SHORT REPORT

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Rec. Nat. Prod. 19:5 (2025) 639-643

records of natural products

A Novel Monoterpenoid Derivative Isolated from *Chloranthus serratus* Roots with Anti-inflammatory Activity

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(Received June 09, 2025; Revised July 25, 2025; Accepted July 28, 2025)

Abstract: Eight compounds were isolated from the 95% ethanol extract of *Chloranthus serratus* roots, including two monoterpenoid derivatives (**1**, **2**), one pimarane-type diterpenoid (**3**), and five labdane-type diterpenoids (**4-8**). Compound **1** was identified as a previously undescribed camphene derivative, while compound **3** was a new natural product. Their structures and relative configurations were elucidated using HR-MS, NMR and ECD calculations. Compounds **1**, **2**, **5** significantly inhibited nitric oxide (NO) production in lipopolysaccharide (LPS)-induced RAW 264.7 cells, with IC_{50} values of 17.47±1.24, 14.92±1.17, and 30.48±1.48 μM, respectively.

Keywords: *Chloranthus serratus*; monoterpenoid; anti-inflammatory activity.

1. Plant Source

The roots of *Chloranthus serratus* were collected in Guiyang, Guizhou Province, People's Republic of China, in November 2023. The plant material was authenticated by Prof. Ji-Xin Li from Guizhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine. A voucher specimen (NO. 20231101) has been deposited at Anhui University of Chinese Medicine

2. Previous Studies

Chloranthus serratus (Chloranthaceae; *Chloranthus* genus) thrives in humid montane understories and streamside grasslands at elevations of 280–1800 m, with a wide distribution across southwestern and southeastern China [1]. In traditional medicine, it has been extensively used to treat traumatic injuries, rheumatic lumbago, leg pain, furuncles, abscesses, and venomous snake bites [2]. Lindenane-type sesquiterpenoids and their polymers are characteristic components of *Chloranthus* species, exhibiting significant anti-inflammatory, antitumor, and neuroprotective activities [3,4]. In addition to these compounds, *Chloranthus* plants contain diterpenoids, coumarins, and minor phenolic acids [5]. Compared to well-studied species such as *C. henryi*, *C. japonicus*, and *C. spicatus,* research on *C. serratus* remains relatively limited, potentially due to concerns regarding its hepatotoxicity [6].

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The article was published by ACG Publications
http://www.acgpubs.org/journal/records-of-natural-products September-October 2025 EISSN:1307-6167
DOI: http://doi.org/10.25135/rnp.542.2506.3558
Available online: August 18, 2025

Nevertheless, its notable anti-inflammatory properties have facilitated clinical applications and sustained research interest[2,7-9]. Previous phytochemical investigations of *C. serratus* have revealed that while lindenane-type sesquiterpenoids are not predominant, eudesmane-type sesquiterpenoids [10] and labdane-type diterpenoids [11] are relatively abundant. To investigate the anti-inflammatory constituents of *C. serratus,* we isolated eight terpenoids from its 95% ethanol extract (Figure 1) and evaluated their anti-inflammatory activity.

3. Present Study

The air-dried roots of *Chloranthus serratus* (9.6 kg) were powdered and extracted three times with 95% EtOH under reflux (2 h × 3). The combined filtrate was concentrated under reduced pressure to yield a crude extract (256g). The extract was fractionated by silica gel column chromatography using a CH_2Cl_2–CH_3OH gradient (1:0–0:1, v/v) to obtain seven major fractions (A–K). Fraction B (19 g) was further separated by ODS column chromatography (CH_3OH–H_2O, 20:80–100:0) to afford 17 subfractions (B1–B17). Subfractions B8 and B9 (157.8 mg) were subjected to silica gel chromatography (petroleum ether–EtOAc, 25:1–1:1) followed by preparative HPLC (CH_3CN–H_2O, 65:35, 35 min) to yield compounds **4** (16.04 mg), **5** (6.41 mg), **6** (2.55 mg), **7** (6.09 mg), and **8** (3.10 mg). Subfraction B14 (43.0 mg) was purified by Sephadex LH-20 (CH_3OH) and preparative HPLC (CH_3CN–H_2O, 75:25, 33 min) to afford compounds **1** (7.60 mg) and **2** (58.01 mg). Subfraction B17 (103 mg) was processed through Sephadex LH-20 (CH_3OH) and preparative HPLC (CH_3CN–H_2O, 90:10-95:5, 48 min) to obtain compound **3** (3.13 mg).

Chloronin A (**1**): colorless oil; $[\alpha]_D^{24}$ +10° (c 0.10, MeOH); UV (MeOH) λ_{max} (log ε) 312 (3.80) nm; ECD (MeOH) λ_{max} ($\Delta\varepsilon$) 311 (−10.6) nm; ^{1}H and ^{13}C NMR data, see Table 1; HR-ESI-MS *m/z* 299.1662 $[M-H]^-$ (calcd. for $C_{19}H_{23}O_3$, 299.1647).

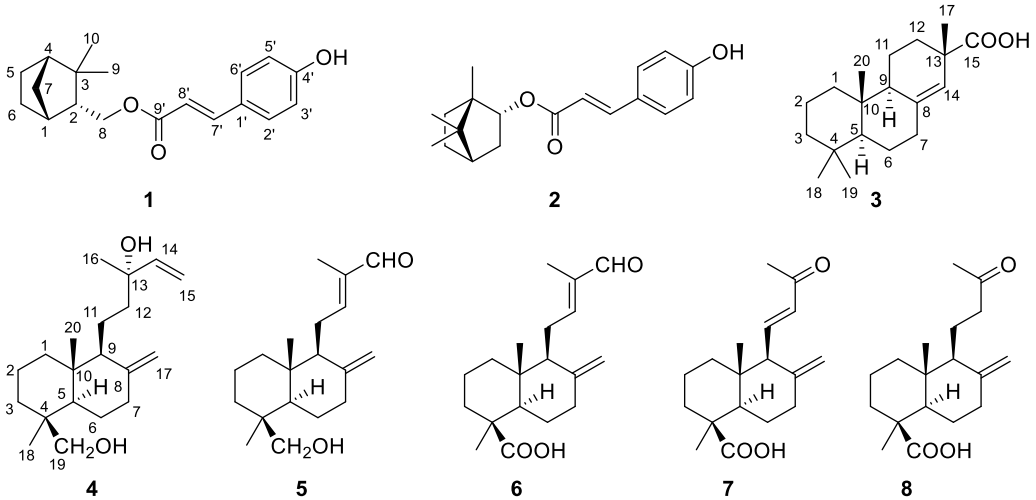

Figure 1. Structures of compounds **1-8**

Compound **1** was obtained as a colorless oil. Its molecular formula was determined as $C_{19}H_{24}O_3$ by HR-ESI-MS (*m/z* 299.1662 $[M-H]^-$, calcd for $C_{19}H_{23}O_3$, 299.1647), corresponding to eight degrees of unsaturation. The ^{1}H NMR spectrum of **1** (Table 1) revealed signals characteristic of an *ortho*-substituted benzene ring (δ_H 7.43, 2H, d, J = 8.6 Hz; 6.85, 2H, d, J = 8.6 Hz), a pair of *trans*-olefinic protons (δ_H 7.61, 1H, d, J = 16.0 Hz; 6.28, 1H, d, J = 16.0 Hz) , an oxygenated methylene (δ_H 4.20, 2H, m), and two methyl singlets (δ_H 1.03, 3H, s; 0.91, 3H, s). The ^{13}C NMR and HSQC spectra displayed 17 carbon signals, including two methyls, four methylenes (one oxygenated at δ_C 63.8), seven methines (four olefinic at δ_C 144.4, 130.1, 116.0, 116.0), and four quaternary carbons (a ester carbonyl at δ_C 167.8 and two olefinic at δ_C 157.8, 127.5). These data suggested the presence of a *p*-hydroxy-cinnamoyl moiety (δ_C 167.8, 157.8, 144.3, 130.1, 127.5, 116.0, 116.0), identical to that of the known compound pressafonin-A (**2**)[12]. This assignment was further supported by the HMBC

correlations (Figure 2) from H-7′ (δ_H 7.61) to C-1′ (δ_C 127.5), C-2′ (δ_C 130.1), C-9′ (δ_C 167.8), as well as from H-3′ (δ_H 6.85) to C-1′ and C-4′ (δ_C 157.8). Excluding the cinnamoyl group, the remaining C_{10} fragment with two degrees of unsaturation implied a bicyclic monoterpenoid structure. The spin systems (H-7/H-4/H-5/H-6/ H-1/H-2/H-8) observed in the ^{1}H-^{1}H COSY spectrum, along with the HMBC correlations from Me-10 (δ_H 1.03) to C-2 (δ_C 49.0), C-3 (δ_C 37.2), C-4 (δ_C 49.3), C-9 (δ_C 20.9), and from H-8 (δ_H 4.20) to C-1 (δ_C 40.6), C-2, and C-3, suggested a monoterpenoid scaffold closely resembling camphanol group, the aglycone of shionoside A [13]. Thus, compound **1** consists of two structural units: a camphanol group and a *p*-hydroxy-cinnamoyl group, linked via C-8 (as evidenced by the HMBC correlation between H-8 and C-9′). The structure of **1** was thereby elucidated as depicted in Figure 1 and designated chloronin A.

Table 1. ^{1}H NMR (600 MHz) and ^{13}C NMR (150 MHz) data of **1** ($CDCl_3$, *J* in Hz)

No	δ_H (*J* in Hz)	δ_C
1	2.27, br s	40.6
2	1.80, m*	49.0
3		37.2
4	1.79, m*	49.3
5*α*	1.31, m*	24.7
5*β*	1.62, m	
6*α*	1.31, m*	20.7
6*β*	1.39, m	
7a	1.23, br d (9.7)	37.4
7b	1.68, br d (9.7)	
8	4.20, m	63.8
9	0.91, s	20.9
10	1.03, s	32.6
1′		127.5
2′	7.43, d (8.6)	130.1
3′	6.85, d (8.6)	116.0
4′		157.8
5′	6.85, d (8.6)	116.0
6′	7.43, d (8.6)	130.1
7′	7.61, d (16.0)	144.4
8′	6.28, d (16.0)	116.0
9′		167.8

*overlapped

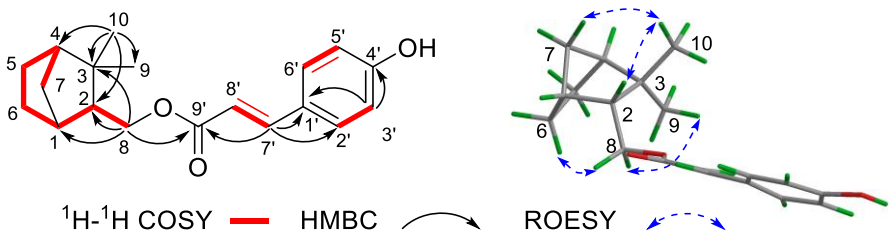

Figure 2. Key 2D NMR correlations of compounds **1**

In the ROESY spectrum, the cross-peaks of H-8/Me-9/H-6*α* suggested that these protons were on the same side, assigned as *α*-orientation. Similarly, Me-10, H-2 and H-7b were established as *β*-oriented by the cross-peaks of H-2/Me-10/H-7b. Given the chemical shifts of C-9 (δ_C 20.4) and C-10 (δ_C 30.5) reported for *endo*-camphanol in the literature [11], the camphanol fragment in compound **1**

was determined to adopt the *endo* configuration. Furthermore, the absolute configurations of **1** was assigned as 1*R*, 2*R*, 4*S* by ECD calculations (Figure 3).

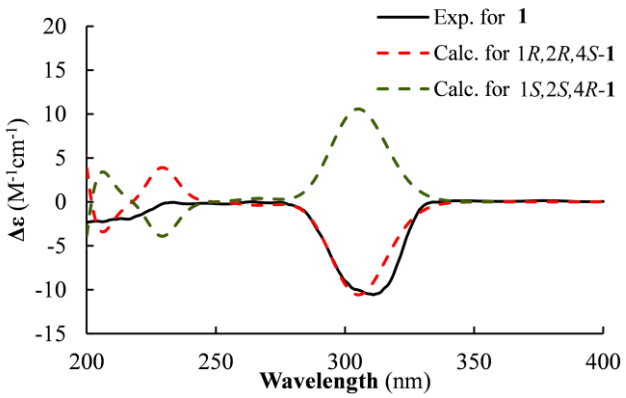

Figure 3. Experimental and computational ECD spectra of chloronin A (**1**)

Additionally, seven known compounds were isolated and identified as pressafonin-A (**2**)[12], (5*S*,9*R*,10*S*,13*S*)-16-norpimar-8(14)-en-15-oic acid (**3**)[14], 13-*epi*-torulosol (**4**)[15], 5-nor-14-oxolabda-8(17),12*E*-dien-19-ol (**5**)[16], 15-nor-14-oxolabda-8(17),12*E*-dien-19-oic acid (**6**)[16], 15,16-bisnor-13-oxo-8(17),11*E*-labdadien-19-oic acid (**7**)[17], 14,15-dinor-13-oxo-8(17)-labden-19-oic acid (**8**)[18], and compound **3** was a new natural product.

In this study, all compounds were evaluated for their inhibitory effects on NO production in LPS-stimulated RAW264.7 macrophages, using L-NMMA as a positive control (IC_{50} = 45.70±1.33 μM). Among the tested compounds, **1**, **2**, and **5** demonstrated significant anti-inflammatory activity, with IC_{50} values of 17.47±1.24, 14.92±1.17, and 30.48±1.48 μM, respectively.

Acknowledgments

This work was partially supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (32400324), the Natural Science Key Research Program of Anhui Province University (2022AH050489), the Foundation of Anhui Province Key Laboratory of Research & Development of Chinese Medicine (AKLPDCM202305), the Open Fund of High-level Key Discipline of Chemistry of Chinese Medicine of the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Anhui University of Chinese Medicine (HKDCCM2024013), and the Anhui Province University Discipline (Professional) Leader Training Project (DTR2023026).

Supporting Information

Supporting Information accompanies this paper on http://www.acgpubs.org/journal/records-of-natural-products

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