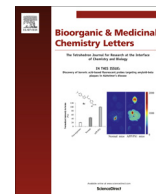




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New cytotoxic *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids from *Scutellaria strigillosa*

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ABSTRACT

Three new *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids, named scutestrigillosins A–C (**1–3**), were isolated from the whole plant of *Scutellaria strigillosa*. Their chemical structures including absolute configurations were established on the basis of detailed physical data analyses. In vitro, the isolated three new compounds exhibited significant cytotoxic activities against four tumor cell lines (HONE-1, P-388, MCF7 and HT29), and gave IC₅₀ values in the range 3.5–7.7 μM.

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Scutellaria is a unique cosmopolitan genus of the subfamily Scutellarioideae belonging to Lamiaceae (Labiatae) family. About 360 species are found to spread throughout the world and in different climatic areas. Plants of this genus have been widely used in local medicine of many countries of the world for thousands of years, and modern pharmacology research has confirmed that their extracts or monomeric compounds possess antitumor effects.^{1,2} On the basis of cDNA microarray analysis, the mechanism underlying the antitumor activity appears to involve DNA damage, cell cycle control, nucleic acid binding, protein phosphorylation and dephosphorylation, and dendritic cell functions. There is evidence that these actions are triggered by *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids.^{3–6}

In the course of ongoing search for more new *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids, we investigated the whole plants of *Scutellaria strigillosa*, which is a perennial herb and mainly distributed in Hebei, Shandong, Zhejiang and Jilin provinces in China. In traditional Chinese medicine, the whole plants have been used to clear away heat-evil, expel superficial evils, eliminate stasis and reduce edema.⁷ This phytochemical investigation led to the isolation of three new *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids, named scutestrigillosins A–C (Fig. 1, **1–3**), the structures of which were elucidated by means of extensive spectroscopic analyses. Furthermore, three new compounds were screened for cytotoxicity against selected cancer cell lines, including HONE-1, P-388, MCF7 and HT29. Herein, we report on the structural elucidation and cytotoxicity of three new *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids.

The air-dried whole plant of *Scutellaria strigillosa* (45.0 kg) was extracted with refluxing EtOH and then partitioned with CHCl₃.

The CHCl₃ fraction (199.3 g) was chromatographed over various columns and preparative HPTLC to obtain compounds **1** (206 mg), **2** (114 mg), and **3** (116 mg) (see detailed experimental procedures in the Supporting information).

Scutestrigillosin A (**1**)⁸ was obtained as white needles with optical rotation [α]_D²⁹ –24.7° (c 0.79, MeOH), and exhibited a positive response to Dragendoff reagent. In the HR-ESI mass spectrum, **1** gave a positive quasi-molecular ion peak at *m/z* 681.2799 [M + H]⁺, corresponding to a molecular formula C₃₉H₄₀N₂O₉. The IR spectrum showed absorption bands at 1753, 1638, 1599, 1560, 1489, 1423, 1390, 1285, 1221 and 1105 cm^{–1}, which were in agreement with carbonyl, conjugated carbonyl, aromatic and γ-lactone groups. In the ¹H NMR spectrum, the following signals were observed: four tertiary methyl groups [δ _H 1.43 (3H, s, H-17); 1.60 (3H, s, H-18); 1.50 (3H, s, H-19); 1.28 (3H, s, H-20)], two nicotinic acid ester moieties [δ _H 9.29 (1H, br s, H-3'), 8.89 (1H, br s, H-5'), 7.55 (1H, dd, *J* = 4.8, 7.8 Hz, H-6'), 8.37 (1H, br d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, H-7'); 8.99 (1H, br s, H-3''), 8.71 (1H, br s, H-5''), 7.31 (1H, overlap, H-6''), 8.06 (1H, br d, *J* = 8.0 Hz, H-7'')], a benzyloxy moiety [δ _H 7.77 (2H, d, *J* = 7.3 Hz, H-3''' and H-7'''), 7.30 (2H, overlap, H-4''' and H-6'''), 7.47 (t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, H-5''')], a tri-substituted double bond unit (δ _H 5.36, 1H, br s, H-3) and an oxygenated methylene group [δ _H 4.35 (1H, d, *J* = 9.5 Hz, Ha-16), 4.50 (1H, d, *J* = 9.5 Hz, Hb-16)]. The ¹³C NMR displayed 39 carbon resonances and the DEPT spectrum was consistent with the presence of four methyls, five methylenes (sp³ hybridized), eighteen methines (fourteen sp² hybridized and four sp³ hybridized), and twelve quaternary carbons (eight sp² hybridized and four sp³ hybridized). Detailed analysis of above 39 carbon signals displayed that 20 carbons were due to one *neo*-clerodane diterpenoid skeleton with a 13-spiro-15,16-γ-lactone moiety,^{1,9,10} 12 carbons to two nicotinoyloxy moieties,

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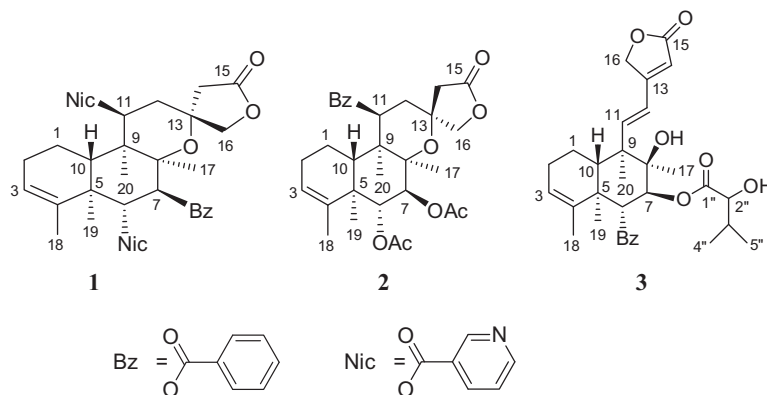


Figure 1. The structures of new *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids from *Scutellaria strigillosa*.

and 7 carbons to a benzoyloxy moiety, respectively. The cross peaks in the HMBC spectrum of H-6/C-1'', H-7/C-1''' and H-11/C-1' confirmed the benzoyloxy group was attached to C-7 and two nicotinoyloxy moieties were attached to C-6 and C-11 (Fig. 2), respectively. The relative configuration of **1** was elucidated by the ^1H – ^1H coupling constant and ROESY spectrum. The large coupling constant (10.2 Hz) of H-6 with H-7 indicated two protons must be in the *trans*-diaxially oriented. In the ROESY spectrum (Fig. 3), cross peaks from H₃-20 to H-7, H-11, H₃-17 and H₃-19, from H-6 to H-10, from H₃-17 to H-7, H-11, H_a-14, H_b-14 and H₃-20, as well as from H-11 to H_a-14, H_b-14, H₃-17 and H₃-20 indicated that H₃-17, H₃-19, H₃-20, H-7, H-11 and H₂-14 were co-facial and α -oriented, while H-6 and H-10 were on the opposite side of the molecular plane and thus β -oriented. Furthermore, the absolute configuration of **1** was determined by the ECD exciton chirality

method. The ECD spectrum of **1** showed the negative first Cotton effect at 240 nm ($\Delta\epsilon$ –5.0) and positive second Cotton effect at 223 nm ($\Delta\epsilon$ +5.6), which were consistent with the absolute configuration 5*R*,6*R*,7*S*,8*R*,9*R*,10*R*,11*S*,13*R*, as was determined for barbaine B.¹¹

Scutestriginosin B (**2**)¹² was isolated as white needles with optical rotation $[\alpha]_D^{29}$ –68.3° (*c* 0.14, MeOH), and the molecular formula was established as C₃₁H₃₈O₉ by HR-ESI mass spectrum, which showed a positive quasi-molecular ion at *m/z* 555.2589 [M+H]⁺. The IR spectrum exhibited absorption bands at 1770, 1731, 1642, 1595, 1466, 1385, 1229 and 1020 cm^{–1}, which were indicative of carbonyl, conjugated carbonyl, aromatic and γ -lactone groups. In the ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra (Table 1), it showed the signals of four tertiary methyl groups and characteristic of one *neo*-clerodane diterpenoid skeleton as in **1**. In addition, a benzoyloxy moiety

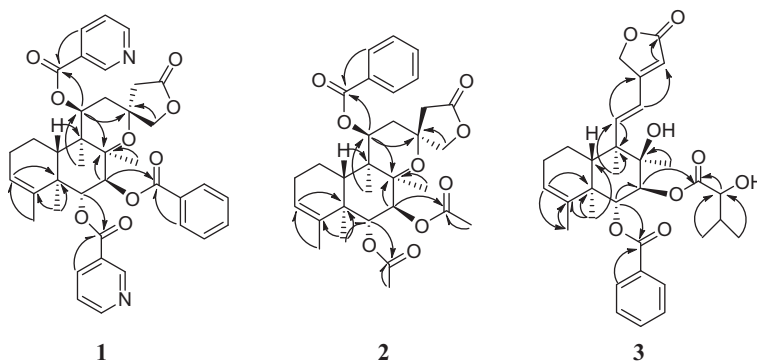


Figure 2. Key HMBC correlations for compounds **1**–**3**.

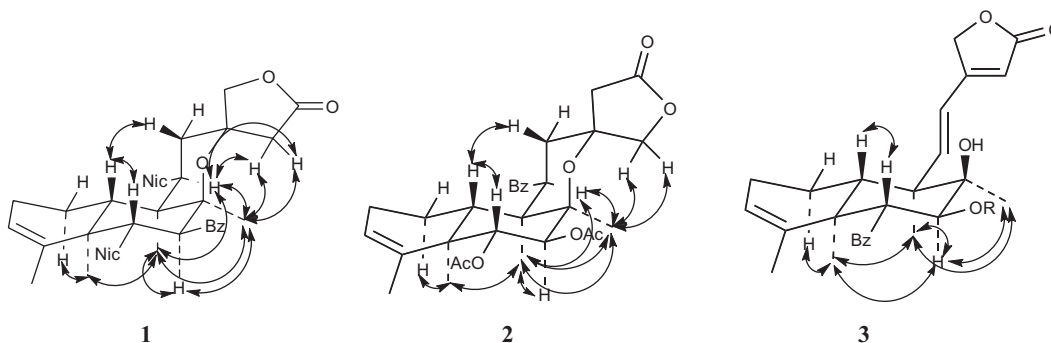


Figure 3. Selected NOE correlations for compounds **1**–**3**.

Table 1
¹H (500 MHz) and ¹³C (125 MHz) NMR data for compounds **1–3** (in CDCl₃)^{a,b}

No.	1		2		3	
	δ_{H}	δ_{C}	δ_{H}	δ_{C}	δ_{H}	δ_{C}
1	1.89 (m, H _a -1) 2.58 (m, H _b -1)	18.2 CH ₂	1.58 (m, H _a -1) 2.07 (overlap, H _b -1)	28.5 CH ₂	1.36 (m, H _a -1) 1.66 (m, H _b -1)	19.3 CH ₂
2	2.21 (m, 2H)	26.1 CH ₂	2.19 (m, H _a -2) 2.69 (m, H _b -2)	33.1 CH ₂	2.06 (m, 2H)	26.2 CH ₂
3	5.36 (br s)	123.6 CH	5.31 (br s)	120.2 CH	5.25 (br s)	123.3 CH
4		140.6 C		143.2 C		140.8 C
5		43.3 C		44.3 C		43.5 C
6	5.76 (d, 10.2)	75.7 CH	5.41 (d, 10.3)	73.2 CH	5.75 (d, 10.0)	75.5 CH
7	5.65 (d, 10.2)	74.7 CH	5.26 (d, 10.3)	74.1 CH	5.56 (d, 10.0)	76.7 CH
8		83.6 C		80.9 C		77.0 C
9		43.7 C		38.7 C		48.4 C
10	2.63 (br d, 11.0)	40.3 CH	2.71 (br d, 11.9)	43.2 CH	2.36 (br d, 10.5)	42.7 CH
11	5.72 (dd, 4.0, 12.9)	75.0 CH	5.78 (m)	70.9 CH	6.41 (d, 16.8)	146.7 CH
12	2.16 (overlap, H _a -12) 2.28 (overlap, H _b -12)	35.1 CH ₂	1.71 (m, H _a -12) 2.10 (overlap, H _b -12)	29.4 CH ₂	6.46 (d, 16.8)	122.0 CH
13		77.6 C		76.5 C		162.1 C
14	2.84 (d, 17.0, H _a -14) 2.86 (d, 17.0, H _b -14)	42.8 CH ₂	2.58 (d, 17.4, H _a -14) 3.12 (d, 17.4, H _b -14)	44.3 CH ₂	5.96 (br s)	115.0 CH
15		172.9 C		173.7 C		174.1 C
16	4.35 (d, 9.5, H _a -16) 4.50 (d, 9.5, H _b -16)	79.1 CH ₂	4.12 (d, 8.7, H _a -16) 4.18 (d, 8.7, H _b -16)	77.3 CH ₂	5.02 (br d, 16.4, H _a -16) 5.04 (br d, 16.4, H _b -16)	70.6 CH ₂
17	1.43 (s, 3H)	19.7 CH ₃	1.13 (s, 3H)	19.6 CH ₃	1.05 (s, 3H)	22.5 CH ₃
18	1.60 (s, 3H)	20.5 CH ₃	1.68 (s, 3H)	20.0 CH ₃	1.58 (s, 3H)	20.2 CH ₃
19	1.50 (s, 3H)	17.3 CH ₃	1.37 (s, 3H)	16.7 CH ₃	1.45 (s, 3H)	17.5 CH ₃
20	1.28 (s, 3H)	16.9 CH ₃	1.09 (s, 3H)	21.1 CH ₃	1.25 (s, 3H)	15.4 CH ₃
1'		164.8 C		165.6 C		166.5 C
2'		125.3 C		130.1 C		129.9 C
3'	9.29 (br s)	150.3 CH	7.95 (d, 8.2)	129.5 CH	8.03 (dd, 1.2, 9.0)	129.7 CH
4'			7.47 (t, 8.0)	128.7 CH	7.47 (br t, 9.0)	128.6 CH
5'	8.89 (br s)	152.2 CH	7.59 (t, 7.5)	133.4 CH	7.60 (br t, 9.0)	133.5 CH
6'	7.55 (dd, 4.8, 7.8)	123.9 CH	7.47 (t, 8.0)	128.7 CH	7.47 (br t, 9.0)	128.6 CH
7'	8.37 (br d, 8.0)	138.0 CH	7.95 (d, 8.2)	129.5 CH	8.03 (dd, 1.2, 9.0)	129.7 CH
1''		163.8 C		169.8 C		173.6
2''		125.7 C	2.01 (s, 3H)	21.5 CH ₃	3.78 (d, 5.1)	75.7
3''	8.99 (br s)	149.6 CH			1.93 (m)	31.7
4''					0.71 (3H, d, 6.0)	16.0
5''	8.71 (br s)	153.5 CH			0.81 (3H, d, 6.0)	19.0
6''	7.31 (overlap)	123.7 CH				
7''	8.06 (br d, 8.0)	138.1 CH				
1'''		166.3 C		170.9 C		
2'''		128.6 C	2.09 (s, 3H)	20.8 CH ₃		
3'''	7.77 (d, 7.3)	129.8 CH				
4'''	7.30 (overlap)	128.4 CH				
5'''	7.47 (t, 7.5)	133.5 CH				
6'''	7.30 (overlap)	128.4 CH				
7'''	7.77 (d, 7.3)	129.8 CH				

^a Chemical shift values were in ppm and *J* values (in Hz) were presented in parentheses.

^b The assignments were based on HSQC, HMBC and ¹H–¹H COSY experiments.

[δ_{H} 7.95 (2H, d, *J* = 8.2 Hz, H-3' and H-7'), 7.47 (2H, t, *J* = 8.0 Hz, H-4' and H-6'), 7.59 (1H, t, *J* = 7.5 Hz, H-5'); δ_{C} 165.6, C-1'; 130.1, C-2'; 129.5, C-3' and C-7'; 128.7, C-4' and C-6'; 133.4, C-5'] and two acetoxy groups [δ_{H} 2.01 (3H, s), 2.09 (3H, s); δ_{C} 169.8, 21.5; 170.9, 20.8] were observed. The long-range correlations in the HMBC experiment of H-11/C-1', H-6/C-1'' and H-7 to C-1''' proved that the benzoyloxy group was linked to C-11, and two acetoxy moieties were connected to C-6 and C-7, respectively. However, the proton signals arising from CH₂-14 and CH₂-16 [δ_{H} 2.58 (1H, d, *J* = 17.4 Hz, H_a-14), 3.12 (1H, d, *J* = 17.4 Hz, H_b-14); 4.12 (1H, d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, H_a-16), 4.18 (1H, d, *J* = 8.7 Hz, H_b-16)] were significantly different from those of **1** [δ_{H} 2.84 (1H, d, *J* = 17.0 Hz, H_a-14), 2.86 (1H, d, *J* = 17.0 Hz, H_b-14); 4.35 (1H, d, *J* = 9.5 Hz, H_a-16), 4.50 (1H, d, *J* = 9.5 Hz, H_b-16)]. The marked differences in their NMR data could be interpreted by their configurations in Figure 3. In the case of the configuration of **1**, in which C-16 was in an equatorial disposition, the chemical shifts of two protons of C-16 were significantly different, whereas for **2** (C-16 was in an axial) the chemical shifts of corresponding protons were not remarkably dif-

ferent. Moreover, in the ROESY experiment, NOE enhancements from H₃-20 to H-7, H-11, H₃-17 and H₃-19, from H-6 to H-10, from H₃-17 to H-7, H_a-16, H_b-16 and H₃-20, as well as from H-11 to H₃-19 and H₃-20 established that H₃-17, H₃-19, H₃-20, H-7, H-11 and H₂-16 were on the same face and α -oriented whilst H-6 and H-10 were on the opposite face and thus β -configuration. Thus, the configuration of the C-13 chiral center of **2** was inverted in comparison with that of **1** and determined to be *S*. Additionally, the ECD spectrum of **2** showed a positive Cotton effect at 224 ($\Delta\epsilon$ +3.7) nm and two negative effects at 247 ($\Delta\epsilon$ -7.3) and 205 ($\Delta\epsilon$ -7.6) nm. Taken together, the absolute configuration of **2** was assigned as 5*R*,6*R*,7*S*,8*R*,9*R*,10*R*,11*S*,13*S*.¹¹

Scutestriginol C (**3**)¹³ was isolated and purified as white needles with optical rotation [α_{D}^{29} -96.7° (*c* 0.13, MeOH). The molecular formula was established as C₃₂H₄₀O₈ by HR-ESI mass spectrum, which displayed a positive quasi-molecular ion at *m/z* 553.2785 [M+H]⁺. The IR spectrum showed absorption bands at 3480, 1741, 1644, 1453, 1376, 1270, 1110 and 1033 cm⁻¹, indicating the presence of hydroxy, conjugated carbonyl, aromatic and α ,

Table 2
Cytotoxicity^a of compounds **1–3** against cultured four tumor cell lines

Compound	Growth inhibition constant (IC ₅₀) ^a (μM)			
	P-388	HONE-1	HT-29	MCF7
Etoposide ^b	1.3 ± 0.9	1.2 ± 0.7	2.0 ± 0.8	2.2 ± 1.0
Cisplatin ^b	1.4 ± 1.0	1.2 ± 1.1	2.3 ± 0.9	2.1 ± 1.1
1	5.8 ± 1.3	3.5 ± 1.9	4.7 ± 2.0	5.7 ± 1.8
2	5.2 ± 1.2	4.2 ± 1.5	4.1 ± 1.7	6.0 ± 1.5
3	7.1 ± 1.6	3.9 ± 1.1	6.4 ± 1.2	7.7 ± 2.1

^a IC₅₀ is means ± standard deviation of three independent replicates.

^b Positive control substance.

β-unsaturated γ-lactone groups. The ¹H NMR spectrum of **3** revealed the presence of the following fragments: four tertiary methyl groups at δ_H 1.05 (3H, s, H-17), 1.58 (3H, s, H-18), 1.45 (3H, s, H-19) and 1.25 (3H, s, H-20); an α,β-unsaturated γ-lactone moiety at δ_H 5.96 (1H, br s, H-14), 5.02 (1H, br d, *J* = 16.4 Hz, H_a-16) and 5.04 (1H, br d, *J* = 16.4, H_b-16); a double bond with *E* configuration at δ_H 6.41 (1H, d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, H-11) and 6.46 (1H, d, *J* = 16.8 Hz, H-12); a tri-substituted double bond unit at δ_H 5.25 (1H, br s, H-3); a benzyloxy moiety at δ_H 8.03 (2H, dd, *J* = 1.2, 9.0 Hz, H-3' and H-7'), 7.47 (2H, br t, *J* = 9.0 Hz, H-4' and H-6'), 7.60 (1H, br t, *J* = 9.0 Hz, H-5'); and a 2-hydroxy-3-methylbutanoyloxy function at δ_H 3.78 (1H, d, *J* = 5.1 Hz, H-2''), 1.93 (1H, m, H-3''), 0.71 (3H, d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, H-4'') and 0.81 (3H, d, *J* = 6.0 Hz, H-5''). The ¹³C NMR and DEPT spectra gave 32 carbon resonances, including six methyls, three methylenes (sp³ hybridized), fourteen methines (nine sp² hybridized and five sp³ hybridized), and nine quaternary carbons (six sp² hybridized and three sp³ hybridized). Careful analysis of above 32 carbon signals revealed that 20 carbons were attributable to a *neo*-clerodane diterpenoid skeleton,^{1,9,10} 5 carbons to a 2-hydroxy-3-methylbutanoyloxy group, and 7 carbons to a benzyloxy moiety, respectively. The cross peaks in the HMBC spectrum of H-7/C-1' and H-6/C-1'' proved the benzyloxy and 2-hydroxy-3-methylbutanoyloxy moieties were attached to C-6 and C-7, respectively. The relative stereochemical assignments of the stereogenic centers in **3** were accomplished by analyses of the ¹H–¹H coupling constants and ROESY spectrum. The coupling constants between H-10 and H₂-1, as well as H-6 and H-7 were observed to be 10.5 Hz and 10.0 Hz, respectively, this confirmed H-10, H-6 and H-7 must be in the axial position. The NOE correlations from H-6 to H-10, H₃-20 to H-7, H₃-17 and H₃-19, as well as from H-7 to H₃-17, H₃-19 and H₃-20 indicated that H₃-17, H₃-19, H₃-20 and H-7 were on the same side of the octalin ring and α-oriented whilst H-6 and H-10 were on the opposite side of the octalin ring and thus β-oriented. Furthermore, the ECD spectrum of **3** exhibited Cotton effects at 263 (Δε –2.9), 223 (Δε –5.9) and 210 (Δε –5.2) nm similar to those of *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids with the same skeletons, which were reported in literature.¹⁴ Accordingly, the absolute configuration of **3** was assigned as 5*R*,6*R*,7*S*,8*R*,9*R*,10*S*.

Compounds **1–3** were evaluated for their cytotoxic activities against HONE-1, P-388, MCF7 and HT29 tumor cell lines by using

MTT assay performed as previously reported¹⁵ and anti-cancer drugs, etoposide and cisplatin,^{16,17} as positive controls. The IC₅₀ values resulting from 50% inhibition of cell growth were shown in Table 2. Based on the results, it is found three new *neo*-clerodane diterpenoids exhibited significant cytotoxicity.

Acknowledgements

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Supplementary data

Supplementary data associated with this article can be found, in the online version, at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.bmcl.2016.02.045>.

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- Scutestrillosin A (1)*: White needles; mp 153–154 °C; [α]_D²⁵ –24.7° (c 0.79, MeOH); UV (CHCl₃) λ_{max} 222, 263 nm; ECD (MeOH) λ_{max} (Δε) 223 (+5.6), 240 (–5.0) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} 2930, 1753, 1638, 1599, 1560, 1489, 1423, 1390, 1285, 1221 and 1105 cm^{–1}; ESIMS *m/z* 681.3 [M+H]⁺; HR-ESIMS *m/z* 681.2799 [M+H]⁺ (calcd for C₃₉H₄₁N₂O₉, 681.2810); ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1.
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- Scutestrillosin B (2)*: White needles; mp 157–158 °C; [α]_D²⁵ –68.3° (c 0.14, MeOH); UV (CHCl₃) λ_{max} 222, 257 nm; ECD (MeOH) λ_{max} (Δε) 205 (–7.6), 224 (+3.7), 247 (–7.3) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} 1770, 1731, 1642, 1595, 1466, 1385, 1229 and 1020 cm^{–1}; ESIMS *m/z* 555.4 [M+H]⁺; HR-ESIMS *m/z* 555.2589 [M+H]⁺ (calcd for C₃₁H₃₉O₉, 555.2592); ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1.
- Scutestrillosin C (3)*: White needles; mp 156–157 °C; [α]_D²⁵ –96.7° (c 0.13, MeOH); UV (CHCl₃) λ_{max} 258 nm; ECD (MeOH) λ_{max} (Δε) 210 (–5.2), 223 (–5.9), 263 (–2.9) nm; IR (KBr) ν_{max} 3480, 2970, 1741, 1644, 1453, 1376, 1270, 1110, 1033 and 712 cm^{–1}; ESIMS *m/z* 553.2 [M+H]⁺; HR-ESIMS *m/z* 553.2785 [M+H]⁺ (calcd for C₃₂H₄₁O₈, 553.2801); ¹H and ¹³C NMR data, see Table 1.
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