

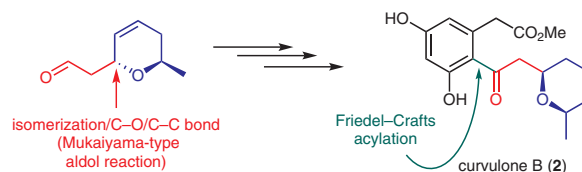
# Concise Total Synthesis of Curvulone B

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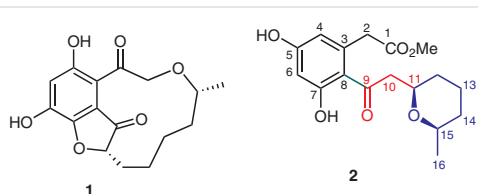


**Abstract** A concise and convergent stereoselective synthesis of curvulone B is described. The synthesis utilized a tandem isomerization followed by C–O and C–C bond-forming reactions following Mukaiyama-type aldol conditions for the construction of the *trans*-2,6-disubstituted dihydropyran ring system as the key steps. Other important features of this synthesis are a cross-metathesis, epimerization, and Friedel–Crafts acylation.

**Key words** curvulone B, natural products, Mukaiyama–aldol reaction, Friedel–Crafts acylation reaction

Marine fungi have been long recognized as a rich source of novel secondary metabolites with such biological properties as antitumor, phytotoxic, or antifungal activities, as well as cytotoxicity against human cancer cell lines.<sup>1</sup> In connection with the search for biologically active metabolites from fungi, Krohn and Kurtán and their co-workers isolated two new curvularin-type metabolites, curvulone A (**1**) and curvulone B (**2**; Figure 1) from a *Curvularia* sp. obtained from the marine alga *Gracilaria folifera*.<sup>1</sup> Curvulone B (**2**) features a 2,6-disubstituted *cis*-tetrahydropyran ring, and displays antitumor, antifungal, and cytotoxic activities.<sup>2</sup>

The structure of curvulone B was determined by 2D NMR spectroscopy, and its absolute configuration was de-

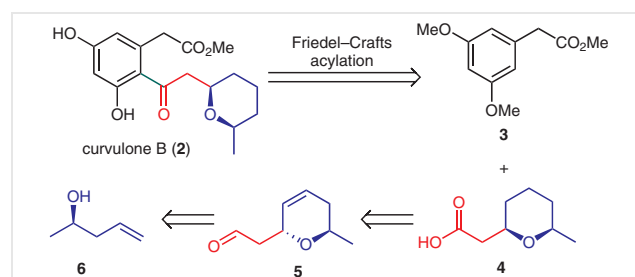


**Figure 1** Structures of curvulone A (**1**) and curvulone B (**2**)

duced by comparison of the experimental electronic circular dichroism spectra in acetonitrile with the Boltzman-averaged spectrum.<sup>3</sup> Total syntheses of curvulone B (**2**) have been reported by the groups of Takahashi,<sup>2</sup> Bates,<sup>4</sup> and, more recently, He.<sup>5</sup> None of these syntheses involved fewer than ten linear steps, and all employed an intramolecular oxa-Michael addition for the formation of THP ring.

We recently reported the synthesis of 2,6-*trans*-disubstituted tetrahydropyrans with a keto functionality by means of a Mukaiyama-type aldol reactions of 1-phenyl-1-(trimethylsiloxy)ethylene with six-membered cyclic hemiacetals in the presence of iodine.<sup>6</sup> As a further application of this Mukaiyama-type aldol reaction, and as a part of our ongoing research on the total synthesis of biologically active natural products containing pyran rings,<sup>7</sup> we report an efficient and convergent synthesis of curvulone B in seven steps.

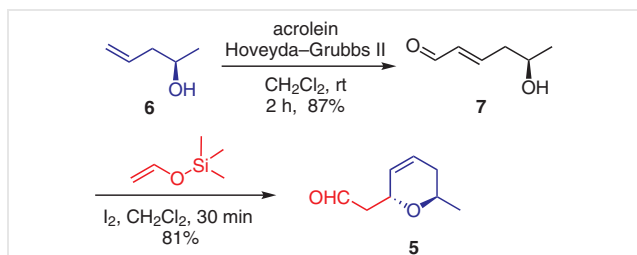
Our retrosynthetic analysis of curvulone B is outlined in Scheme 1. It was envisaged that curvulone B might be prepared by a Friedel–Crafts acylation reaction of aromatic ester **3** and the acid fragment **4** (Scheme 1). We planned to obtain intermediate **4** from the *trans*-2,6-disubstituted dihydropyran **5** that, in turn, would be accessed from a  $\delta$ -hydroxy  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated aldehyde through tandem isomeri-



**Scheme 1** Retrosynthetic analysis of curvulone B (**2**)

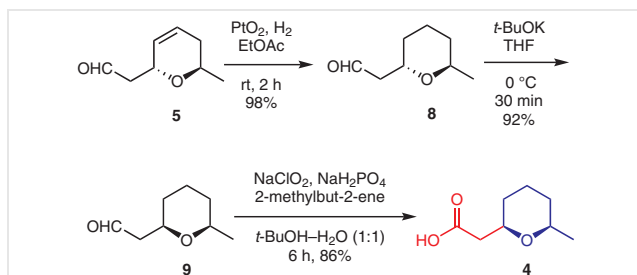
zation followed by C–O and C–C bond-forming reactions of a silyl enol ether under Mukaiyama-type aldol reaction conditions. The  $\delta$ -hydroxy  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated aldehyde would be obtained from the commercially available chiral homoallylic alcohol **6**.

The synthesis of the key intermediate **5** began with the commercially available homoallylic alcohol **6** and acrolein, which, on treatment with the Hoveyda–Grubbs catalyst (10 mol%) in  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  gave the cross-metathesis<sup>8</sup> product, the  $\delta$ -hydroxy  $\alpha,\beta$ -unsaturated aldehyde **7**, in 87% yield (Scheme 2). Tandem isomerization followed by a C–O and C–C bond-formation protocol under Mukaiyama-type conditions was performed by treating **7** with trimethyl(vinyloxy)silane in the presence of a catalytic amount of molecular iodine in anhydrous  $\text{CH}_2\text{Cl}_2$  at room temperature to furnish the *trans*-2,6-disubstituted-3,4-dihydropyran **5** as the sole product in 81% yield.<sup>6,9,10</sup>



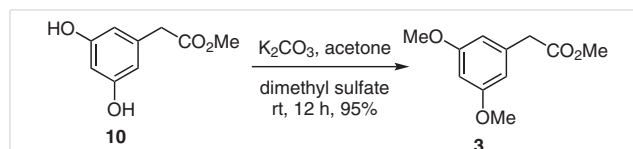
Scheme 2 Synthesis of compound **5**

The next task was to reduce the internal double bond and then to perform the isomerization reaction. Accordingly, the double bond in compound **5** was reduced in the presence of a catalytic amount of Adams's catalyst under hydrogen in anhydrous ethyl acetate to furnish compound **8** in excellent yield (Scheme 3). Epimerization was performed by a retro-oxa-Michael/oxa-Michael reaction with potassium *tert*-butoxide in THF at 0 °C; this reaction was highly stereoselective, favoring the desired C- $\beta$ -epimer **9**, which was obtained in 92% yield.<sup>11</sup> Acid **4**, a key fragment for the Friedel–Crafts acylation strategy, was then synthesized in 86% yield from *cis*-pyran aldehyde **9** by Pinnick oxidation<sup>12</sup> with  $\text{NaClO}_2$ ,  $\text{NaH}_2\text{PO}_4$ , *t*-BuOH– $\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (1:1), and 2-methylbut-2-ene.



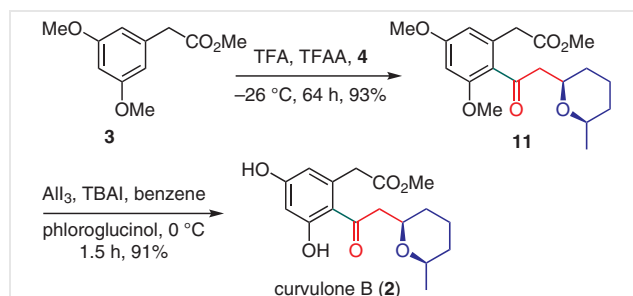
Scheme 3 Synthesis of compound **4**

The aromatic coupling fragment **3** was synthesized by methylation of commercially available methyl 2-(3,5-dihydroxyphenyl)acetate (**10**) with potassium carbonate and dimethyl sulfate in acetone to afford methyl 2-(3,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetate (**3**) in 95% yield (Scheme 4).<sup>13</sup>



Scheme 4 Synthesis of fragment **3**

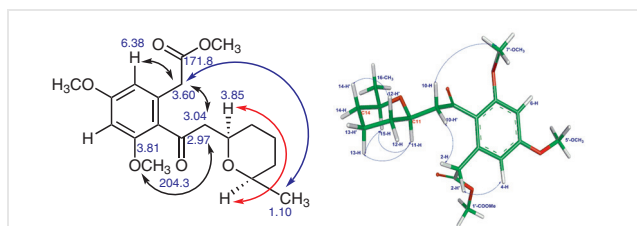
With *cis*-pyran acid **4** and methyl 2-(3,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetate (**3**) in hand, our next objective was to combine both fragments by using the key Friedel–Crafts acylation reaction. Accordingly, treatment of *cis*-pyran acid **4** with methyl 2-(3,5-dimethoxyphenyl)acetate (**3**) in TFA/TFAA, afforded the desired ketone **11** in 93% yield (Scheme 5).<sup>14</sup>



Scheme 5 Completion of the total synthesis of curvulone B (**2**)

The structure of compound **11** was confirmed by extensive NMR experiments, including DQF-COSY, TOCSY, NOESY, HSQC, and HMBC experiments. The distinctive AB spin system of double doublets at  $\delta = 2.97$  and 3.04 ppm, due to 10-H and 10-H' displaying a HMBC correlation with the carbonyl carbon ( $\delta = 204.3$  ppm), was used to initiate the assignments. The DQF-COSY experiment helped us to assign the protons from 11-H to 15-H and the 16- $\text{CH}_3$  protons. The 2- $\text{CH}_2$  protons appear as a broad singlet at  $\delta = 3.60$  ppm. The nOe correlations 11-H/15-H, 11-H/13-H, 13-H/15-H, and 12-H'/14-H' strongly supported the *syn* orientation of the 11-H and 15-H protons, as well as the  $^{14}\text{C}_{11}$  chair conformation of the six-membered ring. Furthermore, nOe correlations between 10-H/2- $\text{CH}_2$ , 2- $\text{CH}_2$ /4-H, and 7'- $\text{OCH}_3$ /10-H provided strong evidence that the pyran ring occupies a position *ortho* to methyl ester of the benzene ring, providing firm support for the proposed structure of **11** (Figure 2).

Finally, demethylation of the methoxy group of **11** was successfully achieved under Maier's conditions ( $\text{AlI}_3$ , TBAI, phloroglucinol)<sup>15</sup> in benzene at 0 °C to furnish curvulone B (**2**) in 91% yield.<sup>16</sup> The spectroscopic and analytical data for synthetic compound **2** were in good agreement with those reported for the natural product.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 2** Energy-minimized structure of **11**, along with key nOe correlations (double-headed arrows)

In summary, a concise and stereoselective synthesis of the curvulone B (**2**) was achieved in seven steps and a 46% overall yield by using iodine-catalyzed tandem isomerization followed by C–O and C–C bond-formation through a Mukaiyama-type aldol reaction for the construction of the *trans*-2,6-disubstituted dihydropyran ring system as the key step. The other important reactions involved in the current synthetic approach were cross-metathesis, epimerization, and Friedel–Crafts acylation reactions.

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### Supporting Information

Supporting information for this article is available online at <https://doi.org/10.1055/a-1297-6838>.

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- (10) [(**2R,6R**)-6-Methyl-5,6-dihydro-2H-pyran-2-yl]acetaldehyde (**5**)  $I_2$  (0.89 g, 3.51 mmol) was added to a stirred solution of aldehyde **7** (2.0 g, 17.54 mmol) and trimethyl(vinyloxy)silane (3.85 mL, 26.31 mmol) in anhyd  $CH_2Cl_2$  (50 mL) at 0 °C, and the mixture was allowed to warm to rt. When the reaction was complete (TLC), it was quenched with sat. aq  $Na_2S_2O_3$  (30 mL), and the mixture was extracted with  $CH_2Cl_2$  (2 × 50 mL). The combined organic extracts were dried ( $Na_2SO_4$ ), filtered, and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column chromatography [silica gel, EtOAc–hexane (1:5)] to give a pale-yellow liquid; yield: 1.99 g (81%);  $[\alpha]_D^{20}$  –68.0 ( $c = 0.85$ ,  $CHCl_3$ ). IR (neat): 3033, 2971, 2928, 1721, 1636, 1373, 1187, 1137, 1090  $cm^{-1}$ .  $^1H$  NMR (300 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta = 9.81$  (s, 1 H), 5.87 (m, 1 H), 5.70 (d,  $J = 11.7$  Hz, 1 H), 4.78 (m, 1 H), 3.83 (m, 1 H), 2.76 (ddd,  $J = 16.2, 8.8, 3.0$  Hz, 1 H), 2.55 (dd,  $J = 16.2, 4.7$  Hz, 1 H), 2.06–1.91 (m, 2 H), 1.21 (d,  $J = 6.2$  Hz, 3 H).  $^{13}C$  NMR (75 MHz,  $CDCl_3$ ):  $\delta = 201.0, 127.5, 125.2, 67.6, 64.1, 47.9, 31.5, 20.6$ . HRMS (ESI):  $m/z$   $[M + Na]^+$  calcd for  $C_8H_{12}NaO_2$ : 163.0728; found: 163.0724.
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- (16) **Curvulone B (2)**  
A suspension of Al powder (192 mg, 7.37 mmol) in anhyd benzene (5 mL) was treated with  $I_2$  (0.7 g, 2.74 mmol) under argon, and the violet mixture was stirred under reflux for 30 min until the mixture became colorless. The mixture was then cooled to 0 °C, and TBAI (12.7 mg, 0.034 mmol) and phloroglucinol (108 mg, 0.85 mmol) were added, followed by a solution of **11** (60 mg, 0.17 mmol) in anhyd benzene (2 mL) added in one portion. The resulting green–brown suspension was stirred for 30 min at 0 °C. When the reaction was complete (TLC), it was quenched with sat. aq aqueous  $Na_2S_2O_3$  (10 mL), and the mixture was diluted with EtOAc (15 mL). The organic layer was separated, and the aqueous layer was extracted with EtOAc (3 × 15 mL). The combined organic extracts were washed with brine (25 mL), filtered, dried ( $Na_2SO_4$ ), and concentrated under reduced pressure. The crude product was purified by column

chromatography [silica gel, EtOAc-hexane (1:1)] to give a colorless liquid; yield: 50 mg (91%);  $[\alpha]_D^{20}$  -18.2 ( $c = 0.2$ , EtOH). IR (neat): 3410, 2928, 1713, 1613, 1451, 1334, 1166  $\text{cm}^{-1}$ .  $^1\text{H}$  NMR (400 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta = 9.79$  (s, 1 H), 6.28 (d,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, 1 H), 6.22 (d,  $J = 2.3$  Hz, 1 H), 6.08 (br s, 1 H), 4.13 (brtt,  $J = 10.5, 2.3$  Hz, 1 H), 3.92 (d,  $J = 16.5$  Hz, 1 H), 3.70 (s, 3 H), 3.57 (m, 1 H),

3.51 (d,  $J = 16.6$  Hz, 1 H), 3.30 (dd,  $J = 14.3, 10.1$  Hz, 1 H), 2.56 (dd,  $J = 14.3, 3.1$  Hz, 1 H), 1.85 (m, 1 H), 1.65–1.50 (m, 3 H), 1.42 (m, 1 H), 1.25 (m, 1 H), 1.17 (d,  $J = 6.2$  Hz, 3 H).  $^{13}\text{C}$  NMR (100 MHz,  $\text{CDCl}_3$ ):  $\delta = 204.2, 172.4, 159.4, 135.7, 120.7, 111.7, 104.0, 77.8, 74.8, 52.0, 49.0, 39.7, 32.6, 30.7, 23.1, 21.5$ . HRMS (ESI):  $m/z$   $[\text{M} + \text{H}]^+$  calcd for  $\text{C}_{17}\text{H}_{23}\text{O}_6$ : 323.1489; found: 323.1494.