Nordivaricatic Acid, a New Depside from the Lichen *Heterodea beaugleholei*

*John A. Elix and Philip D. Tearne*

Chemistry Department, Australian National University, Canberra, A.C.T. 2600.

**Abstract**

The depside nordivaricatic acid (5) has been isolated from the lichen *Heterodea beaugleholei* R. Filson. The structure of this compound followed from the spectroscopic data and has been confirmed by total synthesis.

In the continuation of our chemotaxonomic survey of the lichens of eastern Australia\(^1,2\) we observed that *Heterodea beaugleholei* R. Filson\(^3\) produced three phenolic metabolites, only two of which correspond to known lichen substances.

Usnic acid (1) and divaricatic acid (2) can readily be identified as components of the lichen, by comparison with the authentic materials. Subsequently we have undertaken the large-scale extraction of this lichen and followed this by benzylation of the mixture of lichen acids obtained. Similar benzylation procedures followed by chromatography of the benzyl esters and eventual debenzylation have been used previously in the separation of complex mixtures of natural carboxylic acids. Preparative layer chromatography of this particular mixture of esters led to the isolation of benzyl divaricatate (3) and benzyl nordivaricatate (4).

**The New Depside**

When benzyl nordivaricatate (4) was subjected to hydrogenolysis in the presence of palladized carbon and hydrogen, nordivaricatic acid (5) was obtained. The thin-layer chromatographic behaviour of this compound in three independent solvent

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* Recently this depside has been tentatively identified.\(^*\)

systems was identical to that of the natural material thus substantiating that no artefact formation had occurred during these transformations. The structure of the compounds (4) and (5) followed initially from the spectroscopic properties. The observed p.m.r. spectra were very similar to those of divaricatic acid (2) and benzyl divaricatate (3), but lacked the O-methyl resonance. Further evidence was provided by mass spectroscopy, for nordivaricatic acid (5) exhibited a molecular ion at m/e 374 and the expected ring A fragments (6) and (7) at m/e 196 and 178.

The structure of this depside was confirmed by total synthesis by the now well established procedures. The condensation of 4-benzyloxy-2-hydroxy-6-propylbenzoic acid (8) with benzyl 2,4-dihydroxy-6-propylbenzoate (9) in the presence of trifluoroacetic anhydride gave rise to benzyl 4-O-benzylnordivaricatate (10), and hydrogenolysis of this compound in the presence of palladized carbon and hydrogen produced nordivaricatic acid (5) identical with the natural material.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compound</th>
<th>$R_f(A)$</th>
<th>$R_f(B)$</th>
<th>$R_f(C)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atranorin (standard)</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>0.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norstictic acid (standard)</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.32</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divaricatic acid</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nordivaricatic acid</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anziaic acid</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As thin-layer chromatography is now undoubtedly the most widely used method for the identification of lichen constituents, the relevant data for nordivaricatic acid (5) is listed in Table 1.

Experimental

The general experimental details have been published previously.²

Extraction of Heterodea beaugleholei R. Filson

The lichen material was collected on soil on the western slopes of Black Mountain, Canberra, A.C.T. (J. A. Elix—1258, CANB).

The dried thallus (208 g) was extracted with anhydrous benzene in a Soxhlet extractor for 36 h. The extract was then concentrated to yield 8·3 g of a brown solid.

A portion (1·0 g) of this crude material was dissolved in acetone (20 ml) and treated with an excess of ethereal phenyldiazomethane for 15 min at room temperature. The reaction mixture was then concentrated and the residue chromatographed with 20% ethyl acetate/light petroleum as eluent.

The major band yielded benzyl divaricatate (3) (168 mg, 6·7%) which was recrystallized from n-hexane to form colourless prisms, m.p. 72·5–73·5 °C (Found: C, 70·5; H, 5·9. C₂₅H₂₉O₂ requires C, 70·3; H, 6·3%). P.m.r. (CDCl₃) δ 0·72, 0·94 (each 3H, t, J 7 Hz, CH₂CH₃), 1·30–1·90 (4H, m, CH₂CH₃), 2·68–3·08 (4H, m, ArCH₂), 3·78 (3H, s, OCH₃), 5·40 (2H, s, OCH₂), 6·40 (2H, s, H₃', H₅'), 6·60, 6·78 (each 1H, d, J 3 Hz, H₃, H₅), 7·44 (5H, bs, C₆H₅), 11·48 (2H, br, OH). A minor band yielded benzyl nordivaricatate (4) (49 mg, 2·0%) as a pale yellow oil; p.m.r. (CDCl₃) δ 0·64–1·10 (6H, m, CH₂CH₃), 1·20–1·84 (4H, m, CH₂CH₃), 2·72–3·08 (4H, m, ArCH₂), 5·45 (2H, s, OCH₂), 6·36 (2H, s, H₃', H₅'), 6·60, 6·67 (each 1H, d, J 3 Hz, H₃, H₅), 7·48 (5H, s, C₆H₅), 11·42, 11·64 (each 1H, s, OH).

A mixture of benzyl nordivaricatate (49 mg), ethyl acetate (6 ml) and 10% palladium on carbon (25 mg) was stirred in an atmosphere of hydrogen for 5 h. The catalyst was then removed by filtration and the solvent evaporated. The residue was recrystallized from chloroform/carbon tetrachloride/n-hexane to give nordivaricatic acid (5) (36 mg, 90%) as colourless needles.

Benzyl 4-O-Benzylndivaricatate (10)

A mixture of 4-benzyloxy-2-hydroxy-6-propylbenzoic acid (0·286 g), benzyl 2,4-dihydroxy-6-propylbenzoate (0·286 g), anhydrous toluene (6 ml) and trifluoroacetic anhydride (1 ml) was stirred at room temperature for 20 h. The solvent was then evaporated and the residue chromatographed, with 20% ethyl acetate/light petroleum as eluent. The faster-moving band yielded benzyl 4-O-benzylndivaricatate (10) (132 mg, 24%) which crystallized from cyclohexane as colourless plates, m.p. 94–95 °C (Found: C, 73·9; H, 6·0. C₃₄H₃₄O₇ requires C, 73·6; H, 6·2%). P.m.r. (CDCl₃) δ 0·60–1·08 (6H, m, CH₂CH₃), 1·16–1·82 (4H, m, CH₂CH₃), 2·66–3·08 (4H, m, ArCH₂), 5·02, 5·36 (each 2H, s, OCH₂), 6·46 (2H, s, H₃', H₅'), 6·58, 6·74 (each 1H, d, J 3 Hz, H₃, H₅), 7·40 (10H, s, C₆H₅), 11·44, 11·62 (each 1H, s, OH).

Synthesis of Nordivaricatic Acid (5)

A mixture of benzyl 4-O-benzylndivaricatate (132 mg), ethyl acetate (10 ml) and 10% palladium on carbon (10 mg) was stirred in an atmosphere of hydrogen for 17 h. The catalyst was then removed by filtration and the solvent evaporated. Recrystallization of the residue from chloroform–carbon tetrachloride–n-hexane gave nordivaricatic acid (5) (90 mg, 85%) which was identical in all respects (m.p. and m.m.p., p.m.r. and t.l.c. behaviour) with the sample of natural material obtained above.

Acknowledgment

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