

Effects of Kaurane Diterpene Derivatives on Germination and Growth of *Lactuca sativa* Seedlings

Henriete S. Vieira, Jacqueline A. Takahashi, Lúcia P. S. Pimenta,
and Maria Amélia D. Boaventura*

Departamento de Química, Instituto de Ciências Exatas, Universidade Federal
de Minas Gerais, Av. Antônio Carlos, 6627, 31270-901, Belo Horizonte – MG, Brazil.
Fax: 55 31 3499 5700. E-mail: dianadb@dedalus.lcc.ufmg.br

* Author for correspondence and reprint requests

Z. Naturforsch. **60c**, 72–78 (2005); received May 5/August 23, 2004

Kaurenoic and grandiflorenic acid, isolated from *Wedelia paludosa* (Asteraceae), some derivatives from these acids (alcohols, esters, amides, lactones, oximes) and other naturally occurring kaurane diterpenes were tested for their action on the growth of radical and shoot of *Lactuca sativa*. Gibberellic acid, GA₃, a commercially available phytohormone, belonging to the same class of diterpenes, was also tested. Some of the tested substances showed a remarkable activity either in the inhibition or in stimulation of *L. sativa* growth. The activity, in some cases, was even higher than that of GA₃.

Key words: Gibberellic Acid, Kaurenoic Acid, Allelopathic Activity

Introduction

A number of natural products with allelopathic activity has been reported and used in agriculture, as for example the gibberellins, a group of diterpene lactones. Kaurane diterpenes containing a rigid tetracyclic skeleton are intermediates in the biosynthesis of a number of plant and fungal metabolites, including gibberellins, and are widespread in the plant kingdom. Bioassay-guided fractionation in plant study made this class of diterpenes to be “rediscovered”, due to their many biological activities (Ghisalberti, 1997), including plant growth regulation (Torrenegra and Tellez, 1996; Villalobos *et al.*, 1994; Hanson *et al.*, 1980; Becker and Kempf, 1976; Hüneck and Scheiber, 1972; Cross *et al.*, 1970; Katsumi *et al.*, 1964).

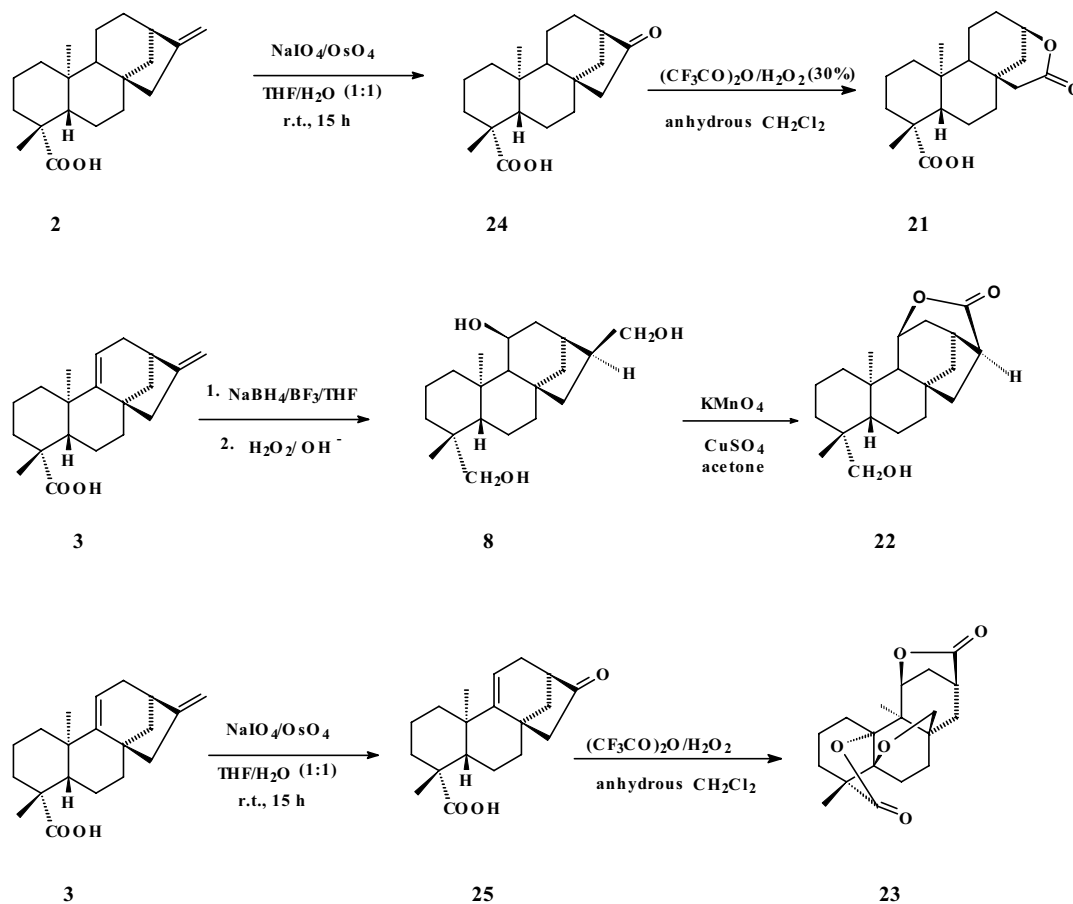
In the phytochemical study of *Wedelia paludosa* (Asteraceae) we have isolated a high amount (ca. 10% of crude extract, in some cases) of *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid [kaurenoic acid, (**2**)], together with a minor proportion (ca. 2–3% of crude extract) of *ent*-kaur- $\Delta^{9(11)}$,16-dien-19-oic acid [grandiflorenic acid (**3**)], among other kaurane diterpenes **11–13** (Fig. 1); *ent*-kauran-16 β H-17-ol (**5**) was isolated from *Xylopia frutescens* (Annonaceae). Some bioassay systems were applied on these compounds (and derivatives obtained by chemical transformations of **2** and **3**, Fig. 1), as for example, trypanocidal (Vieira *et al.*, 2002) and allelopathic evaluations. We describe here the

results of the lettuce (*Lactuca sativa*) hypocotyl assay.

Results and Discussion

Compounds **2–20** (Fig. 1) were obtained by isolation from plant extracts and/or chemical transformations (Vieira *et al.*, 2001, 2002; Takahashi *et al.*, 1995, 2001). Lactones **21** and **22** are described here for the first time to our best knowledge. The structure of lactone **23** was previously elucidated by X-ray (Doriguetto *et al.*, 2002). Their syntheses are showed in Scheme 1. Intermediary ketones **24** and **25** were obtained from **2** and **3**, respectively, initially by exocyclic double bond oxidation (Castellaro *et al.*, 1990), followed by Baeyer-Villiger rearrangement (Anastasia *et al.*, 1985). Lactone **22** was obtained from triol **8** by oxidation with KMnO₄/CuSO₄ (Jefford and Wang, 1988).

The choice of concentrations to be used in allelopathic experiments was based on the work of Macías *et al.* (1994, 2000). According to them, substances with inhibitory activity against species used in standard allelopathic bioassays show a strong inhibitory effect (alternative herbicides) only at concentrations between 10^{–2} and 10^{–3} M; at lower concentrations (10^{–5}–10^{–9} M) this effect disappears or becomes stimulatory. Plants were measured after 5 d standing in the dark, according procedures described by Hoad *et al.* (1981) and Macías *et al.*



Scheme 1.

The acids **1–4** presented stronger action on radical than on shoot growth (Fig. 2). The best activity for **1** was at 10^{-7} M and for **3** at 10^{-3} M, although the latter was active in all three tested concentrations. Gibberellic acid (**1**) inhibited radical growth at higher concentrations, contrary to kaurenoic acid (**2**), that acted in an opposite way. Brian *et al.* (1967) did not find activity for **2** in the lettuce hypocotyl assay at 10 ppm (3.3×10^{-5} M) concentration.

Acids **1–3** were active on shoot growth (Fig. 2); compound **4** (*ent*-3 β -hydroxy-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid) showed activity only at 10^{-7} M, the presence of the hydroxyl group at C-3 being the differentiating structural factor. The stereochemistry of hydroxyl groups in gibberellins is important: 3 β -hydroxy gibberellins, in the absence of a 2 β -hydroxy group, are more active than the correspondent 3 α -hydroxy derivatives (Hoad *et al.*, 1981). Therefore, the small activity of compound **4**, compared to the

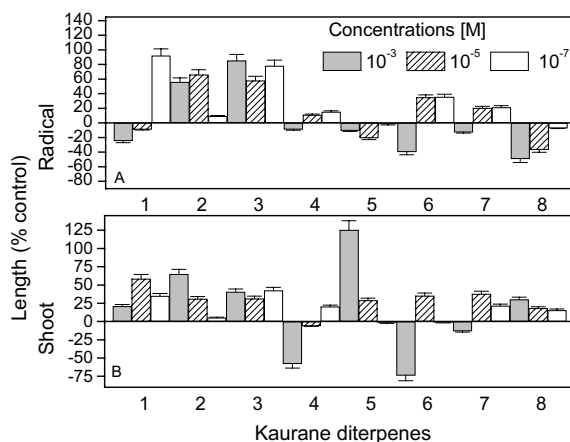


Fig. 2. Effect of gibberellic acid (**1**), kaurane diterpene acids **2–4** and alcohols **5–8** on: (A) radical and (B) shoot length of *L. sativa*.

other acids, could be also associated with the α stereochemistry of the hydroxyl group at C-3.

Oppositely to the acids, the alcohols **5–8** showed better stimulating activity on shoot growth (Fig. 2), mainly *ent*-kauran-16 β H-17-ol (**5**) with the higher stimulatory effect at 10^{-3} M; in contrast, Brian *et al.* (1967) cited the slight activity presented by **5** in the lettuce hypocotyl assay at 10 ppm (3.5×10^{-5} M) concentration. *Ent*-kauran-16-en-19-ol (**6**), the higher inhibitor among alcohols, and diol **7** showed analogous activity on radical elongation; triol **8** acted in the opposite way on promoting shoot growth and inhibiting radical growth. Only gibberellic acid (**1**) stimulated the germination of *L. sativa*. (Fig. 3A). Among the esters (**9–13**), *ent*-3 β -tygloyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (**13**) was the most active on radical growth, at 10^{-7} M, the lower dosis (Fig. 4). Methyl *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oate (**9**) was the best inhibitor on shoot growth at 10^{-3} M (Fig. 4). According to Villalobos *et al.* (1994), the presence of an angeloyloxy group at C-18, associated with a methyl ester at C-19, improves the activity. Both *E* oximes **15** and **16** showed analogous results on radical and on shoot growth. Here, the *E* stereochemistry of the oxime group seems to be the determinant factor for growth activity. The kaurenoic ester **9** showed the best germination results, at 10^{-5} M, among all tested compounds, followed by tygloyloxy ester **13** and ester *Z* oxime **14** (Fig. 3B). Amide **18** (*ent*-kaur-16-en-19-pyrrolidinamide) was active in both

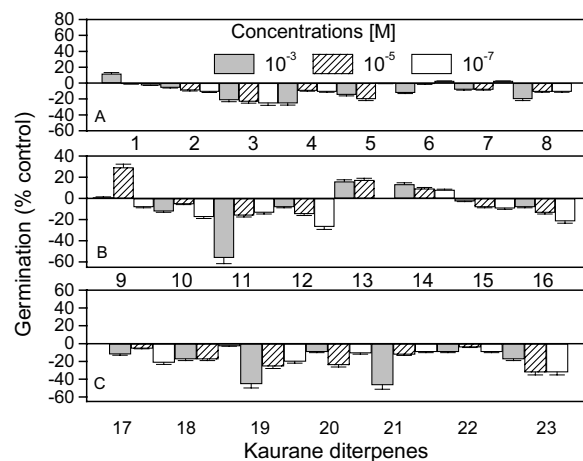


Fig. 3. Effect of (A) gibberellic acid (**1**), kaurane diterpene acids **2–4** and alcohols **5–8**; (B) kaurane diterpene derivatives esters **9–13**, ester oximes **14–15**, alcohol oxime **16**; (C) kaurane diterpene amides **17–19** and lactones **20–23** on the germination of *L. sativa*.

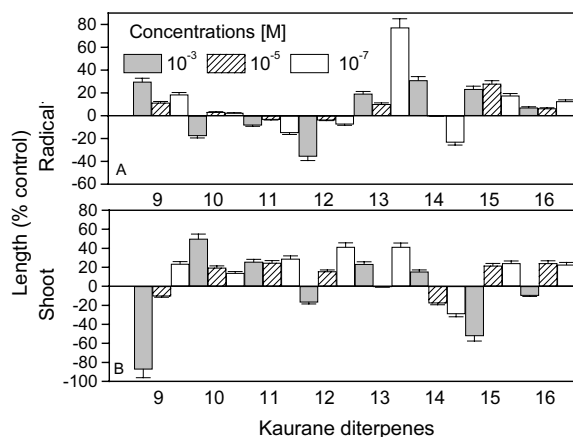


Fig. 4. Effect of kaurane diterpene derivatives esters **9–13**, ester oximes **14–15** and alcohol oxime **16** on: (A) radical and (B) shoot length of *L. sativa*.

shoot and radical elongation and in all three concentrations (Fig. 5). In general, all three amides **17**, **18** and **19** showed a total coherence in their results for radical and shoot growth. Tetrachirin (**20**) and lactone **23** showed similar activities in both radical and shoot growth (Fig. 5). Lactone **21**, from kaurenoic acid, presented the best stimulatory (10^{-5} M) and the best inhibitory (10^{-3} M) effect on shoot elongation of *L. sativa* (Fig. 5).

Finally, only grandiflorenic acid (**3**) and *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-pyrrolidinamide (**18**) showed action on both shoot and radical length in all concentrations; kaurenoic acid (**2**) had analogous action in radical and shoot growth; gibberellic acid (**1**) acted

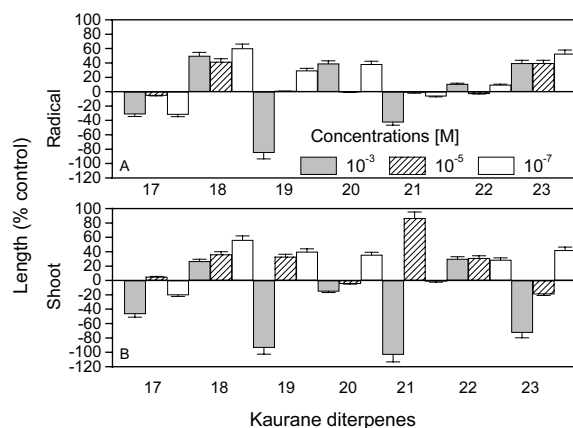


Fig. 5. Effect of kaurane diterpene derivatives amides **17–19** and lactones **20–23** on: (A) radical length of *L. sativa* and (B) shoot length of *L. sativa*.

in an opposite way compared to lactone **23**: its profile activity in radical corresponds to the shoot in **23** and vice-versa. Results found for the inhibitory effect for most of the tested substances corroborate with the proposition found in the literature (Macías *et al.*, 2000) that inhibition occurs mainly at concentrations around at 10^{-3} M. These substances are consequently potential alternative herbicides.

Experimental

General procedure

Melting points were determined with a Kofler hot plate apparatus and are uncorrected. The optical rotations were measured on a Perkin Elmer 341 polarimeter. IR spectra were recorded on a Shimadzu IR-408 spectrophotometer. IR absorption bands are expressed in cm^{-1} . ^1H and ^{13}C NMR spectra were recorded in CDCl_3 at room temperature on a Bruker Advance DPX 200 operating at 200 and 50 MHz, respectively. The chemical shifts are reported in δ values (ppm) relative to the solvent CDCl_3 ($\delta = 7.26$ for ^1H NMR and 77.01 ppm for ^{13}C NMR). Mass spectra (GC-EIMS) were obtained from a GCQ Finnigan-ION TRAP instrument and they were performed with an ionizing energy of 70 eV. Silica gel used for flash chromatography was obtained from Merck (WC4790-005, 230–400 mesh) and celite from Labsynth Ltda., São Paulo, SP, Brazil.

Gibberellic acid (**1**) was purchased from Sigma (USA). *Ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid (kaurenoic acid, **2**) was isolated from green fruits of both *Xylopia frutescens* (Takahashi *et al.*, 1995) and *Xylopia sericea* (Takahashi *et al.*, 2001) and aerial parts of *Wedelia paludosa* (9.6% of ethanolic crude extract). Grandiflorenic acid (**3**) was isolated from ethanolic extracts of aerial parts of *Wedelia paludosa* (2.4% of crude extract). *Ent*-3 β -hydroxy-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid (**4**) was obtained by alkaline hydrolysis from *ent*-3 β -cinamoyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (**12**, yield: 84%). *Ent*-kauran-16 β H-17-ol (**5**) was isolated from the hexanic extract of green fruits of *Xylopia frutescens* (2.2% of crude extract). *Ent*-kauran-16-en-19-ol (**6**) was obtained by reduction of **9** with LiAlH_4 (yield: 86%). *Ent*-kauran-16 β H-17,19-diol (**7**) and *ent*-kauran-16 β H-11 α ,17,19-triol (**8**) were obtained from **2** and **3**, respectively, by treatment with diborane/ H_2O_2 (Vieira *et al.*, 2002). Methyl *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oate (**9**) and methyl *ent*-kaur-3 β -hy-

droxy-16-en-19-oate (**10**) were obtained by treatment of **2** and **4**, respectively, with diazomethane (quantitative yield). *Ent*-3 β -angeloyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (**11**, 2.4% of crude extract), *ent*-3 β -cinamoyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (**12**, 1.9% of crude extract) and *ent*-3 β -tygloyloxykaur-16-en-19-oic acid (**13**, 0.065% of crude extract) were isolated from ethanolic extracts of aerial parts of *Wedelia paludosa* (Vieira *et al.*, 2001). Methyl *ent*-16*Z*-oxime-17-norkauran-19-oate (**14**), methyl *ent*-16*E*-oxime-17-norkauran-19-oate (**15**), *ent*-16*E*-oxime-17-norkauran-19-ol (**16**), *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-piperidinamide (**17**) *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-pyrrolydinamide (**18**) and *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-*N,N*-diethylamide (**19**) were obtained according to the route described by Vieira *et al.* (2002). Tetrachirin (**20**, 0.068% of crude extract) was isolated from ethanolic extracts of aerial parts of *Wedelia paludosa* (Vieira *et al.*, 2001).

Ent-kauran-16-oxo-17-nor-19 oic acid (**24**) and *ent*-kaur-16-oxo-17-nor-11(9)-en-oic acid (**25**) (Castellaro *et al.*, 1990). To a suspension containing a mixture (500 mg) of kaurenoic acid (**2**) and grandiflorenic acid (**3**) and 1.6 g (8.0 mmol) of NaIO_4 in 50 ml of THF/ H_2O 1:1 v/v a crystal of OsO_4 was added. After overnight stirring at room temperature, work-up (treatment by NaHSO_3) and flash chromatography, 173 mg of **24** and 198 mg of **25** were obtained.

Ent-13 α -hydroxy-17-nor-13,16-seco-kauran-16,19-dioic acid 16 \rightarrow 13-lactone (**21**) and *ent*-5 α ,15 α -epoxy-9,10-friedo-10 β ,11 β -dihydroxy-16,11 α :19,10 β -diseco-17-norkauran-16,19-dioic acid 16 \rightarrow 11:19 \rightarrow 10-dilactone (**23**) (Anastasia *et al.*, 1985). Trifluoroacetic acid was generated *in situ* by adding 148 mmol of trifluoroacetic anhydride to 31 mmol of 30% hydrogen peroxide at 0 °C in anhydrous CH_2Cl_2 . Ketone (0.99 mmol), dissolved in anhydrous CH_2Cl_2 , was added and the solution stirred for 1 h at room temperature. Work-up (2% K_2CO_3 solution) and flash chromatography (*n*-hexane/ethyl acetate) furnished pure lactones (yields: **21**: 80% and **23**: 19%).

Ent-13 α -hydroxy-17-nor-13,16-seco-kauran-16,19-dioic acid 16 \rightarrow 13-lactone (**21**): White powder, $\text{C}_{20}\text{H}_{30}\text{O}_4$ (334). M.p. 218–219 °C. – $[\alpha]_D^{25} -110^\circ$ ($c = 0.002$, CHCl_3). – IR (KBr) $\nu_{\text{max}} = 3400, 1725, 1690, 1250\text{--}1111\text{ cm}^{-1}$. – ^1H NMR (CDCl_3 , 200 MHz): $\delta = 0.97$ (3H, s, 20-CH), 1.26 (3H, s, 18-CH), 4.68 (1H, br s, 13-CH). – ^{13}C NMR (CDCl_3 , 50 MHz): $\delta = 40.9, 18.9, 37.3, 43.5, 56.6, 19.8, 42.9, 33.8, 53.0, 39.5, 16.3, 28.7, 75.8, 33.0$,

47.9, 172.4, 28.9, 184.0, 16.3. – EI-MS: m/z (rel. int.) = 320 (20) $[M^+]$, 302 (80) $[M^+ - H_2O]$, 260 (40) $[M^+ - CH_3CO_2H]$, 215 (100) $[260 - CO_2H]$.

Ent-11 α ,19-dihydroxy-16 β -kauran-17-oic acid 17 \rightarrow 11- δ -lactone (22) (Jefford and Wang, 1988). To a solution containing 48.3 mmol of triol **8** in acetone, $KMnO_4$ (1.0 mmol) and $CuSO_4 \cdot 5H_2O$ (0.06 mmol) were added and the mixture was stirred for 2 d at room temperature. After removing of acetone, the residue was chromatographed (celite followed by silica gel) and the lactone **22** was eluted with CH_2Cl_2 (47% yield) as a white powder, $C_{20}H_{30}O_3$ (318). – M.p. 239–240 °C. $[\alpha]_{25}^D -27^\circ$ ($c = 0.01$, $CHCl_3$). – IR (KBr) $\nu_{max} = 3300, 1725\text{ cm}^{-1}$. – 1H NMR ($CDCl_3$, 200 MHz): $\delta = 0.98$ (3H, s, H-20), 3.46 (1H, d, $J = 11.0$ Hz, 19a- CH_2), 3.75 (1H, d, $J = 11.0$ Hz, 19b- CH_2), 0.99 (3H, s, 18-CH), 2.97 (1H, dd, $J = 8.0$ and 10.0 Hz, 16a- CH_2), 2.69 (1H, br s, 13-CH), 4.58 (1H, br s, 11-CH). – ^{13}C NMR ($CDCl_3$, 50 MHz): $\delta = 40.1, 18.1, 36.1, 38.6, 56.5, 20.4, 38.8, 44.2, 59.4, 37.4, 75.7, 35.2, 34.3, 41.9, 48.3, 42.5, 177.3, 27.2, 65.2, 17.9$. – EI-MS: m/z (rel. int.) = 318 (18) $[M^+]$, 300 (10) $[M^+ - H_2O]$, 287 (100) $[M^+ - CH_2OH]$, 269 (40) $[300 - H_2OH]$, 241 (35) $[287 - HCO_2H]$, 225 (20) $[269 - CO_2]$.

Bioassay

Seeds of *Lactuca sativa* (cv. Grand Rapids) were purchased from Isla Pak, RS, Brasil. All undersized and damaged seeds were discarded. In 100 mm Petri dishes containing a 90 mm sheet of Whatman no. 1 filter paper and 10 ml of a test (10^{-3} , 10^{-5} and 10^{-7} M) or control solution 25 let-

tuce seeds were added. Test and control solutions were prepared with dionized water and their pH values [buffered with 10 mM 2-(*N*-morpholino)-ethanesulfonic acid, MES] were adjusted to 6.0–6.5 with NaOH solution. Lower concentrations than 10^{-3} M were obtained by dilution of the previous solution. There were 3 replicates for each concentration and for control. The dishes were sealed and incubated in the dark at 25 °C for 5 d. After this time the dishes were frozen during the measurement process to avoid subsequent growth (Macías *et al.*, 2000). The osmotic pressure values were measured on a microosmometer (Precision Systems Inc., Natick, Mass. USA) and ranged between 30 and 38 mosmolar (Macías *et al.*, 1994).

Statistic treatment

Statistic treatment was done according to Macías *et al.* (1994) and the results, presented in Fig. 2–5, consist of the differences (in cm) between mean values of seeds grown with tested compounds **1–23** and mean values for control (seeds grown without addition of tested compounds). Mean values of the controls (in mm) were: Fig. 2 = 2.1645×10^3 ; Fig. 4 = 2.6871×10^3 ; Fig. 5 = 2.3217×10^3 . The germination, radical and shoot length values were tested by the Student's *t*-test and the differences between the experiment and control were significant at a value of $P = 0.05$.

Aknowledgement

To CNPq for Henriete S. Vieira's grant.

- Anastasia M., Allevi P., Ciuffreda P., Fiecchi A., and Scala A. (1985), Synthesis of (2*R*,3*S*,22*R*,23*R*)- and (2*R*,3*S*,22*S*,23*S*)-2,3,22,23-tetrahydroxy-B-homo-7 α -oxa-5 α -ergostan-7-one, two new brassinolide analogues. *J. Org. Chem.* **50**, 321–325.
- Becker H. and Kempf T. Z. (1976), Untersuchung der Grandiflorensäure [kaura $\Delta^9(11),16$ -dien-18-carbonsäure] auf Gibberellinaktivität. *Z. Pflanzenphysiol.* **80**, 87–91.
- Brian P. W., Grove J. F., and Mulholland T. P. C. (1967), Relationships between structure and growth-promoting activity of the gibberellins and some allied compounds, in four test systems. *Phytochemistry* **6**, 1475–1499.
- Castellaro S. J., Dolan S. C., MacMillan J., and Willis C. L. (1990), Deuterium labeling of *ent*-kaur-16-en-19-oic acid at carbon-6 and -7. *Phytochemistry* **29**, 1823–1831.
- Cross B. E., Stewart J. C., and Stoddart J. L. (1970), 6 β ,7 β -Dihydroxykaurenoic acid: its biological activity and possible role in the biosynthesis of gibberellic acid. *Phytochemistry* **9**, 1065–1071.
- Doriguetto A. C., Vieira H. S., Ellena J. A., Takahashi J. A., Boaventura M. A. D., and Mascarenhas Y. P. (2002), A novel diterpene lactone. *Acta Cryst. E* **58**, 1392–1394.
- Frankland B. and Wareing P. F. (1960), Effect of gibberellic acid on hypocotyl growth of lettuce seedlings. *Nature* **185**, 255–256.
- Ghisalberti E. I. (1997), The biological activity of naturally occurring kaurane diterpenes. *Fitoterapia* **LXVIII**, 303–325.
- Hanson J. R., Willis C. L., and Parry K. P. (1980), The inhibition of gibberellic acid biosynthesis by *ent*-kauran-16 β ,17-epoxyde. *Phytochemistry* **19**, 2323–2325.

- Hoad G. V., Phinney B. O., Sponsel V. M., and MacMillan J. (1981), The biological activity of sixteen gibberellin A₄ and gibberellin A₉ derivatives using seven bioassays. *Phytochemistry* **20**, 703–713.
- Hüneck S. and Schreiber K. (1972), Wachstumsregulatorische Eigenschaften von Flechten- und Moosinhaltsstoffen. *Phytochemistry* **11**, 2429–2434.
- Jefford C. W. and Wang Y. (1988), Selective heterogeneous oxidation of alcohols and diols with potassium permanganate. *J. Chem. Soc. Chem. Comm.*, 634–635.
- Katsumi M., Phinney B. O., Jefferies P. R., and Henrick C. A. (1964), Growth response of the d-5 and an-1 mutants of maize to some kaurene derivatives. *Science* **44**, 849–850.
- Macías F. A., Simonet A. M., and Esteban M. D. (1994), Potential allelopathic lupane triterpenes from bioactive fractions of *Melilotus messanensis*. *Phytochemistry* **36**, 1369–1379.
- Macías F. A., Castellano D., and Molinillo J. M. G. (2000), Search for a standard phytotoxic bioassay for allelochemicals. Selection of standard target species. *J. Agric. Food Chem.* **48**, 2512–2521.
- Takahashi J. A., Boaventura M. A. D., Bayma J. C., and Oliveira A. B. (1995), Frutoic acid, a dimeric kaurane diterpene from *Xylopia frutescens*. *Phytochemistry* **40**, 607–609.
- Takahashi J. A., Vieira H. S., and Boaventura M. A. D. (2001), Mono and diterpenes from seeds of *Xylopia sericea*. *Quim. Nova* **24**, 616–618.
- Torrenegra R. D. and Tellez A. A. N. (1996), Phytochemistry of *Espeletia killipii* Cuatr., and gibberellic activity of some isolated compounds. *Rev. Latinoam. Quim.* **24**, 2–6.
- Vieira H. S., Takahashi J. A., and Boaventura M. A. D. (2001), Constituents from aerial parts of *Wedelia paludosa*. *Fitoterapia* **72**, 854–856.
- Vieira H. S., Takahashi J. A., Oliveira A. B., Chiari E., and Boaventura M. A. D. (2002), Novel derivatives of kaurenoic acid: preparation and evaluation of their trypanocidal activity. *J. Braz. Chem. Soc.* **13**, 151–157.
- Villalobos N., Martín L., Macías M. J., Mancheño B., and Grande M. (1994), Gibberellin-like activity of some tetracyclic diterpenoids from *Elaeoselinum* species and their derivatives. *Phytochemistry* **37**, 635–639.