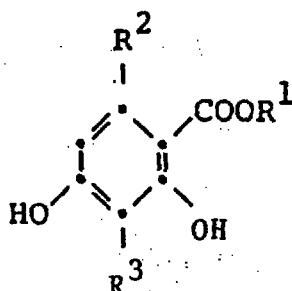


Description

The invention concerns a process for the production of esters of the general formula



I

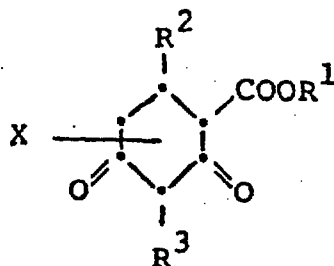
in which R¹ signifies methyl or ethyl and R² and R³, independently from one another, signify C₁₋₄-alkyl, many of which esters are known.

Of most interest are the esters I in which R¹ signifies methyl or ethyl and R² and R³ signify methyl.

Especially preferred is the compound with R¹, R² and R³ as methyl.

The compounds I are known odorants, as described in e.g. U.S. Patent Specification Nos. 3,634,491 and 3,944,596.

The process is characterized in subjecting a diketo ester of the formula



III

in which R¹ to R³ have the above significances, and X is chloro or bromo, preferably chloro, to a dehydrohalogenation process.

The dehydrohalogenation process is conveniently brought about by means of a metal halide.

The metal halide can be a chloride, bromide or iodide. A mono- or polyvalent metal cation can function as the counter-ion. Examples of suitable halides are LiCl, NaCl, MgCl₂, CaCl₂, BaCl₂, ZnCl₂, SnCl₄, LiBr, KI, NaI, etc. The halide can be anhydrous or can contain crystal water.

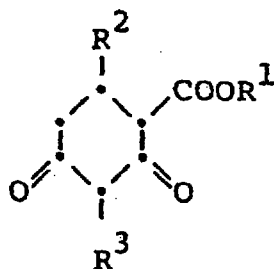
Preferred are the alkali metal or alkaline earth metal halides, in particular MgCl₂, CaCl₂, etc.

The ratio of the diketo ester III to the halide is not critical. A ratio of ca. 1:1-1,20 (w/w) is usually convenient, a ratio of ca. 1:1-1,1 is preferred.

The reaction is suitably carried out in the presence of any solvent, whereby those solvents which are marked *, i.e. those with an elevated dielectric constant, e.g. a dielectric constant of about ≥ 30 , e.g. acetonitrile*, formamide, dimethyl formamide*, hexamethyl phosphoric acid triamide*, pyridine, nitrobenzene*, etc. are preferred.

The crude reaction product can be purified by, e.g. recrystallization from a convenient solvent, e.g. toluene, acetonitrile, methanol, ethanol, etc.

Conveniently, the compound of formula III is prepared by reaction of a compound of formula



II

wherein R^1 to R^3 have the above significances, with a hypohalite, e.g. a hypochlorite or hypobromite, in particular a alkali metal or alkaline earth metal hypohalite. Preferred are NaOCl and Ca(OCl)_2 , in particular NaOCl , e.g. in the form of Javel water.

The reaction is conveniently carried out in an organic solvent. The nature of this solvent is not critical. Convenient solvents are (chlorinated) hydrocarbons, alcohols, ethers, ketones, nitriles, amides, etc.

Specific examples are: toluene, methylene chloride, dichloro ethane, trichloro ethane, methanol, acetone, acetonitrile, dimethyl formamide, isopropyl ether, etc.

The reaction is carried out in acidic medium, e.g. in a pH range of ca. 1-6 said acidity been brought about by the addition of the respective amount of an acid, preferably, an inorganic acid, e.g. a mineral acid such as sulfuric acid or hydrochloric acid, or an organic acid, e.g. a carboxylic acid such as formic acid, acetic acid, etc.

The process is suitably effected in a temperature range of from approximately 5 to 40 °C, preferably at room temperature, i.e. at ca. 20-25 °C.

The working up conveniently consists in a simple decantation step of the organic layer.

If a solvent with an elevated dielectricity constant has been used, the resulting solution can be directly used for the dehalogenation step. Otherwise, such solvent is preferably added, whereby even small amounts, even catalytic amounts suffice.

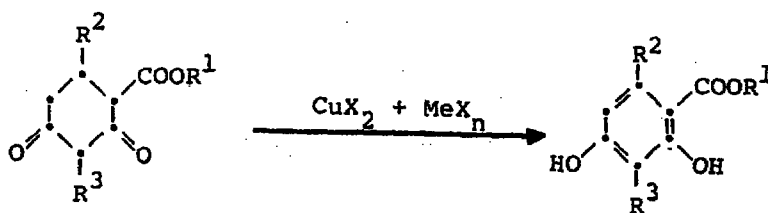
If the compound III is, on the other hand, to be isolated, this can be done by simply distilling off the solvent.

The compounds III are novel and are also part of the invention.

The individual halogenated isomers may be separated by means of column chromatography, e.g. on silica. Said separation is, however, not necessary. The identification can be effected e.g. by NMR.

The prior art [and its drawbacks] in this field can be depicted as follows:

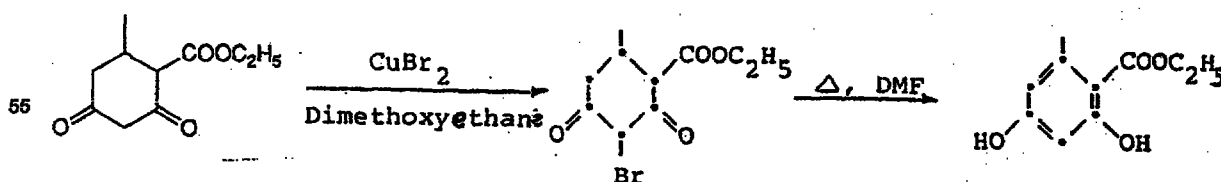
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I

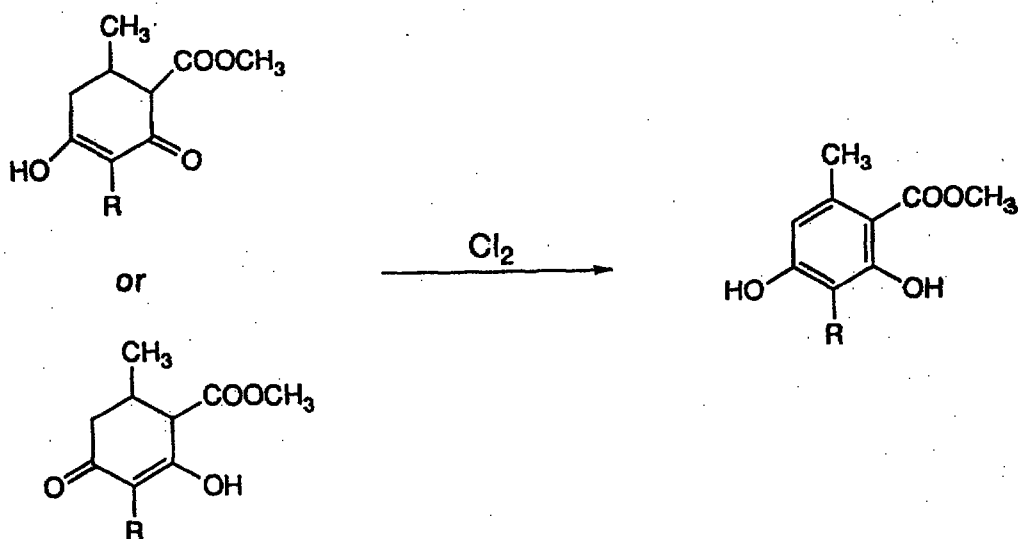
The disadvantage consists in the fact that the Cu salt compulsorily used and even used in more than stoichiometric amounts leads to corrosion of the vessels and to the formation of coloured products.

R.S. Marmor, J. Org. Chem. 37, (1972), 2901-2904



The disadvantage encountered is the low yield of ca. 41-43 %

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The preferred reagent is chlorine - which reagent is disliked in chemical plants because of its toxicity.

Example 1

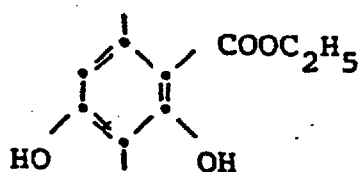
To a mixture of 198 g dione ester of formula II with $R^1 = R^2 = R^3 =$ methyl in 580 ml methylene chloride and 280 ml of 30% H_2SO_4 are added under stirring within 1 hour 670 ml of sodium hypochlorite (150 g/l, ~48° chlorometrically). The temperature is kept at 20 to 25°C by means of a cold water bath. After the addition, stirring is continued for a further 30 minutes, followed by a decantation step. The organic phase is given into a second reaction vessel, 4 g of anhydrous calcium chloride are added, and 250 ml of methylene chloride are distilled off. At the end of the distillation, the temperature of the vapours is 37°C and the temperature of the residue is 48°C. 380 ml of acetonitrile are added rapidly, thereupon the distillation is continued until the residue reaches 70°C. There follows a reflux treatment lasting for 10 hours. The calcium chloride is removed by filtration, the mass is transferred to a Vigreux flask and 225 ml of solvent are distilled in vacuo, starting at 400 mm Hg. The crude reaction product is recrystallized in 500 ml of toluene. The yield is 165.5 g (89%) of methyl β -orcine carboxylate.

Example 2

198 g of the dione ester of Example 1, 600 ml of trichloroethane, 130 ml of hydrochloric acid (22° B diluted with 130 ml of water) are given to a 2 l reaction flask. 600 ml of the same sodium hypochlorite solution as used in Example 1 are added within 1 hour, the temperature is kept between 20 and 25°C. After the addition, stirring is continued for 15 minutes at the same temperature. The organic phase is decanted and given to a second reaction flask. There are now added 7,6 ml of dimethyl formamide and 7,6 g of $MgCl_2 \cdot 6H_2O$. The reaction mixture is brought to reflux temperature within 15 minutes and is kept there for 3 hours. The trichloroethane is removed by distillation, this distillation is finalized at a vacuum of 40 mmHg. The yellow residue is dissolved in 560 ml of methanol; the methyl β -orcine carboxylate is precipitated through the addition of 2,8 l water. The reaction product is cooled to 0° to -5°C and centrifuged. There are obtained 177 g crystals of m.p. 146°C.

Example 3

In an analogous manner to the process outlined in Example 1, there was obtained, via the respective intermediate of formula III, the compound I of formula

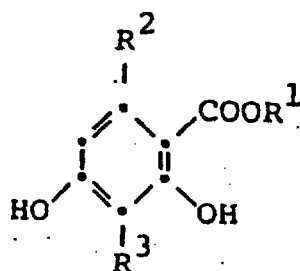


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10 Claims

1. A process for the production of esters of the general formula

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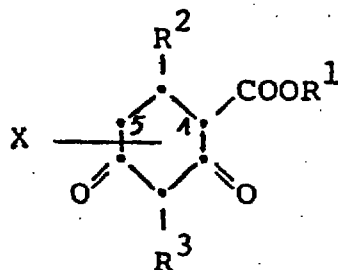
I

20

25

wherein R¹ signifies methyl or ethyl and R² and R³, independently from one another, signify C₁₋₄-alkyl,
comprising subjecting a diketo ester of the general formula

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III

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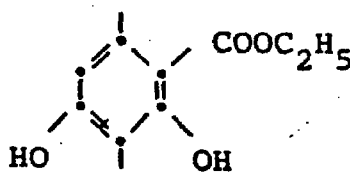
wherein R¹ to R³ have the above significances, X is bromine, or preferably, chlorine and situated in position 1 or 5,
to a dehydrohalogenation process.

45

2. A process according to claim 1, comprising effecting the dehydrohalogenation by means of a metal halide.
3. A process according to claim 1 or 2, wherein an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal halide is used.
4. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the process is carried out in the presence of a solvent having an elevated dielectric constant.
5. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 4, comprising preparing the compound of formula III by reaction of a compound of formula

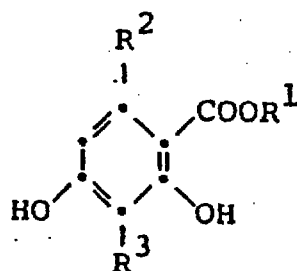
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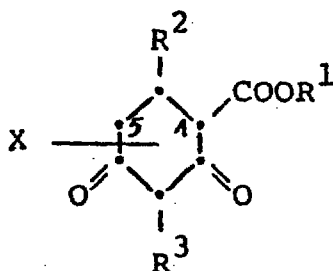


10 Claims

1. A process for the production of esters of the general formula



25 wherein R¹ signifies methyl or ethyl and R² and R³, independently from one another, signify C₁-4-alkyl,
comprising subjecting a diketo ester of the general formula

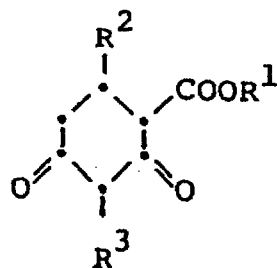


40 wherein R¹ to R³ have the above significances, X is bromine, or preferably, chlorine and situated in position 1 or 5,
to a dehydrohalogenation process.

- 45
2. A process according to claim 1, comprising effecting the dehydrohalogenation by means of a metal halide.
3. A process according to claim 1 or 2, wherein an alkali metal or an alkaline earth metal halide is used.
4. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the process is carried out in the presence of a solvent having an elevated dielectric constant.
- 50
5. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 4, comprising preparing the compound of formula III by reaction of a compound of formula

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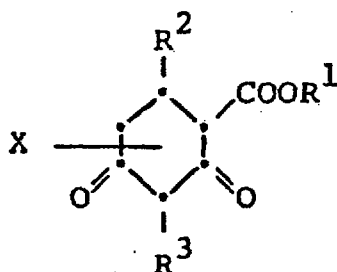


II

wherein R¹ to R³ have the above significances, with a hypohalite.

6. A process according to any one of claims 1 to 5, characterized in that R¹ = methyl or ethyl and R² = R³ = methyl.

7. Compounds of the general formula



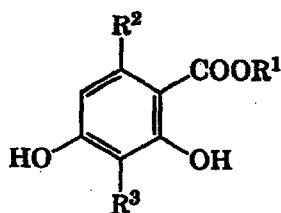
III

wherein R¹ signifies methyl or ethyl and R² and R³, independently from one another, signify C₁₋₄-alkyl, X is bromine, or preferably, chlorine and situated in position 1 or 5.

8. Compounds of the general formula III according to claim 7, wherein R¹ = R² = R³ = methyl and X is chlorine.

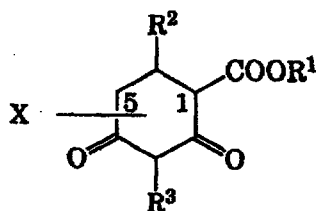
Patentansprüche

1. Verfahren zur Herstellung der Ester der allgemeinen Formel



I

worin R¹ Methyl oder Aethyl und R² und R³, unabhängig voneinander, C₁₋₄-Alkyl bedeuten. dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass man einen Diketo-ester oder allgemeinen Formel

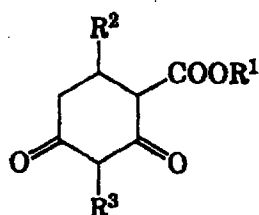


III



worin R^1 bis R^3 obige Bedeutung besitzen, X Brom, oder vorzugsweise, Chlorin Stellung 1 oder 5 ist, einer Dehydrohalogenierung unterwirft.

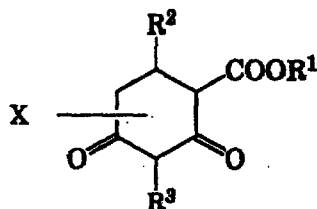
2. Verfahren gemäss Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass die Dehydrohalogenierung mittels eines Metallhalogenides durchgeführt wird.
3. Verfahren gemäss Anspruch 1 oder 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass ein Alkalimetallhalogenid oder ein Erdalkalimetallhalogenid verwendet wird.
4. Verfahren gemäss einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass das Verfahren in Anwesenheit eines Lösungsmittels mit höherer Dielektrizitätskonstante durchgeführt wird.
5. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass man die Verbindung der Formel III durch Reaktion einer Verbindung der Formel



II

worin R^1 bis R^3 obige Bedeutungen besitzen, mit einem Hypohalogenit erhält.

6. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1 bis 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, dass R^1 = Methyl oder Aethyl und R^2 = R^3 = Methyl sind.
7. Verbindungen der allgemeinen Formel



III

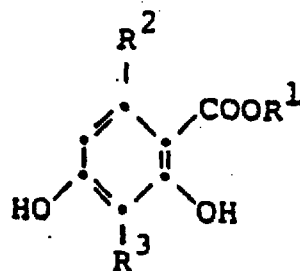
worin R^1 Methyl oder Aethyl und R^2 und R^3 unabhängig voneinander C_{1-4} -Alkyl, X Brom oder, vorzugsweise, Chlor in Stellung 1 oder 5 sind.

8. Verbindungen der allgemeinen Formel III gemäss Anspruch 7, worin R^1 = R^2 = R^3 = Methyl und X Chlor ist.

Revendications

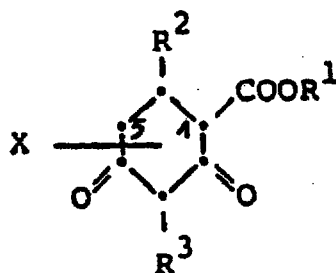
1. Procédé de production d'esters de formule générale





I

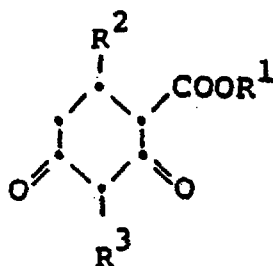
dans laquelle R¹ représente le méthyle ou l'éthyle et R² et R³ indépendamment l'un de l'autre représentent un alkyle C₁₋₄, qui comprend de soumettre à un processus de déhydrohalogénéation un dicétoester de formule générale



III

dans laquelle R¹ à R³ ont les significations ci-dessus, X est le brome, ou de préférence le chlore et est placé en position 1 ou 5.

2. Procédé selon la revendication 1, qui comprend d'effectuer la déshydrohalogénéation au moyen d'un halogénure de métal.
3. Procédé selon la revendication 1 ou 2, dans lequel on utilise un halogénure de métal alcalin ou un halogénure de métal alcalino-terreux.
4. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 3, dans lequel on réalise le procédé en présence d'un solvant ayant une constante diélectrique élevée.
5. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 4, qui comprend de préparer le composé de formule

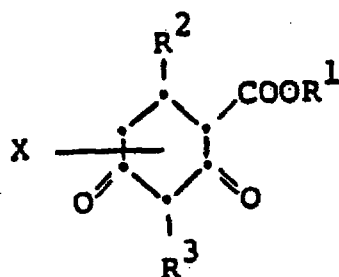


II

dans laquelle R¹ à R³ ont les significations ci-dessus, avec un hypohalite.

6. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 à 5, caractérisé en ce que R¹ = méthyle ou éthyle et R² = R³ = méthyle.
7. Composés de formule générale





III

dans laquelle R¹ représente le méthyle ou l'éthyle et R² et R³ représentent indépendamment l'un de l'autre un alkyle C₁₋₄, X est le brome, ou de préférence le chlore, et est en position 1 ou 5.

8. Composés de formule générale III selon la revendication 7, dans laquelle R¹ = R² = R³ = méthyle et X est le chlore.

