

E2-26 A new aromatic polyether compound from the coconut lichen *Ramalina farinacea*

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Lichens are ubiquitous and occur in diverse habitats. In Sri Lanka, these are widespread, mostly in wet, cool regions and to a lesser degree in the dry zone. There is a great paucity of research on the lichens of Sri Lanka, both botanically and chemically. Lichens however, produce a variety of biologically active compounds suggesting that they might function in the chemical defence against pathogens.

The present work describes the chemical investigation of *Ramalina farinacea* growing on the main trunk of coconut trees in the Kurunegala district. The lichen is ash-green in colour. It is an erect thallus (foliose type) and is easily removable.

Medium pressure liquid chromatography of the methanol extract of the dried lichen, with a solvent gradient ranging from CH₂Cl₂ to 12% MeOH in CH₂Cl₂ yielded compound I and methyl-2, 4-dihydroxy-6-methyl-benzoate (II). The compounds were characterised by detailed analysis of ¹H NMR, COSY, HMBC and HMQC and Electron Ionization Mass Spectroscopy. Compound II which appears to be a biosynthetic precursor of compound I, displayed antifungal activity against *Cladosporium cladosporioides* in the TLC bioassay technique.

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