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### **Supporting Information**

# Design and synthesis of novel monoterpenoidindole alkaloids-like analogues and their antitumour activities *in vitro*

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#### The preparation of genipin (G)

Genipin (**G**) was obtained by the enzymatic hydrolysis (emulsin) of geniposide that was isolated from *Gardenia jasminoides* Ellis. **G** was unsteady in aqueous solution and could be isomerized to form a couple of epimers<sup>[1]</sup> that can be observed by the NMR. These two epimers were unable to be separated by conventional methods.

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz) for **G** δ (ppm): 7.53 (d, J = 0.8 Hz, 1H), 5.88 (d, J = 0.8 Hz, 1H), 4.80 (d, J = 7.2 Hz, 1H), 4.33 (d, J = 13.2 Hz, 1H), 4.28 (d, J = 13.2 Hz, 1H), 3.74 (s, 3H), 3.21 (m, 1H), 2.88 (m, 1H), 2.53 (ddd, J = 8.2, 8.2, 1.6 Hz, 1H), 2.06 (m, 1H); <sup>13</sup>C-NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 100 MHz) for **G** δ (ppm): 168.0, 152.6, 142.0, 130.9, 110.7, 96.3, 61.2, 51.3, 48.1, 39.0, 36.7. ESI-MS m/z: 249.1 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>.

#### The preparation of G<sub>1</sub>

According to the reported procedure<sup>[2]</sup>, several drops of HCl were added to the solution of **G** (500 mg) in methanol (or ethanol), and stirred at  $60^{\circ}$ C for 6 h. The solution was treated with NaHCO<sub>3</sub>, then extracted three times with EtOAc, the combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure. The residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography eluting with a gradient of petroleum ether and EtOAc (1:1) to afford **G**<sub>1</sub>. When R<sup>1</sup> was CH<sub>3</sub>, **G**<sub>1-1</sub> was obtained (the ESI-MS m/z: 263.0 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>), when R<sup>1</sup> was CH<sub>3</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>, **G**<sub>1-2</sub> was obtained (ESI-MS m/z: 277.1 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>).

#### The preparation of $G_{6a}$ and $G_{6b}$

Dess-Martin periodinane (DMP, 883 mg, 2.08 mmol) was added to the solution of  $G_{1-1}$  (500 mg, 2.08 mmol) in the dry dichloromethane, stirred at room temperature for 1h. The saturated solutions of NaHCO<sub>3</sub> and Na<sub>2</sub>S<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> were added progressively to the

mixture, then extracted three times with dichloromethane, after distillation of the dichloromethane, the residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc = 8:1) to give  $G_{6a-1}$  and  $G_{6b-1}$ .  $G_{6a-2}$  and  $G_{6b-2}$  can be prepared in the same way. Intermediates  $G_{6a}$  and  $G_{6b}$  were a pair of epimer that were able to be separated by silica gel column chromatography.

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz) for  $\mathbf{G_{6a-1}}$  δ (ppm): 9.77 (s, 1H), 7.47 (d, J=1.0 Hz, 1H), 6.98 (d, J=1.7 Hz, 1H), 5.29 (d, J=4.1 Hz, 1H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 3.48 (s, 3H), 3.34 (ddd, J=7.8, 4.1, 1.0 Hz, 1H), 3.29 (dt, J=3.9, 2.0 Hz, 1H), 3.01 (m, 1H), 2.57 (dddd, J=19.5, 4.4, 2.8, 1.8 Hz, 1H). When R<sup>1</sup> was CH<sub>3</sub>,  $\mathbf{G_{6a-1}}$  was obtained (ESI-MS m/z: 261.1 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>). When R<sup>1</sup> was CH<sub>3</sub>CH<sub>2</sub>,  $\mathbf{G_{6a-2}}$  was obtained (ESI-MS m/z: 275.0 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>);  $\mathbf{G_{6b-2}}$  was obtained (ESI-MS m/z: 275.0 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>).

#### The preparation of $G_{1a}$ and $G_{1b}$

 $G_{6a-2}$  (546 mg, 2.16 mmol) was dissolved in MeOH, then NaBH<sub>4</sub> (90 mg, 2.38 mmol) was added to the solution and stirred at room temperature for 30 minutes, then extracted three times with EtOAc, the combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure. The residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether: EtOAc = 4:1) to give  $G_{1a-2}$ . And other intermediates  $G_{1a-1}$ ,  $G_{1b-1}$  and  $G_{1b-2}$  can be got in the same way.

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz) for **G**<sub>1a-2</sub> δ (ppm): 7.52 (s, 1H), 5.84 (s, 1H), 4.55 (d, J = 8.4 Hz, 1H), 4.26 (s, 2H), 4.14 (m, 1H), 3.73 (s, 3H), 3.64 (m, 1H), 3.22 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 3.18 (d, J = 8.6 Hz, 1H), 2.88 (m, 1H), 2.68 (br s, 1H), 2.59 (t, J = 8.2 Hz, 1H), 2.07 (m, 1H), 1.80 (t, J = 6.8 Hz, 3H). ESI-MS m/z: 277.1 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR (CDCl<sub>3</sub>, 400 MHz) for  $G_{1b-2}\delta$  (ppm): 7.46 (s, 1H), 5.76 (s, 1H), 5.11 (d, J = 2.8 Hz, 1H), 4.26 (d, J = 13.2 Hz, 1H), 4.18 (d, J = 13.2 Hz, 1H), 3.88 (m, 1H), 3.72(s, 1H), 3.57 (s, 1H), 3.15 (m, 2H), 2.75 (m, 1H), 2.36 (br s, 1H), 2.25 (m, 1H), 1.21 (t, J = 7.0 Hz, 3H); ESI-MS m/z: 277.1 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>.

#### The preparation of $G_2$

**G** (501 mg, 2.21 mmol), imidazole (301 mg, 4.43 mmol) were added into a flask in dry THF under the condition of ice-bath, the solution of TBS-Cl in dry THF was injected slowly into the mixture, then stirred at room temperature, monitored by TLC. The residue was obtained after distillation under reduced pressure, then purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc = 10:1) to give  $G_{2m}$  (ESI-MS m/z: 363.2 [M + Na]+). Dess-Martin periodinane (451 mg, 1.06 mmol) was added to the solution of  $G_{2m}$  (181 mg, 0.532 mmol) in dry dichloromethane, stirred at room temperature, monitored by  $TLC^{[6]}$ . The saturated solution of  $Na_2S_2O_3$  was added progressively to the mixture, then extracted three times with diethyl ether, the combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure. The residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc = 10:1) to offer  $G_2$  (ESI-MS m/z: 361.1 [M + Na]<sup>+</sup>).

#### The preparation of G<sub>3</sub>

 $G_{1a-1}$  (200 mg, 0.832 mmol) and  $Ph_3P$  (251 mg, 0.957 mmol) were added into a flask in dry dichloromethane, the solution of  $CBr_4$  (317 mg, 0.957 mmol) in dry dichloromethane<sup>[3]</sup> was injected into the flask and stirred at room temperature under  $N_2$  atmosphere, monitored by TLC. The residue was obtained after distillation under reduced pressure, then purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc = 10:1) to give  $G_3$ .

#### The preparation of G<sub>4</sub>

 $G_{1a-1}$  (50 mg, 0.222 mmol) and triethylamine (37  $\mu$ L, 0.266 mmol) were added into a flask in dry THF, and acrylylchloride (18  $\mu$ L, 0.224 mmol) was added and stirred at room temperature for 4h<sup>[4]</sup>. Then extracted three times with EtOAc, the combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure. The residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc = 4:1) to offer  $G_4$ .

**G**<sub>4</sub>: ESI-MS m/z: 317.0 [M +Na]<sup>+</sup>.

#### The preparation of G<sub>5</sub>

 $G_{1a-1}$  (140 mg, 0.588 mmol), phthalimide (111 mg, 0.756 mmol), Ph<sub>3</sub>P (196 mg, 0.756 mmol) were added into a flask in dry THF. Diisopropyl azodiformate (153 $\mu$ L, 1.164 mmol) was injected into the solution and stirred at room temperature for 1h<sup>[51]</sup>, then extracted three times with EtOAc, the combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure. The residue was purified by silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc = 8:1) to give  $G_{5m}$ . 80% hydrazinehydrate (127  $\mu$ L) was added to the solution of  $G_{5m}$  (130 mg, 0.548 mmol) in EtOH and stirred overnight. After filtration and distillation under reduced pressure, the residue was purified with preparative TLC (EtOAc:MeOH:Et<sub>2</sub>NH = 60:5:1) to provide  $G_{5-1}$  (ESI-MS m/z: 240.1 [M + H]<sup>+</sup>).  $G_{5-2}$  can be obtained in the same way by using  $G_{1a-2}$ .

#### The preparation of G<sub>7a</sub>

The aqueous solution of NaOH (1.5 mL, 1M) was added to the solution of  $G_{1a-2}$  (30 mg) in THF, stirred at room temperature for 24 h. The pH of the solution was adjusted to around 5 by progressively adding 10% HCl, then extracted three times with ethyl

acetate. The combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure. The residue was purified with silica gel column chromatography (petroleum ether:EtOAc AcOH = 100:50:3) to give  $G_{7a}$ .

#### The preparation of $M_{14}$

Thionyl chloride (180  $\mu$ L, 0.297 mmol) was added dropwisely to the solution of tryptophan (200 mg, 0.979 mmol) in dry MeOH under the condition of ice-bath, then heated to reflux, monitored by TLC.  $\mathbf{M}_{14}$  was obtained after distillation under reduced pressure ( $\mathbf{M}_{14}$ : ESI-MS m/z: 219.1 [M + H]<sup>+</sup>).

### The preparation of $M_{15}$

NaBH<sub>4</sub> (600 mg, 15.9 mmol) was added gradually to the solution of  $\mathbf{M}_{14}$  (300 mg, 1.18 mmol) in EtOH/H<sub>2</sub>O (V/V = 1:1), stirred at room temperature for 11h, then extracted three times with CHCl<sub>3</sub>. The combined organic phases were evaporated at reduced pressure to give  $\mathbf{M}_{15}$  (ESI-MS m/z: 189.1 [M - H]<sup>-</sup>)

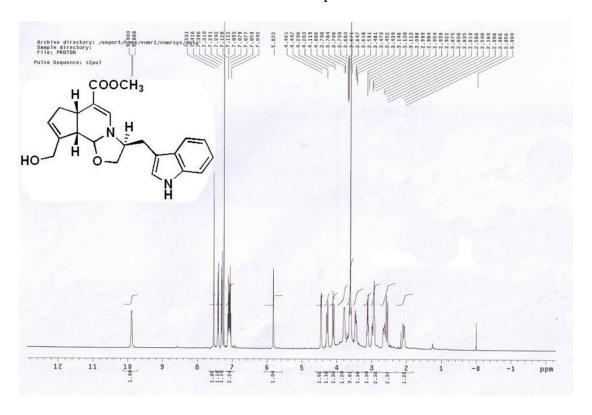
Scheme 1. Synthesis routes of intermediates.

### **References**

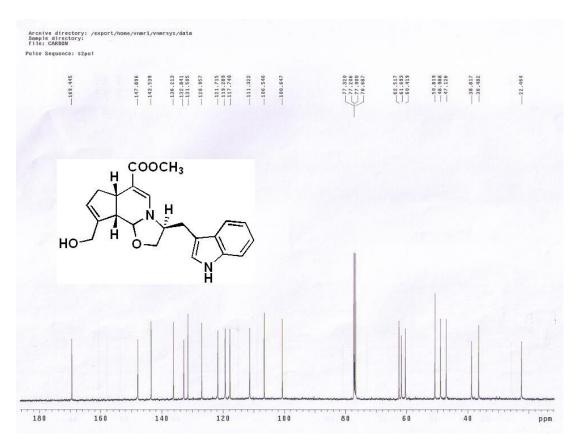
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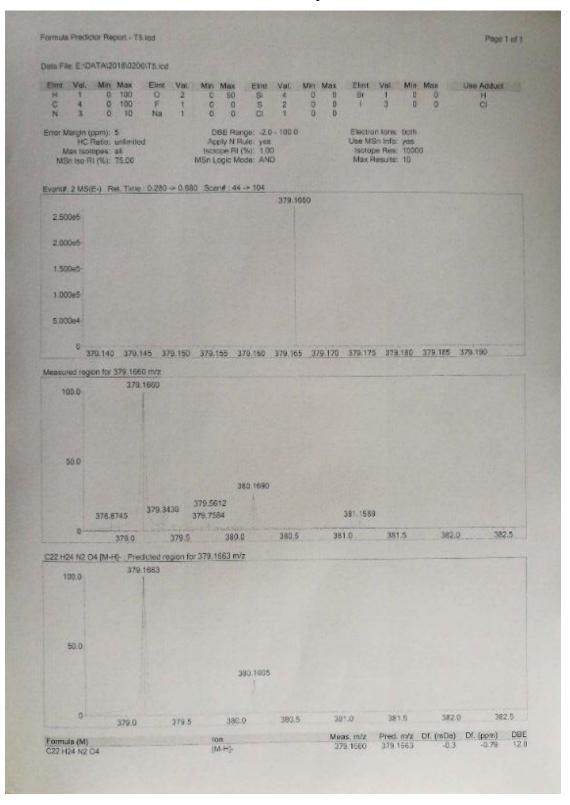
# <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>13</sup>C-NMR, and HR-MS spectra for compounds 1–34.

<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **1** 

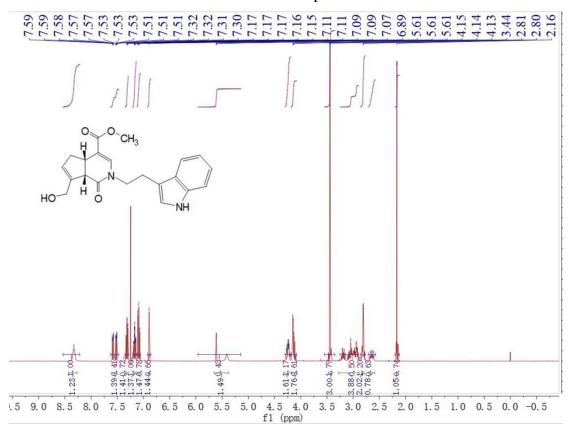


<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **1** 

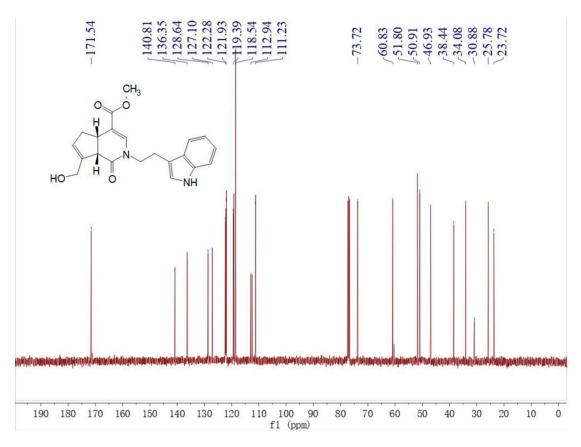


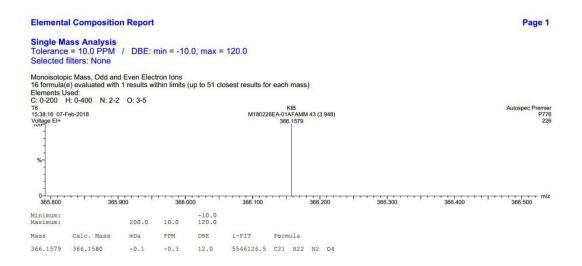


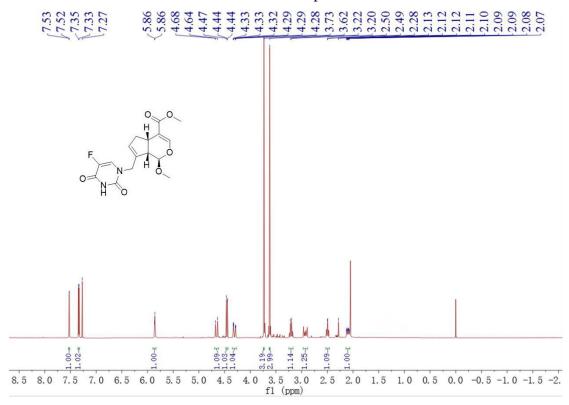
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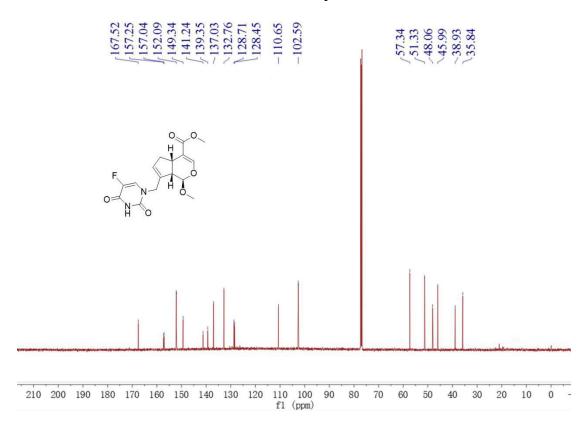


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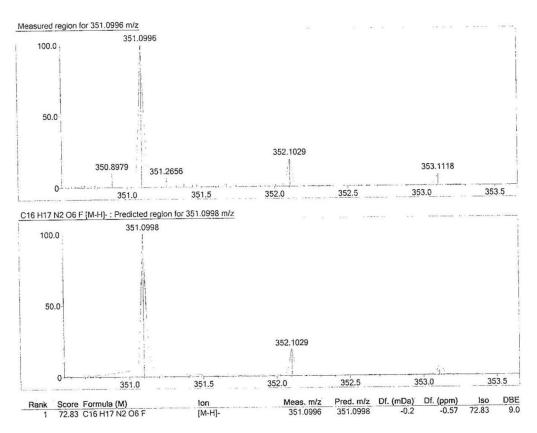






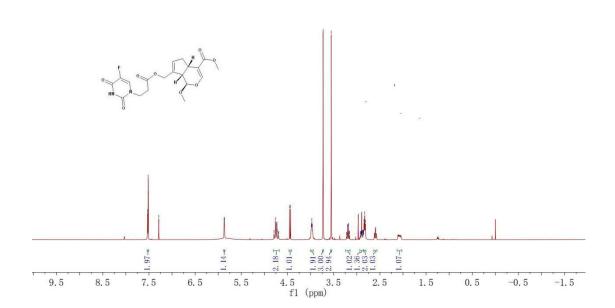


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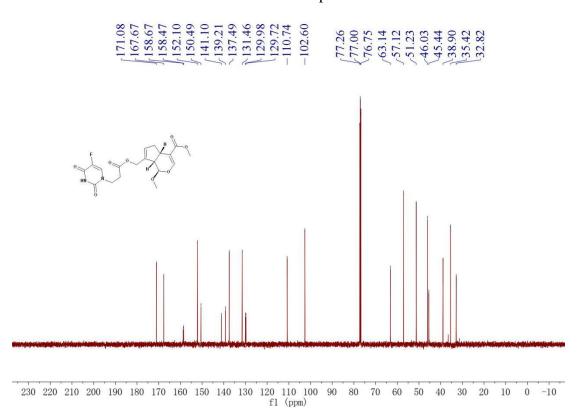


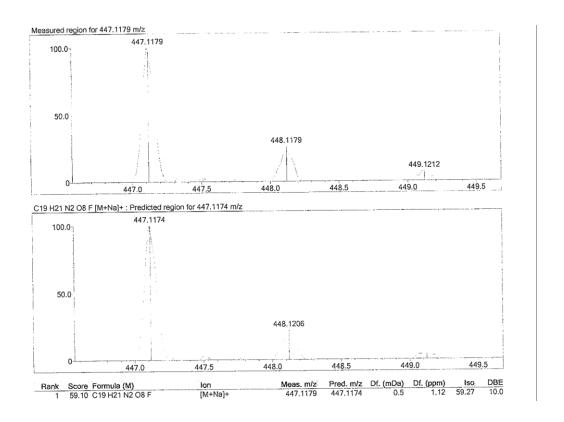
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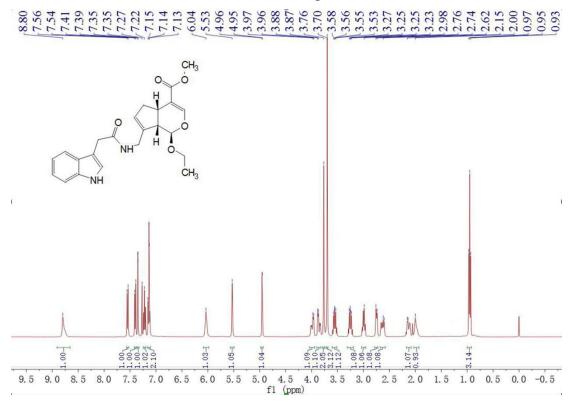


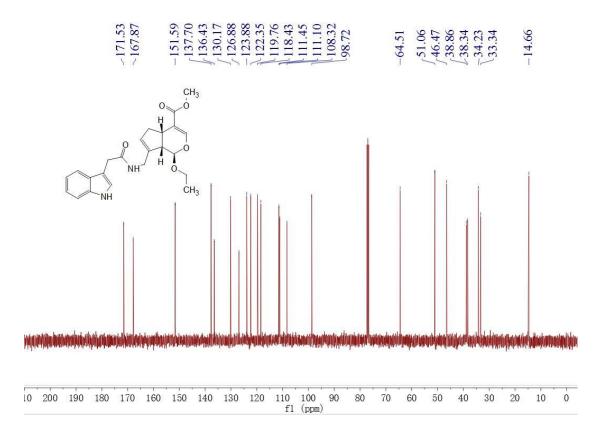


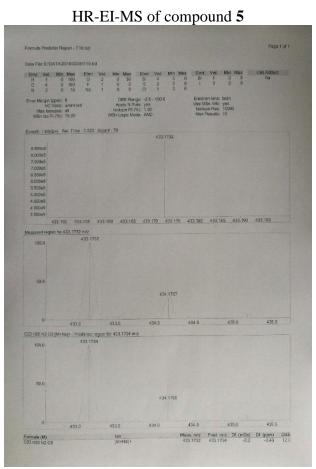
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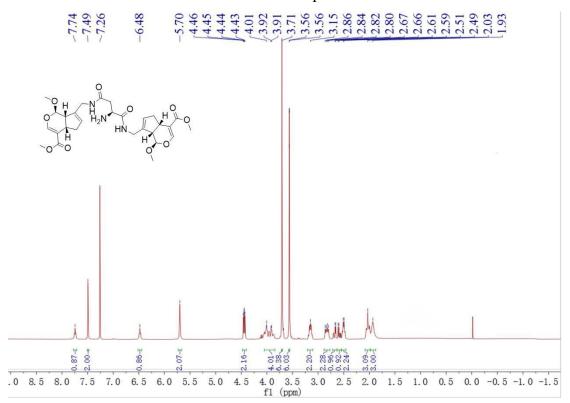


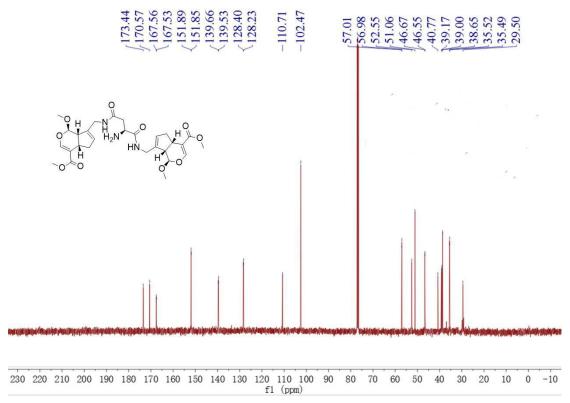


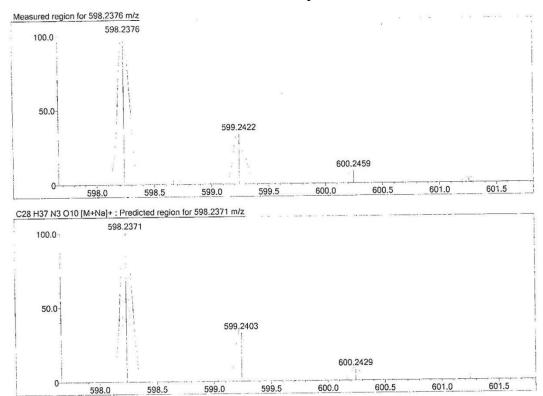












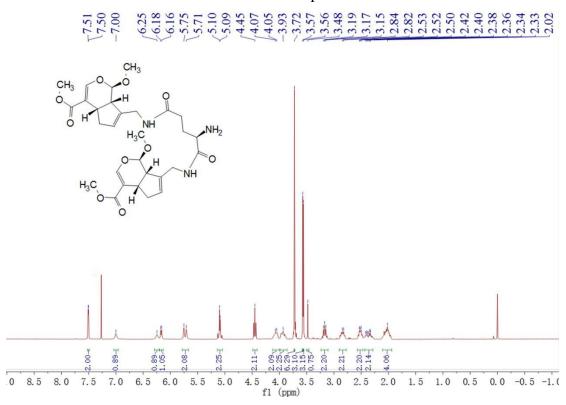
# <sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **7**

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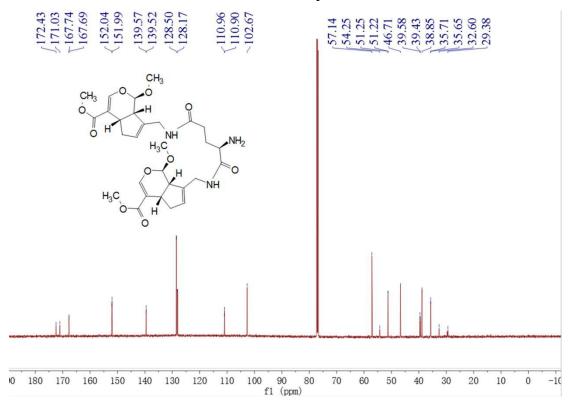
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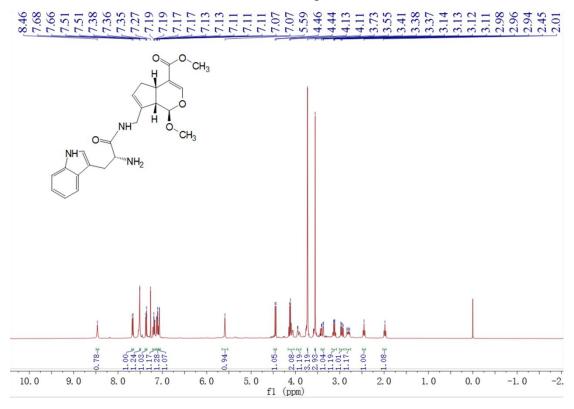
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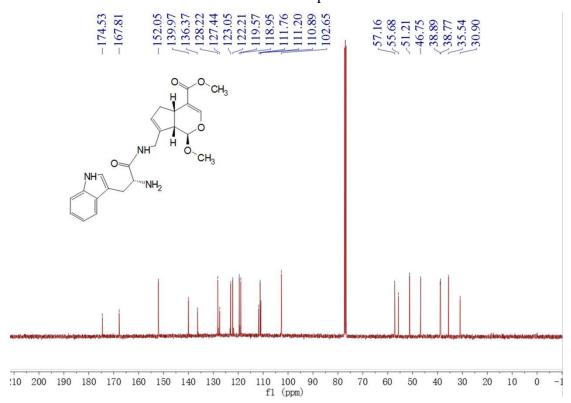


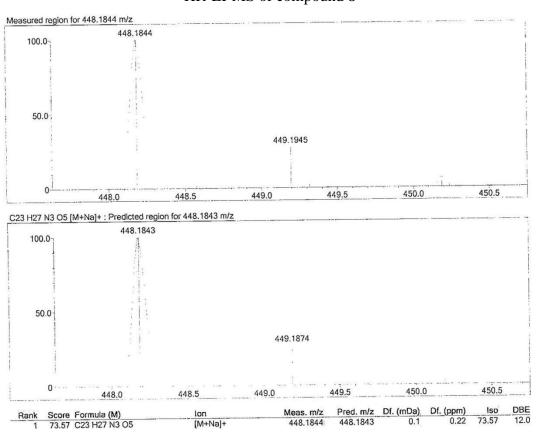
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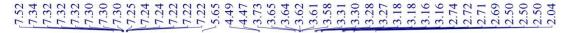
<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **8** 

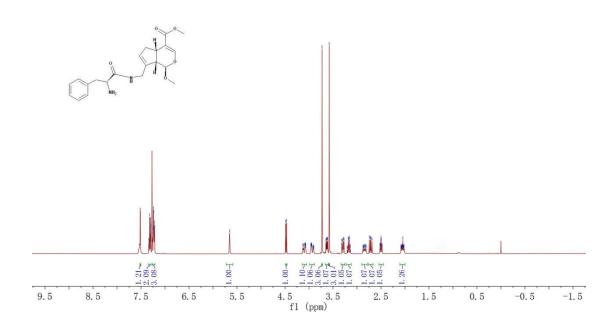




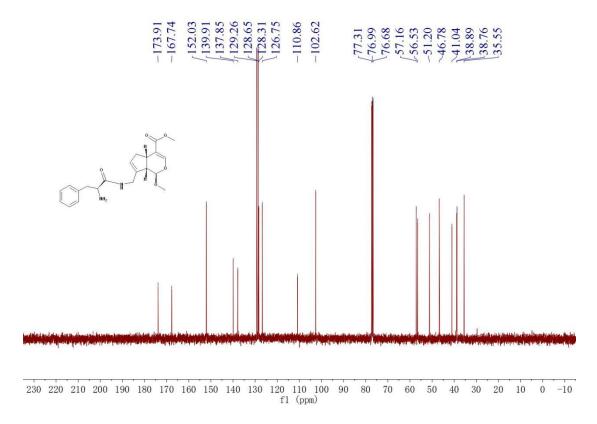


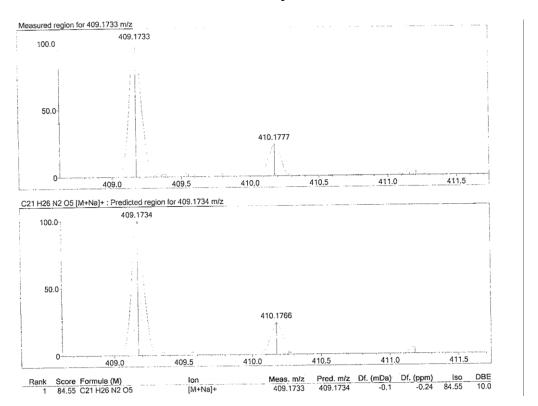
<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **9** 

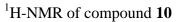


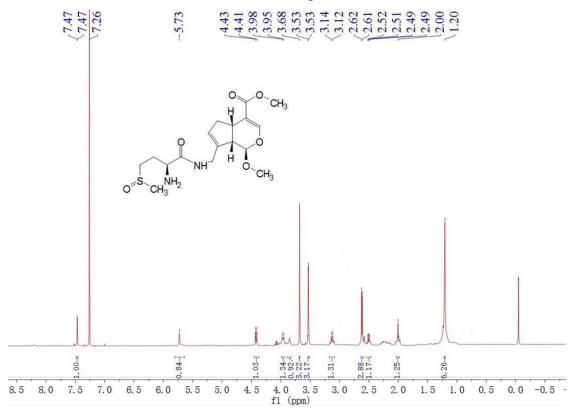


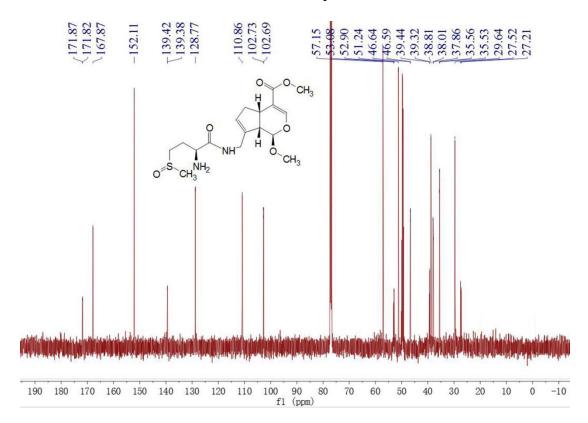
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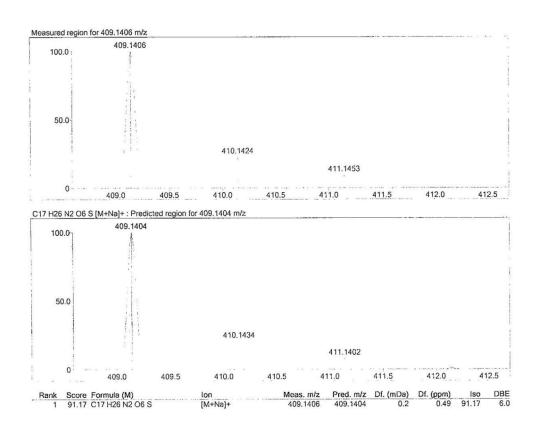


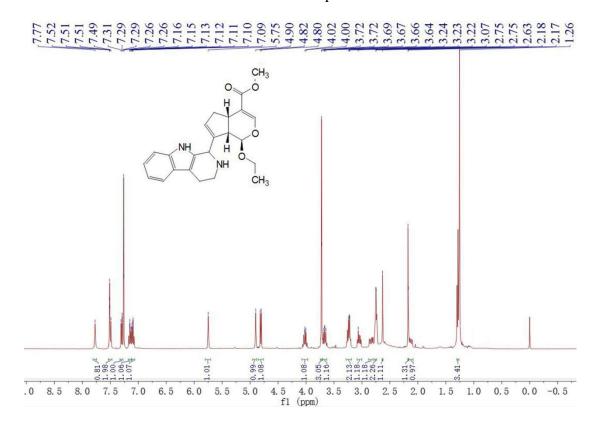


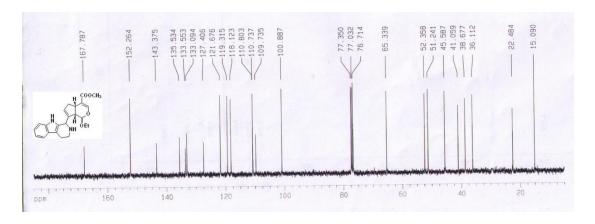




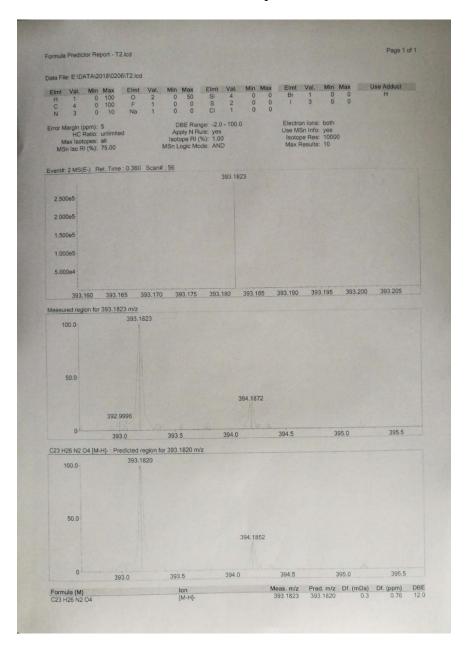
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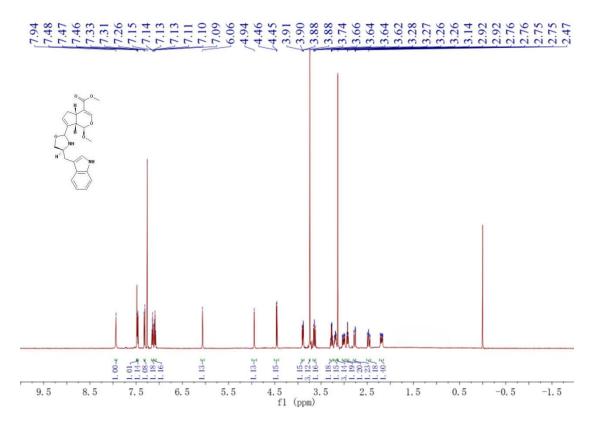




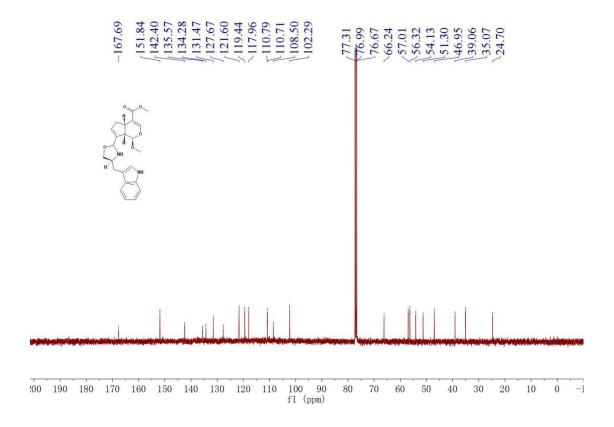
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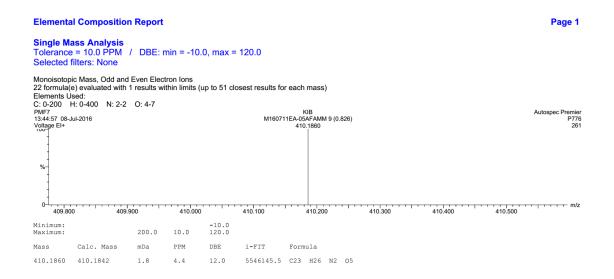


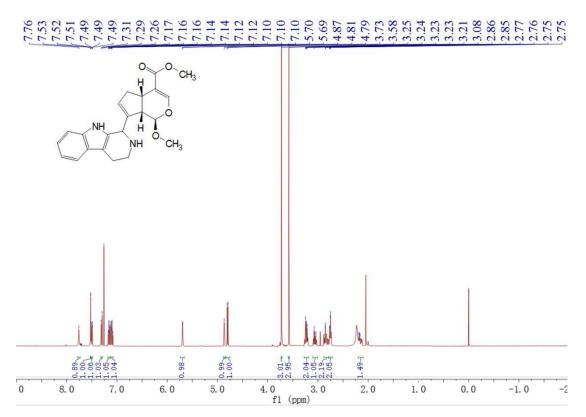
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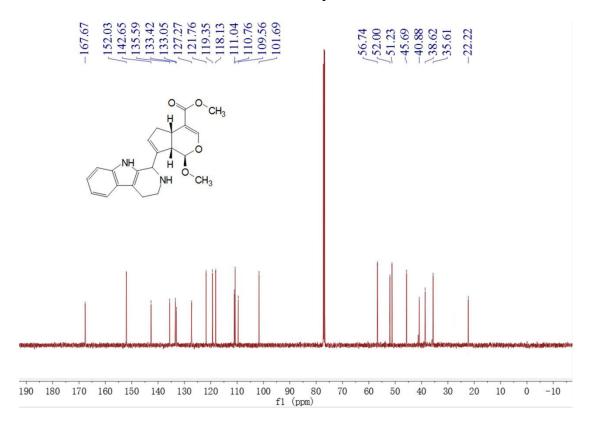


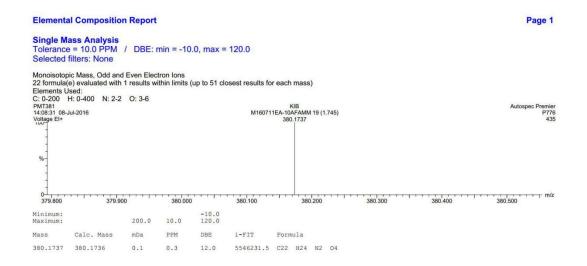
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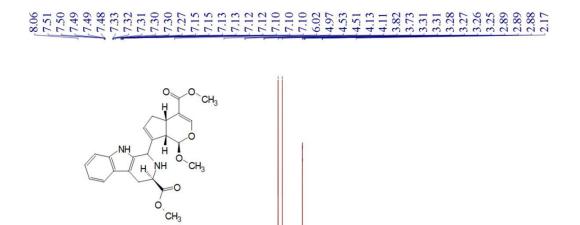






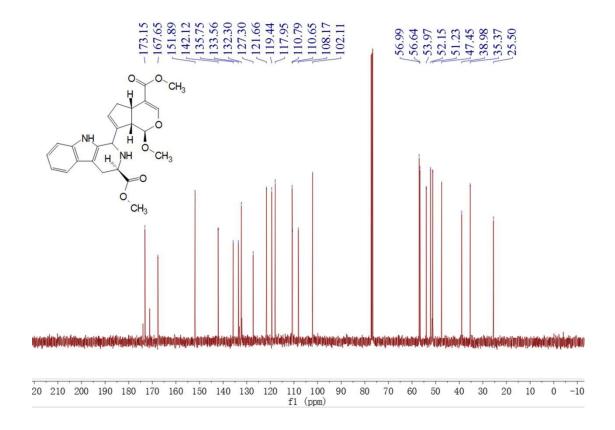


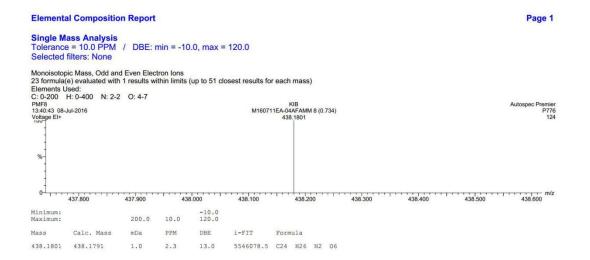




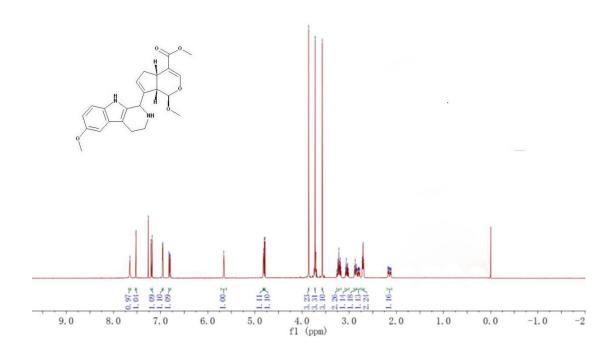
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **14** 

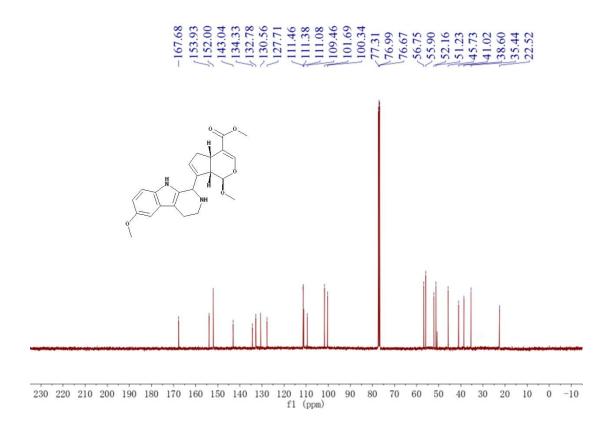
7.5 7.0 6.5 6.0 5.5 5.0 4.5 4.0 3.5 3.0 2.5 2.0 1.5 1.0 0.5 0.0 -0.5 -1.0 -1.5 fl (ppm)

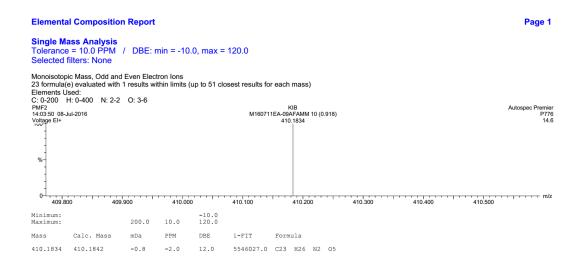


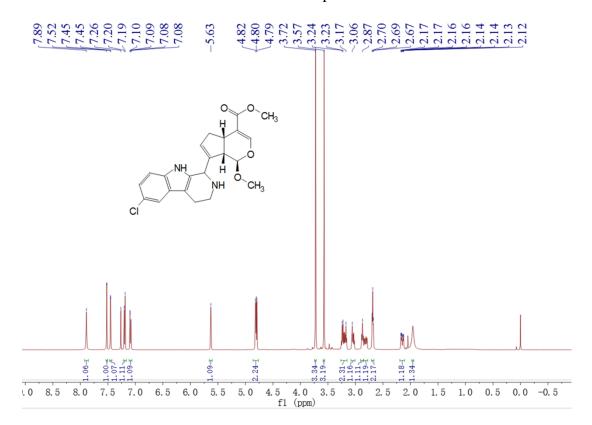


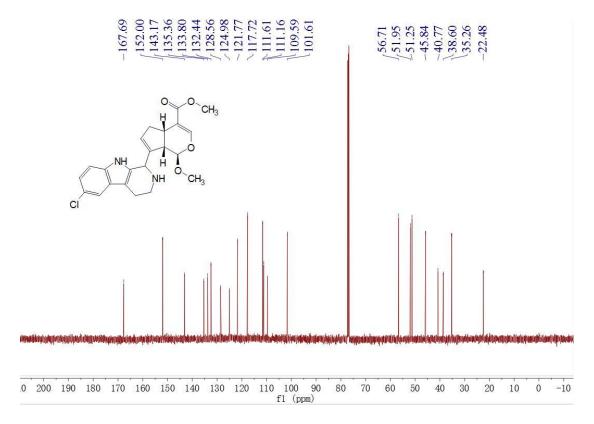


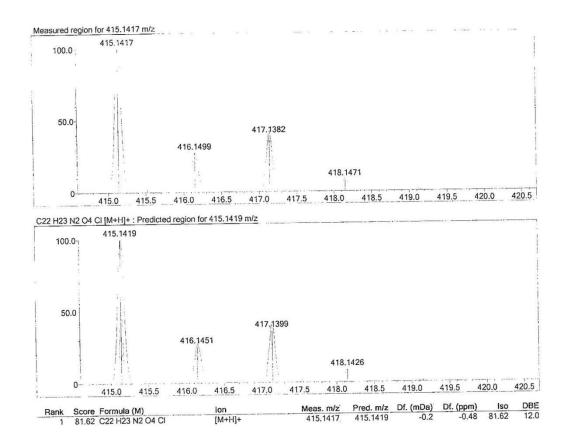




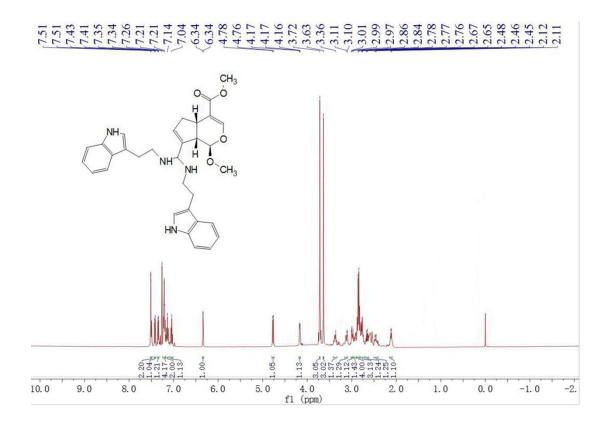


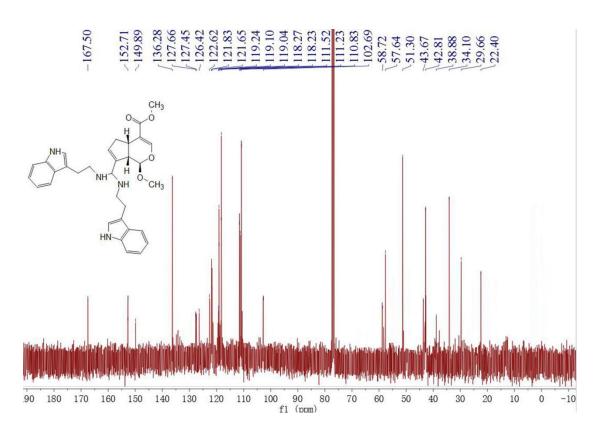




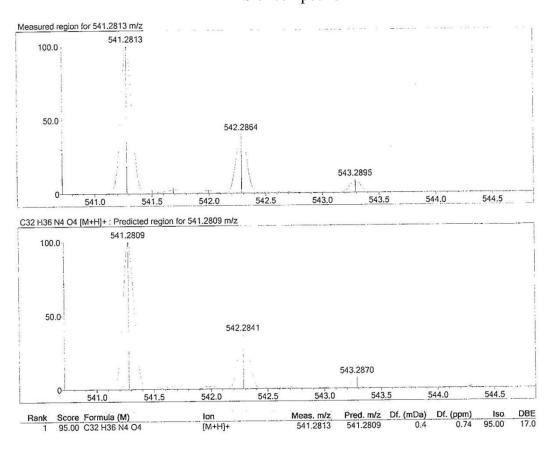


<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **17** 

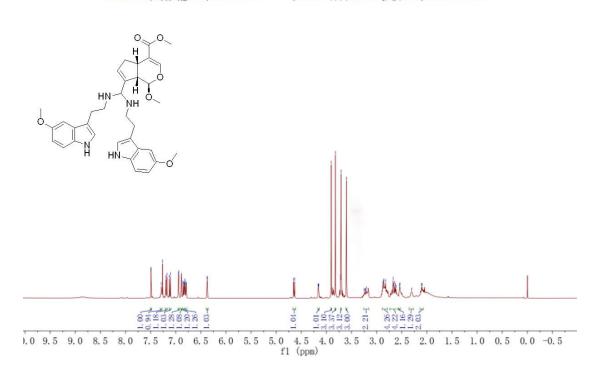




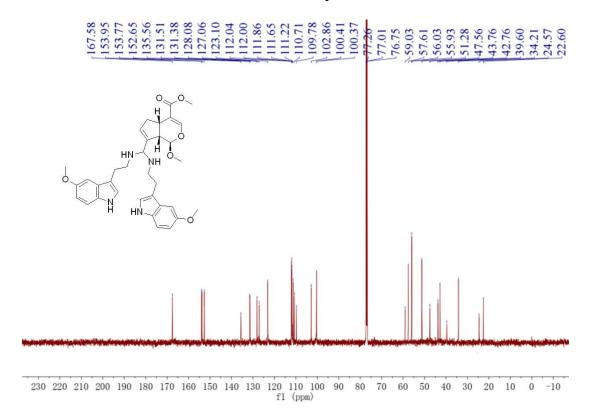
HR-EI-MS of compound 17

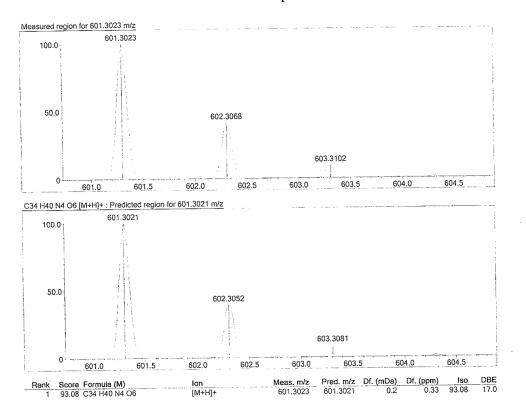


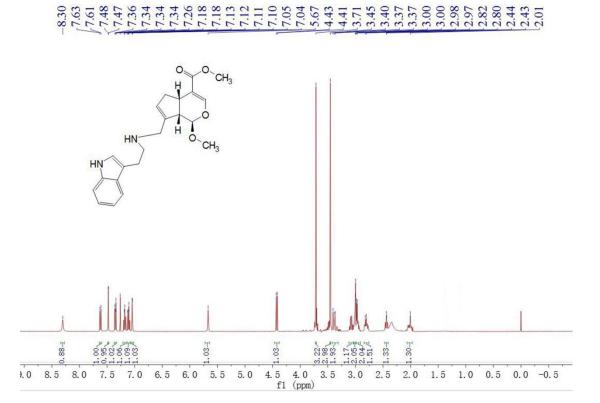
# 

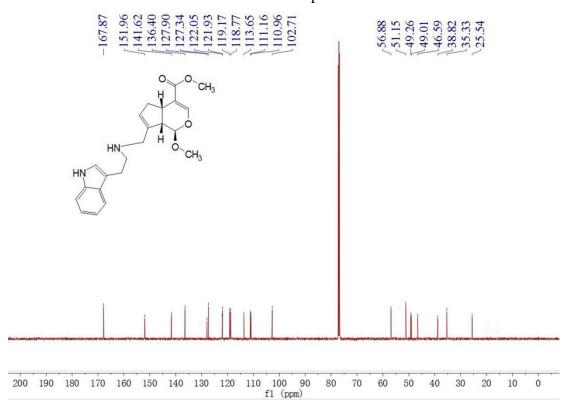


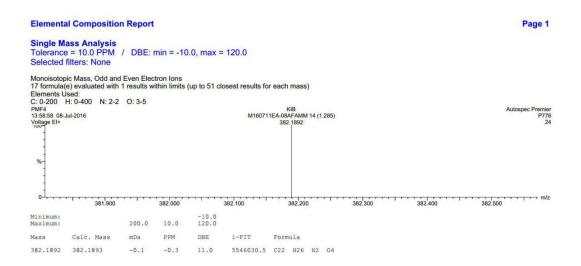
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **18** 





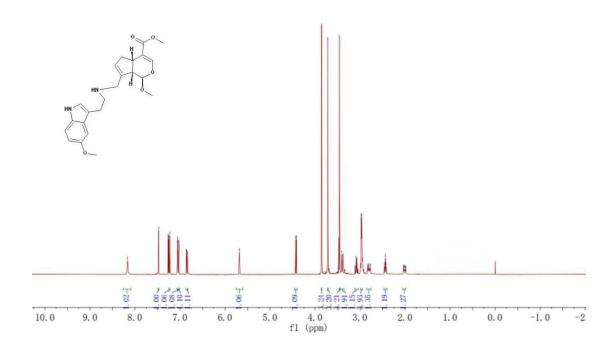




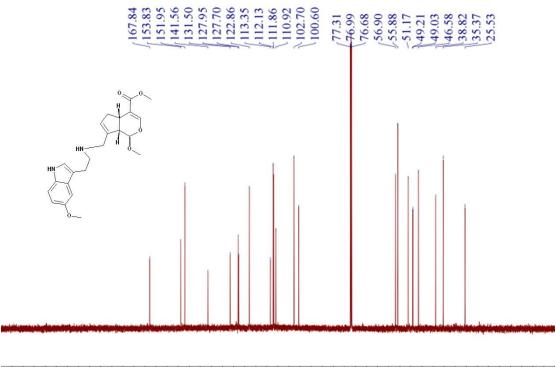


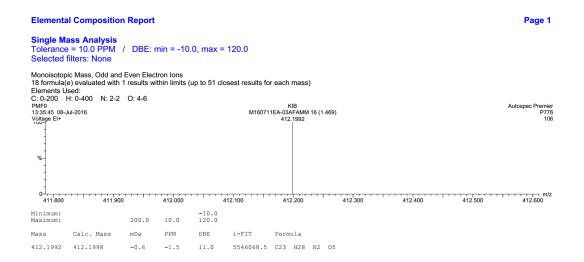
<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **20** 



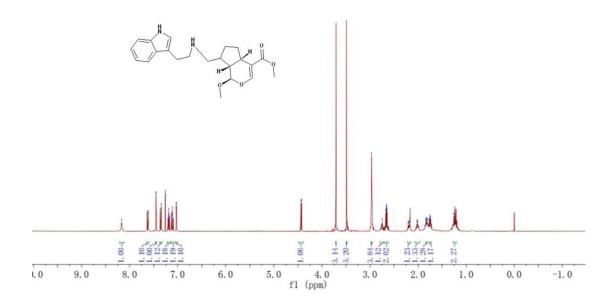


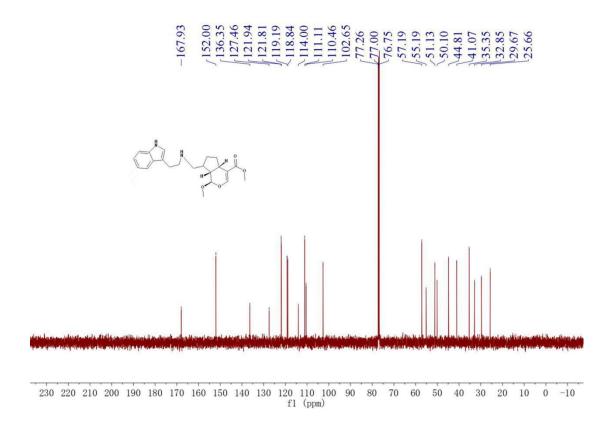
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **20** 

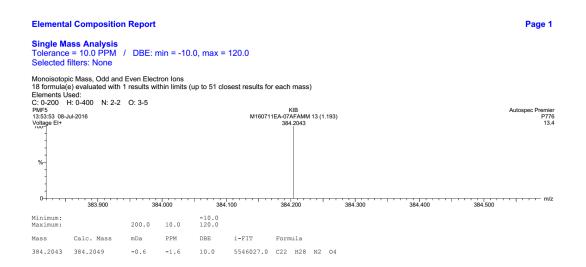


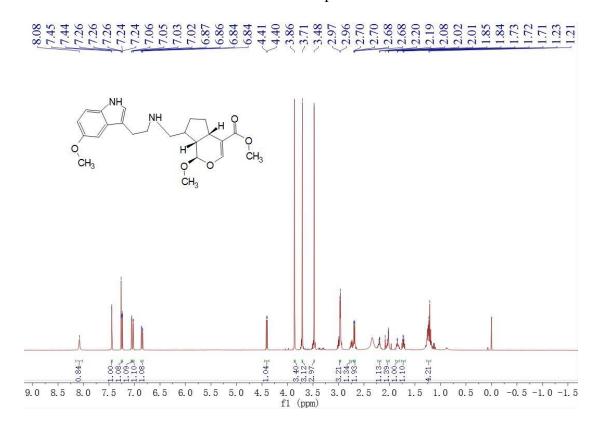


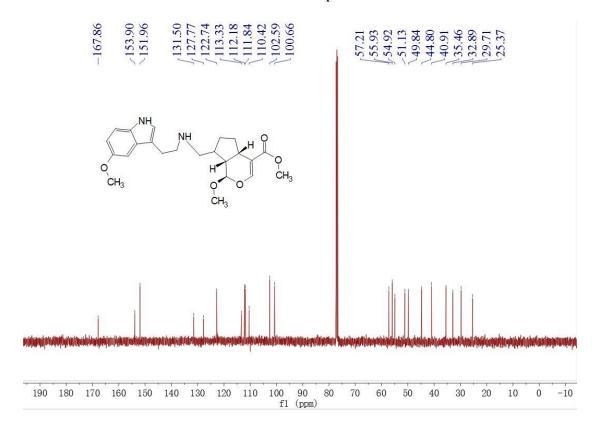


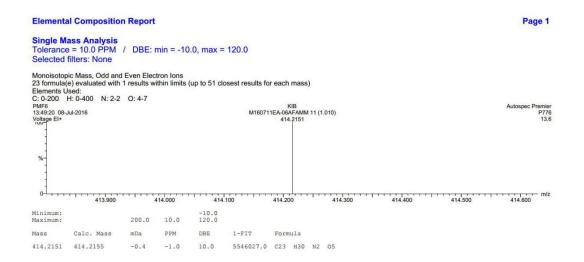


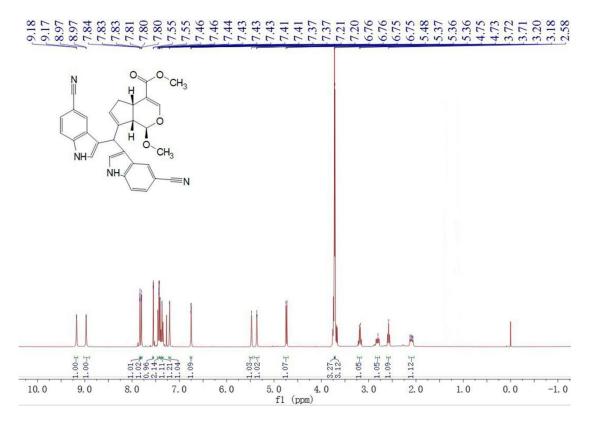


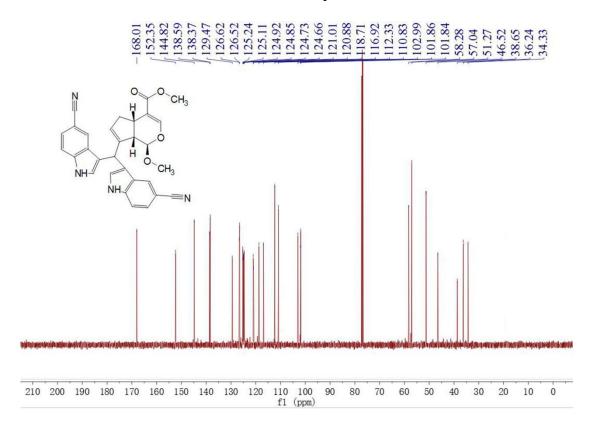


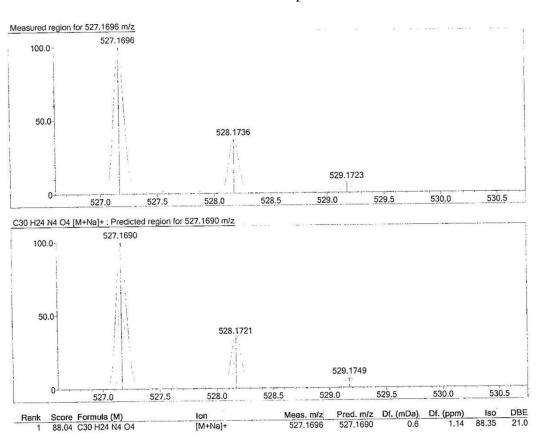


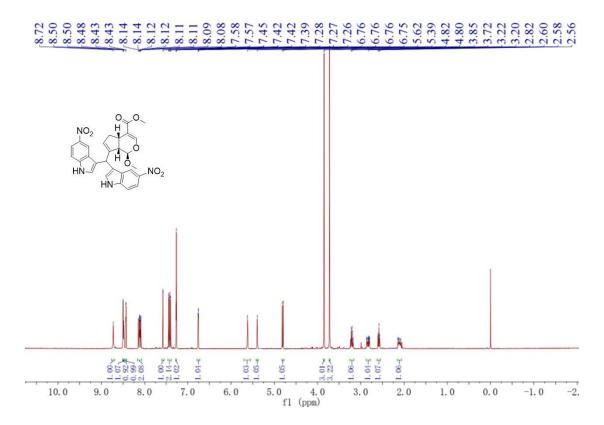




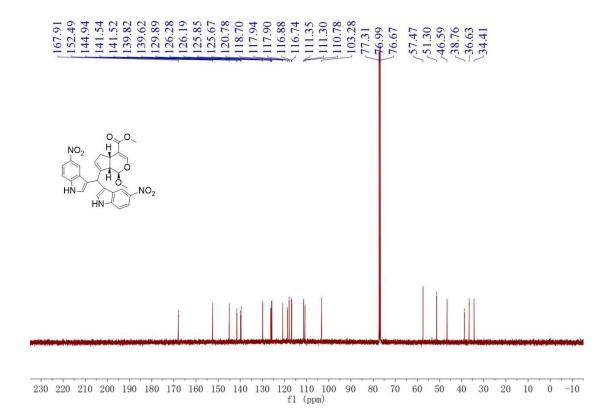


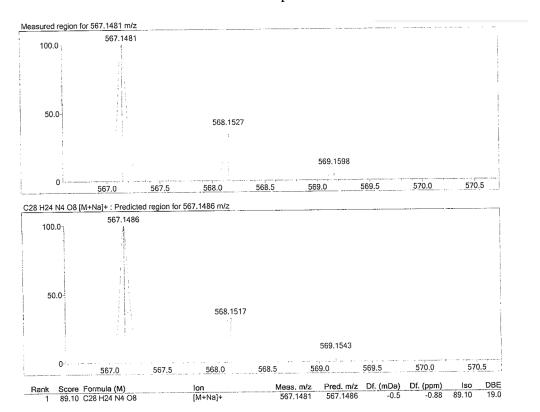




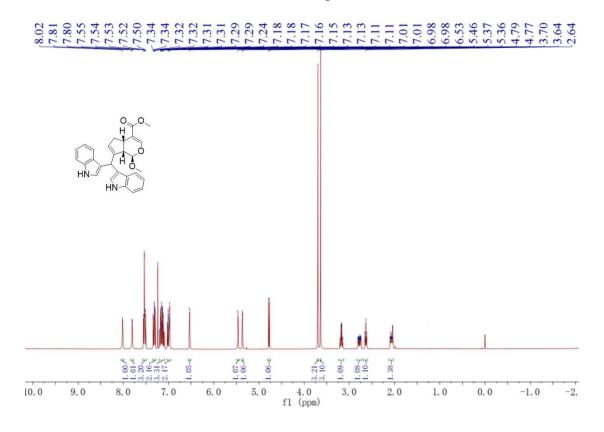


<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **24** 

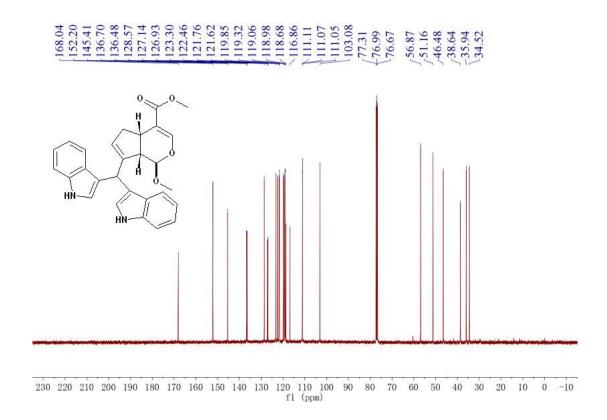




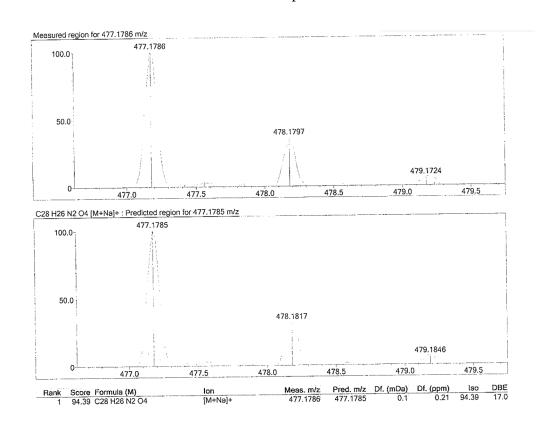
<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **25** 

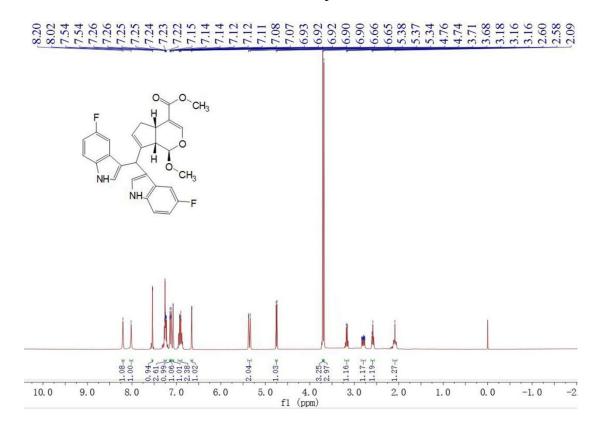


<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **25** 

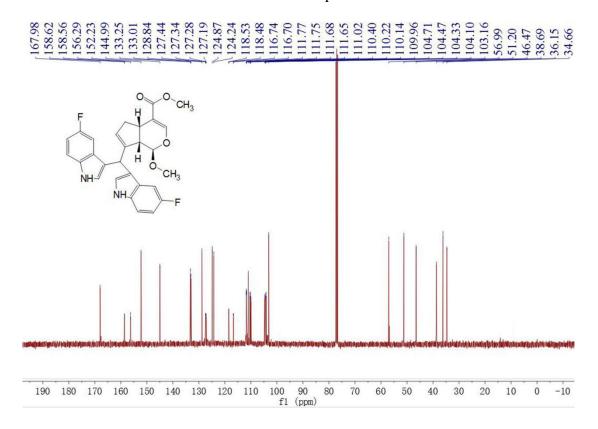


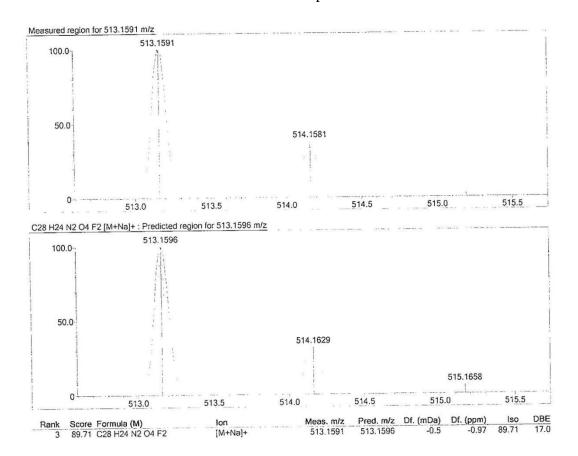
HR-EI-MS of compound 25



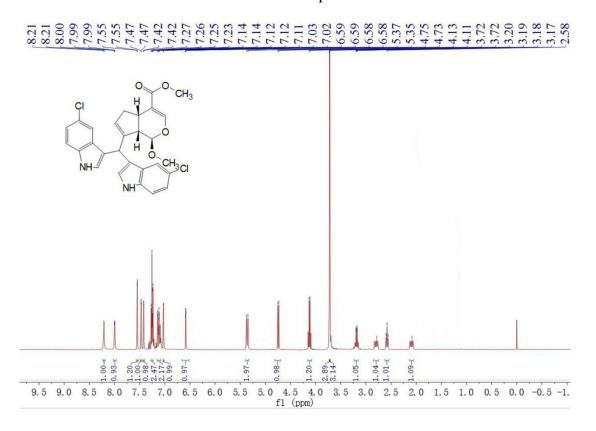


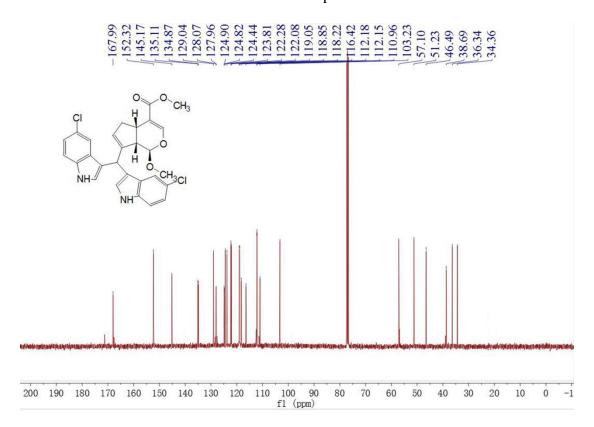
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **26** 



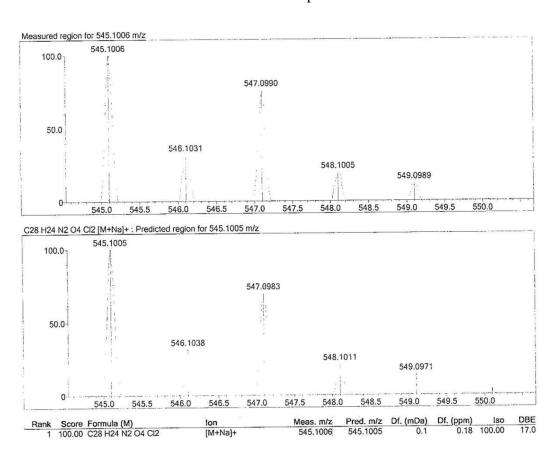


<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound 27

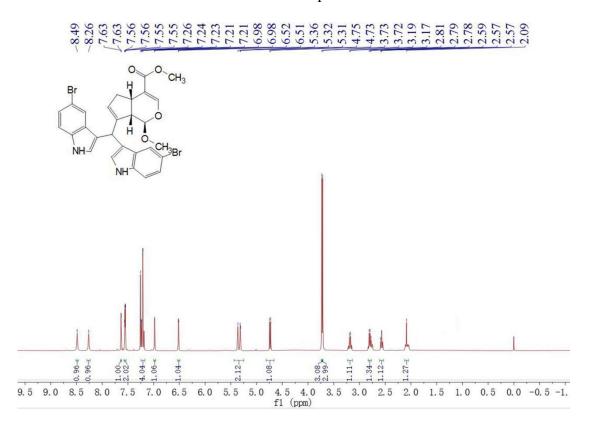




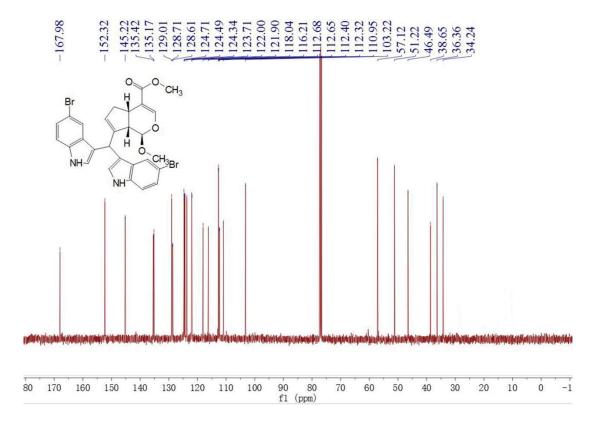
HR-EI-MS of compound 27

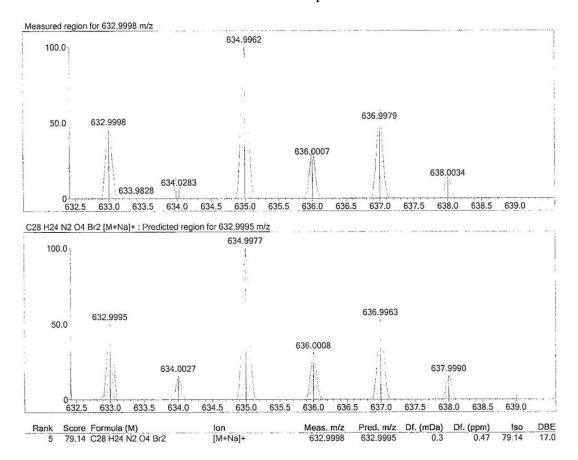


<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **28** 

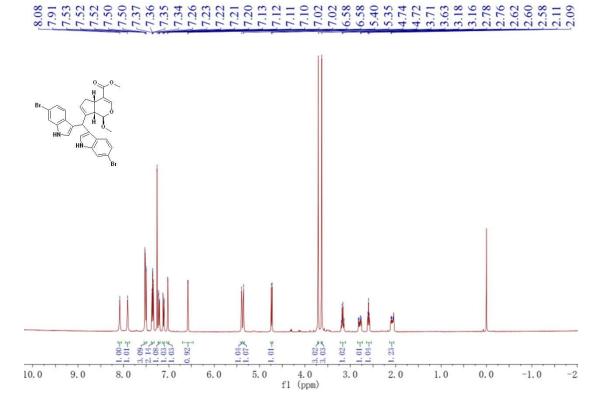


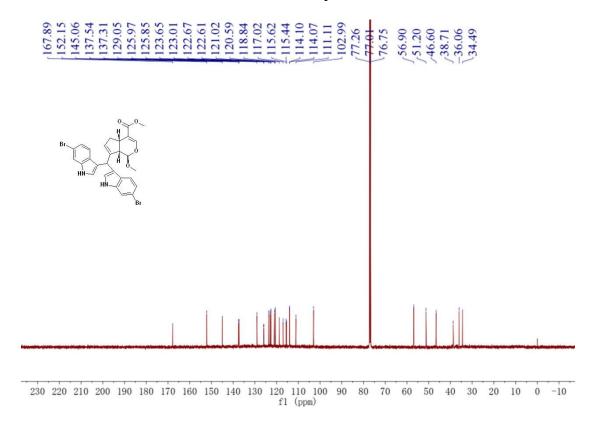
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **28** 

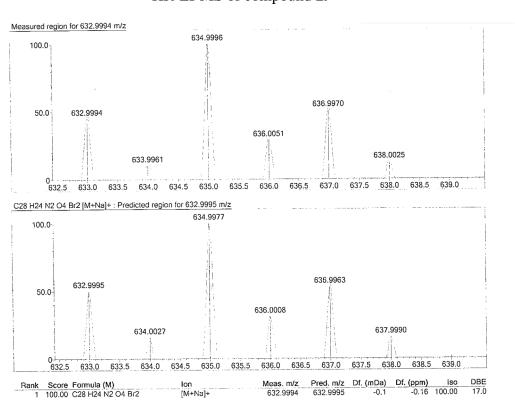


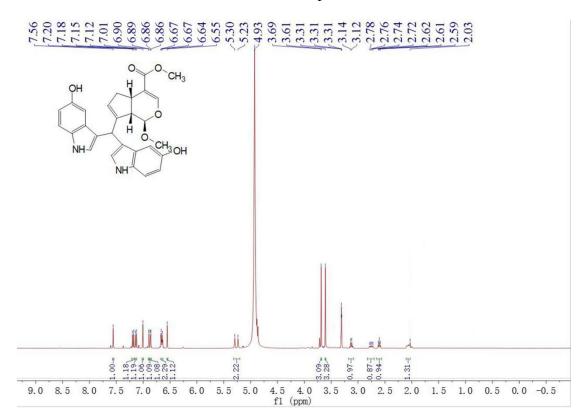


<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **29** 

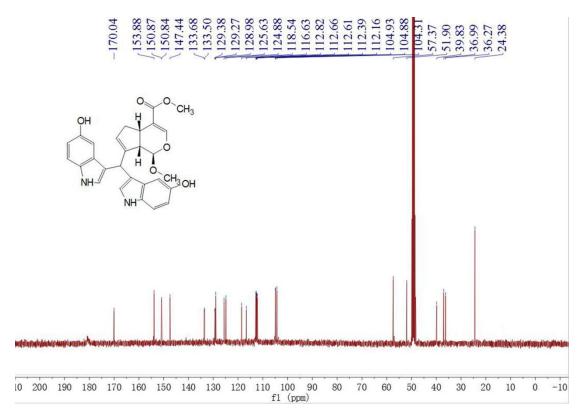




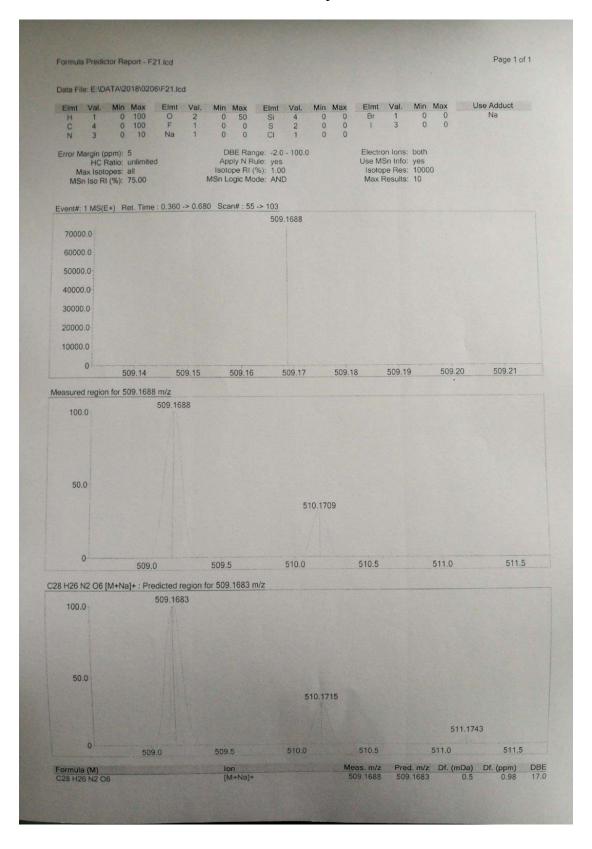


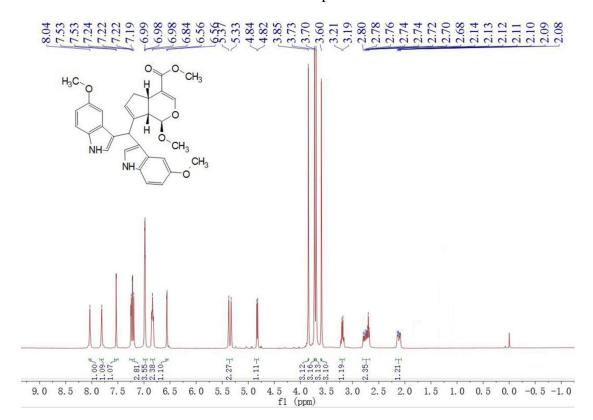


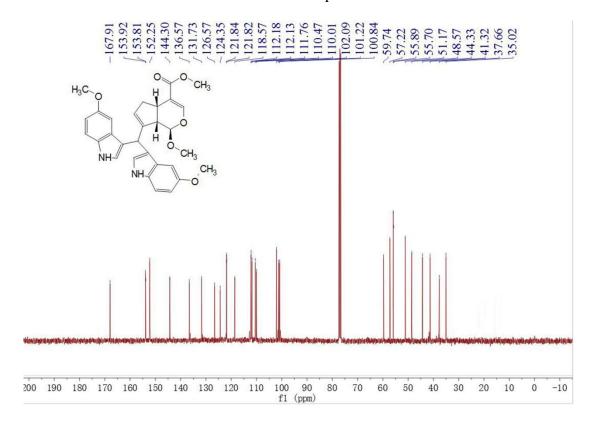
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **30** 

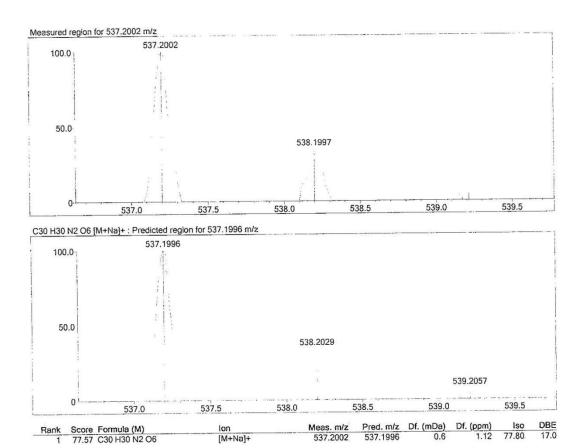


HR-EI-MS of compound 30

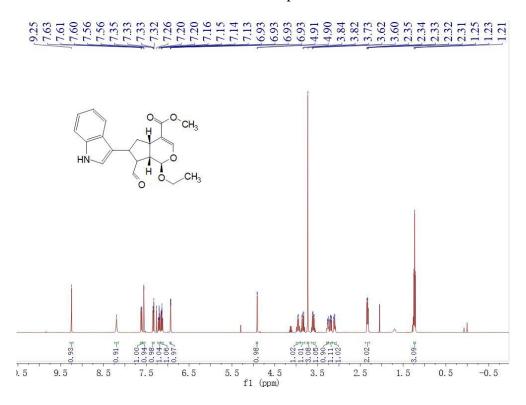




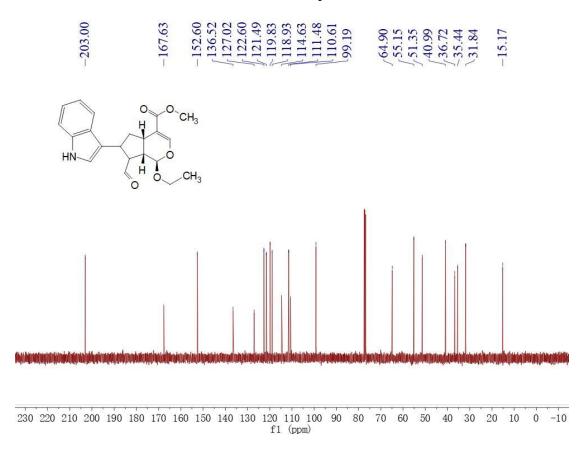




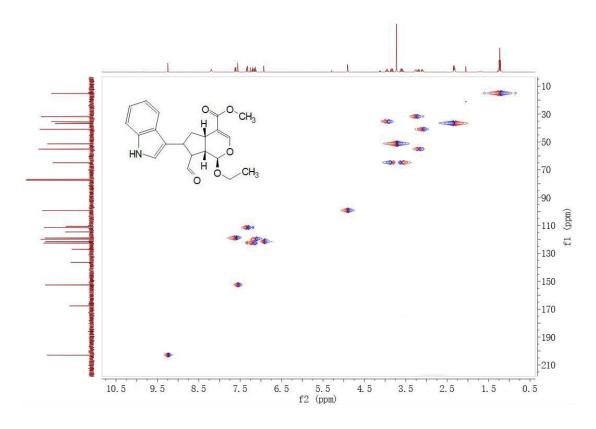
<sup>1</sup>H-NMR of compound **32** 



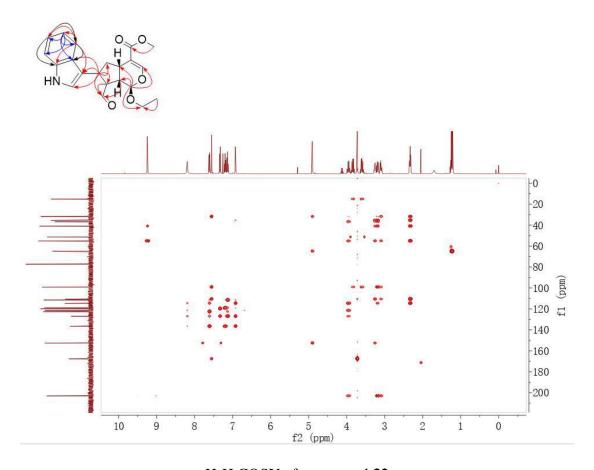
<sup>13</sup>C-NMR of compound **32** 



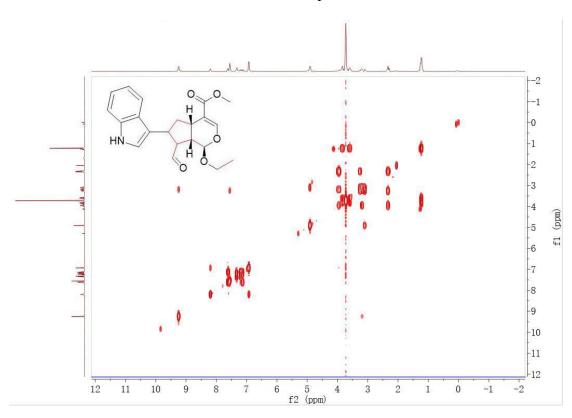
HSQC of compound 32



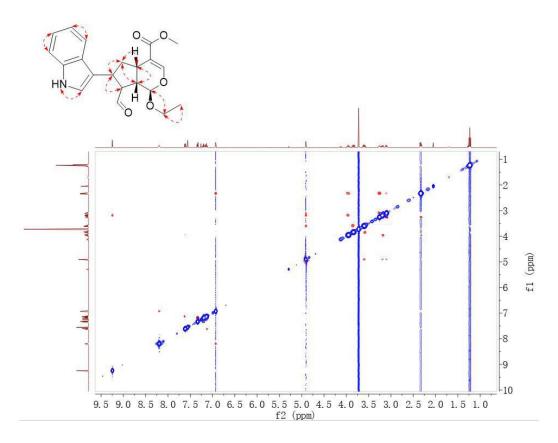
# HMBC of compound 32



H-H COSY of compound 32

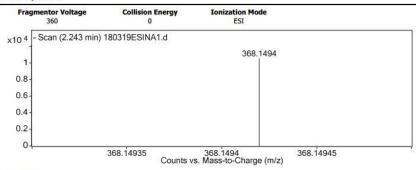


## ROESY of compound 32



HR-ESI-MS of compound 32

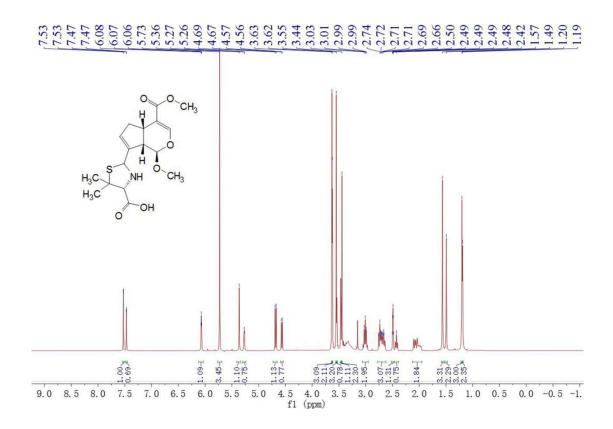
#### **User Spectra**

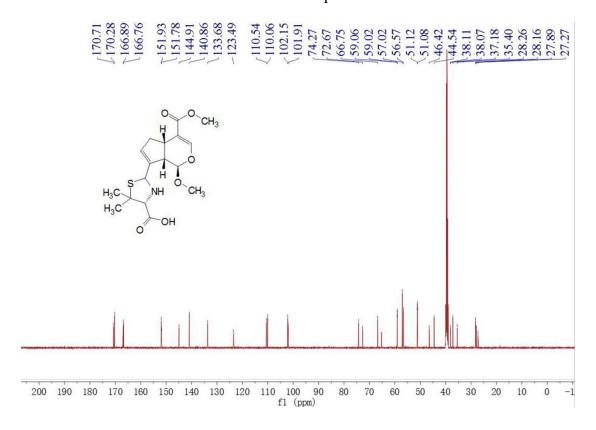


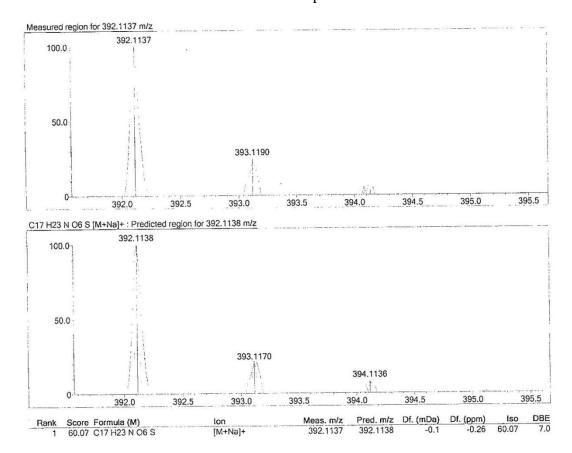
m/z	Z	Abund
101.0211	1	361176.84
116.9073		106036.91
118.9044		101976.38
123.1034	1	280366.63
126.9049	5	74298.16
127.0538	1	121464.89
127.0981	1	287931.06
152.8841		125120.5
154.8811		157801.22
186.9071	1	82006.05

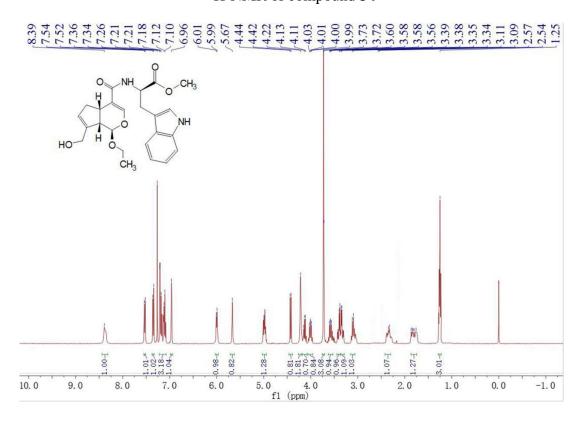
#### Max 200 400 10

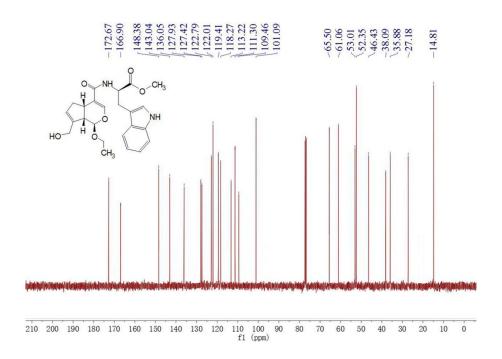
Diff. (ppm) CalculatedMass Formula 368.1498











HR-EI-MS of compound 34

