compounds are.

In the reactions leading to formation of compounds **2** and **3a–3c** no other phosphorus containing compounds are observed in  $^{31}P\{-^1H\}$  NMR spectra of crude reaction mixtures, the deposition of small quantities of elemental selenium during the reactions points to some degradation of **1**. No further products are recovered upon elution with more polar solvents. We speculate that the initially formed  $C_2PSe$  rings generated during these reactions are prone to selenium insertion from **1** into the  $C-Se$  bond, being more facile in the norbornene system compared with norbornadiene.

#### Reaction of compound **1** with azobenzene

While the  $P_2(\mu-Se)_2$  ring of compound **1** is cleaved during its reaction with norbornene, part of this linkage is preserved in the product from its reaction with azobenzene. The compound  $PhP(Se)(\mu-Se)(\mu-NPh)P(Se)Ph$  **4** is generated upon reaction of 1.5 equivalents of **1** with azobenzene in hot toluene, followed by chromatographic purification on silica (eqn. 3). X-Ray crystal-



lography confirms **4** is a 1-selena-3-aza-2,4-diphosphetane 2,4-diselenide (Fig. 3, Table 3), the first structurally characterised  $P_2SeN$  ring. The central  $P_2SeN$  ring is planar, the twist angle along  $N(1)–C(7)$  between this ring and the  $C(7)–C(12)$  phenyl group being 96°. Introduction of  $\mu-NPh$  for  $\mu-Se$  produces dramatic changes in the heterocycle geometry compared with

**Table 3** Selected bond lengths (Å) and angles (°) for compound **4** (e.s.d.s in parentheses)

Se(1)–P(1)	2.0676(12)	P(1)–N(1)	1.705(3)
P(1)–C(1)	1.801(4)	P(1)–Se(12)	2.2705(12)
N(1)–C(7)	1.439(5)	N(1)–P(2)	1.694(3)
Se(12)–P(2)	2.2662(11)	P(2)–C(13)	1.802(4)
P(2)–Se(2)	2.0846(11)		
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N(1)–P(1)–C(1)	108.1(2)	N(1)–P(1)–Se(1)	116.07(12)
C(1)–P(1)–Se(1)	114.1(2)	N(1)–P(1)–Se(12)	87.47(11)
C(1)–P(1)–Se(12)	107.09(14)	Se(1)–P(1)–Se(12)	120.66(6)
C(7)–N(1)–P(2)	126.6(3)	C(7)–N(1)–P(1)	124.1(2)
P(2)–N(1)–P(1)	109.2(2)	P(2)–Se(12)–P(1)	75.28(4)
N(1)–P(2)–Se(2)	115.82(13)	N(1)–P(2)–Se(12)	87.86(11)
Se(2)–P(2)–Se(12)	119.71(5)		

those of **1**. The N(1)–P–Se(12) and P(1)–Se(12)–P(2) angles are *ca.* 7–10° narrower compared to those of **1**, with P(1)–N(1)–P(2) [109.2(2)°] being 17° wider than the P–Se–P angles of **1** [85.45(9)°]. There is modest shortening of the internal P–Se distances [P(1)–Se(12) 2.2705(12), P(2)–Se(12) 2.2662(11) Å], consequently the transannular P(1)⋯P(2) and N(1)⋯Se(12) distances are only 2.77(1) and 2.78(1) Å respectively. A similar ring geometry perturbation by NR is also apparent in the thiaphosphetanes RP(S)(μ-S)(μ-NR')P(S)R (R = ferrocenyl, R' = CH<sub>2</sub>Ph, Cy, Ph or Me).<sup>11</sup> In this series of compounds the P–N–P angles are 104.5(4)–107.4(5)° whereas P–S–P is 79.1(2)–79.3(1)° *cf.* P–S–P 86.9(1)° in [RP(S)(μ-S)]<sub>2</sub>.<sup>12</sup> The exocyclic P=Se distances of **4** [P(1)–Se(1) 2.0676(12), P(2)–Se(2) 2.0846(11) Å] are somewhat shortened from **1** [2.102(3) Å]; the P–N lengths [P(1)–N(1) 1.705(3), P(2)–N(1) 1.694(3) Å] suggest some multiple bond character.

Chloroform solutions of compound **4** are susceptible to oxidation, depositing red selenium within 72 h, although the crystalline material is more robust. Employing molar ratios of **1** and azobenzene closer to parity gives additional singlets in the <sup>31</sup>P-{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR to high frequency of that of **4**; however these species have proven inseparable from **4** and have not further been characterised. The magnitude of <sup>1</sup>J(P=Se) in **4** (857 Hz) is consistent with a P–N linkage,<sup>13</sup> while the very small <sup>1</sup>J(P–Se) coupling (263 Hz) reflects the strain inherent within the four membered ring, *cf.* **3a**. The ν<sub>PSe</sub> vibration (551 cm<sup>-1</sup>) is substantially higher than for either **1** (506 cm<sup>-1</sup>) or **2** (529 cm<sup>-1</sup>), with ν<sub>PN</sub> at 942 cm<sup>-1</sup>.

## Conclusion

Crystallographic analysis has established unequivocally the structure of **1** as a diselenadiphosphetane diselenide; **1** undergoes cleavage of the central P<sub>2</sub>(μ-Se)<sub>2</sub> ring in its reaction with norbornene to give a 1,2-diselena-3-phospholane 3-selenide. With azobenzene, **1** reacts with retention of one μ-Se atom to give a structurally unique P<sub>2</sub>SeN system. The simplicity of heterocycle syntheses using **1** bodes well for further investigations into its chemistry.

## Experimental

Syntheses of compounds **2–4** were performed in thick walled glass tubes with Young taps under an atmosphere of dinitrogen; subsequent chromatographic and recrystallisation procedures were performed in air. Compound **1** was prepared from (PhP)<sub>2</sub> and elemental selenium;<sup>1,2</sup> anhydrous toluene (Aldrich) and other reagents and solvents were used as supplied. <sup>31</sup>P-{<sup>1</sup>H} and <sup>1</sup>H NMR (121.4 and 300.0 MHz, CDCl<sub>3</sub>) and infrared spectra (KBr discs) were recorded on Varian Gemini 2000 and Perkin-Elmer System 2000 NIR FT-Raman spectrometers; FAB<sup>+</sup> mass spectra (3-nitrobenzyl alcohol matrix) were obtained by the EPSRC National Mass Spectrometry Service Centre, Swansea.

## Preparations

**PhP(Se)Se<sub>2</sub>(C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>) 2.** A toluene solution (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) of compound **1** (150 mg, 0.28 mmol) and norbornene (52 mg, 0.56 mmol) was heated at 130 °C for 24 h, giving an orange solution with a small amount of elemental selenium. The solvent was removed *in vacuo*, the crude product extracted into dichloromethane (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) and purified by column chromatography (silica, dichloromethane eluent). The orange compound **2** was recrystallised by slow evaporation of a dichloromethane–hexane solution over several days at room temperature, giving crystals suitable for X-ray analysis. Yield 25 mg, 20% based on **1**. Found (Calc. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>15</sub>PSe<sub>3</sub>); C 35.5(35.6), H 3.1(3.4)%. δ<sub>P</sub> 81.4(s), <sup>1</sup>J(P–Se) 773, 353 Hz. δ<sub>H</sub> 8.01 (m, 2H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 7.44 (m, 3H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 3.95 (ddd, 1H, *J* = 2, 7.5 and 14, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>), 3.01 (d, 1H, *J* = 7.5, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>), 2.94 (d, 1H, *J* = 10, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>), 2.39 (d, 1H, *J* = 10 Hz, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>), 1.63 (m, 2H, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>) and 1.20 (m, 3H, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>10</sub>). IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 1094m (ν<sub>PC</sub>) and 529s (ν<sub>PSe</sub>). FAB<sup>+</sup> MS: *m/z* 440, *M*<sup>+</sup>.

**Reaction of compound 1 with norbornadiene.** A toluene solution (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) of compound **1** (150 mg, 0.28 mmol) and norbornadiene (0.25 cm<sup>3</sup>, 2.3 mmol) was heated at 130 °C for 24 h, giving an orange solution with some selenium. The solvent was removed *in vacuo*, the crude products extracted into dichloromethane (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) and subjected to column chromatography (silica, 1:1 v/v dichloromethane–hexane eluent), to give a pale yellow eluate (*R*<sub>f</sub> 1.0) of **3a** and an orange eluate (*R*<sub>f</sub> 0.5) of **3b,3c**. Collection of small (*ca.* 1 cm<sup>3</sup>) fractions from the latter enabled resolution of **3b** from **3c**. **3a** was isolated as an off-white oil soluble in all organic solvents, precluding isolation as an analytically pure material. **3b,3c** can be obtained as orange solids from dichloromethane–hexane.

**3a:** 30 mg, 30% based on **1**. δ<sub>P</sub> 29.0(s), <sup>1</sup>J(P–Se) 794, 202 Hz. δ<sub>H</sub> 8.18 (m, 2H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 7.44 (m, 3H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 6.07 (m, 1H, =CH), 6.02 (m, 1H, =CH), 3.44 (ddd, 1H, *J* = 2, 7 and 14, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.26 (d, 2H, *J* = 7, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.11 (d, 2H, *J* = 10, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>) and 1.70 (d, 1H, *J* = 10 Hz, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>). FAB<sup>+</sup> MS: *m/z* 360, *M*<sup>+</sup>.

**3b:** 3 mg, 1% based on **1**. Found (Calc. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>13</sub>PSe<sub>3</sub>); C 35.9(35.7), H 3.1(3.0)%. δ<sub>P</sub> 70.9(s), <sup>1</sup>J(P–Se) 751, 394 Hz. δ<sub>H</sub> 8.02 (m, 2H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 7.46 (m, 3H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 6.60 (dd, 1H, *J* = 3 and 5, =CH), 6.28 (dd, 1H, *J* = 3 and 5, =CH), 4.28 (ddd, 1H, *J* = 4, 7 and 19, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.81 (m, 1H, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.73 (br s, 1H, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.44 (br s, 1H, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 1.66 (t, 1H, *J* = 7, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>) and 1.52 (d, 1H, *J* = 7 Hz, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>). IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 536s (ν<sub>PSe</sub>). FAB<sup>+</sup> MS: *m/z* 438, *M*<sup>+</sup>.

**3c:** 17 mg, 14% based on **1**. Found (Calc. for C<sub>13</sub>H<sub>13</sub>PSe<sub>3</sub>); C 36.1(35.7), H 3.1(3.0)%. δ<sub>P</sub> 71.4(s), <sup>1</sup>J(P–Se) 759, 359 Hz. δ<sub>H</sub> 8.07 (m, 2H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 7.50 (m, 3H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 6.40 (s, 2H, =CH), 4.00 (ddd, 1H, *J* = 2, 7 and 16, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.65 (d, 1H, *J* = 5, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 3.23 (m, 2H, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>), 2.74 (d, 1H, *J* = 10, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>) and 1.65 (d, 1H, *J* = 10 Hz, C<sub>7</sub>H<sub>8</sub>). IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 533s (ν<sub>PSe</sub>). FAB<sup>+</sup> MS: *m/z* 438, *M*<sup>+</sup>.

**PhP(Se)(μ-Se)(μ-NPh)P(Se)Ph 4.** A toluene solution (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) of compound **1** (150 mg, 0.28 mmol) and azobenzene (32 mg, 0.18 mmol) was heated at 130 °C for 5 h, giving an orange solution with some selenium. The solvent was removed *in vacuo*, the crude product extracted into dichloromethane (2 cm<sup>3</sup>) and purified by column chromatography (silica, dichloromethane eluent) giving 20 mg (13%) of **4** as a pale orange solid. Crystals of **4** suitable for X-ray analysis were grown by layering a CDCl<sub>3</sub> solution of the compound with hexane over 48 h. Found (Calc. for C<sub>18</sub>H<sub>15</sub>NP<sub>2</sub>Se<sub>3</sub>); C 39.6(39.7), H 2.8(2.8), N 2.5(2.6)%. <sup>31</sup>P-{<sup>1</sup>H} NMR: δ 44.7(s), <sup>1</sup>J(P–Se) 857, 263 Hz. <sup>1</sup>H NMR: δ 8.49 (m, 2H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 8.43 (m, 2H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 7.84 (m, 1H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>), 7.52 (m, 6H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>) and 7.03 (m, 4H, C<sub>6</sub>H<sub>5</sub>). IR (cm<sup>-1</sup>): 1090m (ν<sub>PC</sub>), 942s (ν<sub>PN</sub>) and 551s (ν<sub>PSe</sub>). FAB<sup>+</sup> MS: *m/z* 545, *M*<sup>+</sup> + H.

**Table 4** Data collection and structural refinement parameters for compounds **1**, **2** and **4**

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>
Formula	C <sub>12</sub> H <sub>10</sub> P <sub>2</sub> Se <sub>4</sub>	C <sub>13</sub> H <sub>15</sub> PSe <sub>3</sub>	C <sub>18</sub> H <sub>15</sub> NP <sub>2</sub> Se <sub>3</sub>
<i>M</i>	531.98	439.10	544.13
Crystal system	Monoclinic	Monoclinic	Monoclinic
Space group	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> / <i>c</i>	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> / <i>c</i>	<i>P</i> 2 <sub>1</sub> / <i>n</i>
<i>a</i> /Å	9.5224(4)	17.3773(7)	9.6859(1)
<i>b</i> /Å	7.3091(5)	6.6669(2)	16.2944(3)
<i>c</i> /Å	11.3341(8)	12.9445(5)	13.3506(1)
$\beta$ /°	96.213(3)	101.237(1)	108.456(1)
<i>U</i> /Å <sup>3</sup>	784.22(8)	1470.91(9)	1998.70(4)
<i>Z</i>	2	4	4
$\mu$ /mm <sup>-1</sup>	9.539	7.587	5.681
Reflections collected	3278	5984	8565
Independent reflections ( <i>R</i> <sub>int</sub> )	1129(0.0477)	2106(0.0463)	2870(0.0305)
<i>R</i> 1, <i>wR</i> 2 [ <i>I</i> > 2 $\sigma$ ( <i>I</i> )]	0.0447, 0.1132	0.0364, 0.0761	0.0288, 0.0634

### Single crystal X-ray diffraction studies

Crystallographic analyses of compounds **1**, **2** and **4** were performed at 293 K using a Bruker SMART diffractometer with graphite-monochromated Mo-K $\alpha$  radiation ( $\lambda$  = 0.71073 Å). The structures were solved by direct methods, non-hydrogen atoms refined with anisotropic displacement parameters, hydrogen atoms bound to carbon idealised and fixed (C–H 0.95 Å). Structural refinements were by the full-matrix least-squares method on *F*<sup>2</sup> using the program SHELXTL.<sup>14</sup> Data collection and structural refinement parameters are shown in Table 4.

CCDC reference number 186/2287.

See <http://www.rsc.org/suppdata/dt/b0/b008071n/> for crystallographic files in .cif format.

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