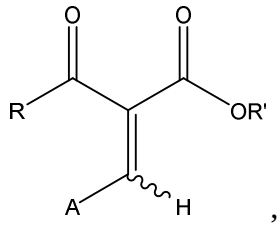
Claims

1. A method of preventing or reducing the extent and/or rate of deactivation of a precursor compound for a fragrant aldehyde according to the following general formula



,

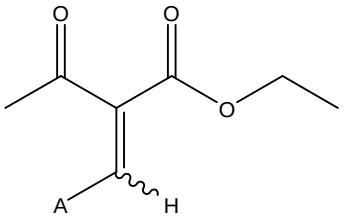
wherein

A is a hydrocarbon residue of a fragrant aldehyde A-CHO, wherein the hydrocarbon residue may optionally contain one or more hetero-atom(s) selected from O, N, S and/or Si; and

R and R' are independently an alkyl residue, and more particularly methyl, ethyl, propyl, isopropyl, butyl, sec-butyl, iso-butyl and pentyl;

said method comprising preparing the precursor compound enriched in the Z-isomer synthetically or by a combination of synthetic and purification steps.

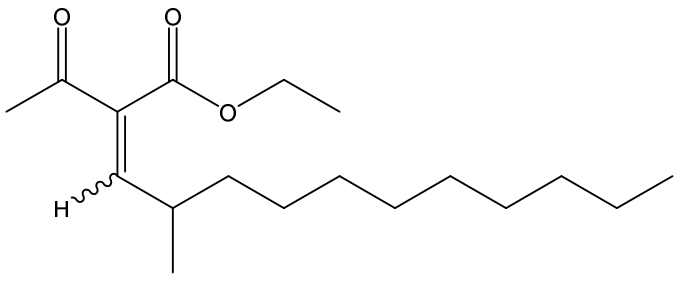
2. The method according to claim 1, wherein a compound having the following formula (II)



(II),

wherein the akylidene double bond is enriched in its *Z*-isomer, is prepared.

3. The method according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein ethyl 2-acetyl-4-methyltridec-2-enoate (III)



(III),

wherein the alkylidene double bond is enriched in its *Z*-isomer, is prepared.

4. The method according to any one of the preceding claims, wherein the *Z*:*E* ratio is at least 70:30.

5. The method according to claim 3, said method comprising the step of carrying out a Knoevenagel condensation reaction between ethyl acetoacetate and 2-methyl undecanal in the presence of a base.

6. The method of claim 5, comprising the step of removing residual base and/or residual derivatives of the base.

7. The method according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the base is a piperazine or a piperidine.

8. The method according to one of claims 5 to 7, comprising the step of removing residual unreacted 2-methyl-undecanal from the reaction mixture.

9. The method according to one of claims 5 to 8, comprising the step of storing ethyl 2-acetyl-4-methyltridec-2-enoate (III) at a temperature of about 6 °C or less.

10. The method according to one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the precursor compound is prepared by a Knoevenagel Condensation reaction, and wherein

< 1 mol% of an amine catalyst, more preferably < 0.1 mol% of an amine catalyst, is used; and/or

a temperature of < 80 °C, more preferably of < 60 °C, is used; and/or

calcium carbonate is used as an inorganic catalysts; and/or

the reaction is run in a pH range of 5-8.

11. The method according to one of claims 1 to 10, comprising enriching or further enriching the Z-isomer using chromatography, distillation or membrane filtration, more particularly silica gel chromatography, and more particularly still silica gel chromatography using a mixture of hexane and tert-butyl methyl ether in a 4:1 to 9:1 ratio.