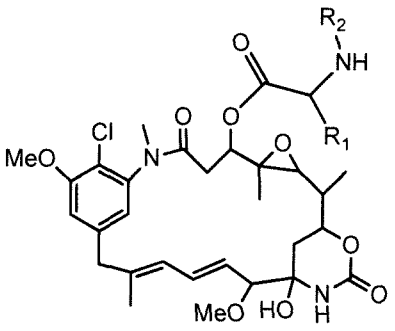
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the Lewis acid is selected from the group consisting of zinc triflate, zinc chloride, magnesium bromide, magnesium triflate, copper triflate, copper (II) bromide, copper (II) chloride, and magnesium chloride.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the Lewis acid is zinc triflate.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising contacting the reaction mixture, after the reaction of maytansinol and the N-carboxyanhydride, with an aqueous solution containing bicarbonate or carbonate, or contacting the reaction mixture with a metal scavenger.

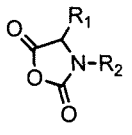
6. A method of preparing a compound represented by the following formula:



(I),

wherein R_1 is methyl; and R_2 is methyl, the method comprising:

a) reacting maytansinol with an *N*-carboxyanhydride in a reaction mixture additionally comprising a base and a Lewis acid, wherein the *N*-carboxyanhydride is represented by the following formula:



(II)

thereby forming the compound of Formula (I);

b) reacting unreacted *N*-carboxyanhydride from the reaction mixture in step a) with a nucleophilic reagent.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein the compound of Formula (I) is represented by the following formula: