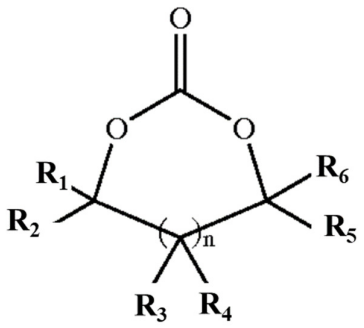
What is claimed is:

1. A process for preparing an N-substituted-2-oxazolidinone comprising reacting a cyclic carbonate with an N-substituted ethanolamine in the presence of an alkali carbonate catalyst to form a reaction product comprising the N-substituted-2-oxazolidinone.

2. The process according to claim 1, wherein the cyclic carbonate is a compound having the formula (I):



(I)

wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5 and R_6 are independently selected from hydrogen, a hydroxyalkyl group, and a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 8 carbon atoms; and n is an integer from zero to one**.**

3. The process according to claim 2, wherein n is zero.

4. The process according to claim 3, wherein R_1, R_2, R_3, R_4, R_5 and R_6 are independently selected from hydrogen and a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 4 carbon atoms.

5. The process according to claim 1, wherein the N-substituted ethanolamine is a compound having the formula (II):

$$HO\text{-}(C_2H_4)\text{-}NHR \qquad (II)$$

wherein R is a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 10 carbon atoms, a cycloalkyl group, an aralkyl group or a hydroxyalkyl group.

6. The process according to claim 5, wherein R is a hydrocarbyl group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms.

7. The process according to claim 1, wherein the alkali carbonate catalyst is selected from potassium carbonate, sodium carbonate, calcium carbonate and potassium hydrogencarbonate.

8. The process according to claim 7, wherein the alkali carbonate catalyst is potassium carbonate.

9. A process for preparing an N-substituted-2-oxazolidinone comprising reacting a cyclic carbonate with an N-substituted ethanolamine in the presence of an alkali carbonate catalyst to form a reaction product comprising the N-substituted-2-oxazolidinone and one or more by-products and subjecting the reaction product to a separation technique to remove at least a portion of the one or more by-products.

10. The process according to claim 9, wherein the cyclic carbonate and the N-substituted ethanolamine are present during the reaction at a molar ratio of from about 0.99:1 to about 1.01:1.

11. The process according to claim 9, wherein the amount of the alkali carbonate catalyst present during the reaction is from about 0.005% by weight to about 1% by weight, based on the total weight of the cyclic carbonate, N-substituted ethanolamine and alkali carbonate catalyst.

12. The process according to claim 9, wherein the reaction takes place at a temperature of from about 50°C to about 130°C.

13. The process according to claim 9, wherein the separation technique is a concentration, crystallization, recrystallization, distillation, fractional distillation, or chromatography technique.

14. The process according to claim 9, wherein the N-substituted-2-oxazolidinine is N-methyl-2-oxazolidinone, N-ethyl-2-oxazolidinone, N-propyl-2-oxazolidinone, N-isopropyl-2-oxazolidinone, N-butyl-2-oxazolidinone, N-hydroxyethyl-2-oxazolidinone, N-hydroxypropyl-2-oxazolidinone N-cyclohexyl-2-oxazolidinone or N-benzyl-2-oxazolidinone.

15. The process according to claim 14, wherein the N-substituted-2-oxazolidinone is prepared at a percent yield of at least 85%.