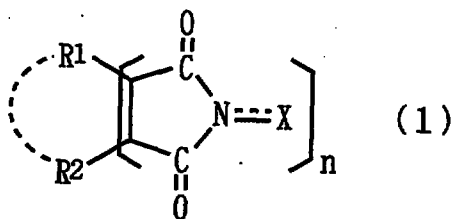


ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An oxidation reaction mixture (e.g. adipic acid, benzoic acid, butenediol) and an oxidation catalyst are efficiently separated from a reaction mixture with the use of an aqueous solvent (e.g. methyl benzoate, benzonitrile) containing at least water (e.g. water) and a non-water-soluble solvent separable from the aqueous solvent, the reaction mixture being obtained by oxidizing a substrate (e.g. a hydrocarbon) in the presence of an imide compound such as N-hydroxyphthalimide shown by the following formula (1) as the oxidation catalyst,

15



wherein R^1 and R^2 represents a substituent such as a hydrogen atom and a halogen atom; R^1 and R^2 may together form a double bond, or an aromatic or nonaromatic 5- to 12-membered ring; X stands for O or OH; and n is 1 to 3. No decomposition of the oxidation catalyst is observed in this separation process.